
The means: to change places for the better.

The relevance of parking
in the success of urban centres

A review for London Councils

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What was the review?

The Means was commissioned by London Councils to carry out a review of the relevance of parking in the success of urban centres in July 2012.

The review aimed to address the following research questions:

1. Is there a correlation between the amount of free / cheap parking and commercial activity? If so, is this correlation causal or coincidental?
2. How do people travel to town centres? What types of visitor are most profitable to business owners? Is this profitability attributable to their choice of mode?
3. How important is the availability and cost of parking, in comparison with other factors, in attracting visitors to town centres?
4. How important is parking to the night-time economy? How many visitors to bars, restaurants, theatres, casinos and night clubs are driving home after spending the night out?
5. How many people working in the night-time economy choose or need to drive home? How can (or should) councils make allowances for this group?
6. What can councils, businesses and other stakeholders do to increase footfall, and hence prosperity, in town centres?
7. What further research might be useful in helping councils improve their policies in this area? What gaps in knowledge and understanding exist, and how could these be addressed?

The study involved looking at the evidence from academic and reports from foundations, industry associations and public agencies, such as Transport for London. In addition, a questionnaire was sent out to all London boroughs, requesting data on parking supply, charging and town centre economic indicators, such as footfall (number of visitors), empty retail units, business turnover and the rate of change in businesses in two town centre areas. Finally, data from market research carried out with shoppers at 3 outer London based shopping centres was analysed.

What were the findings?

The review of the academic literature and other reports showed that there was relatively little research carried out into the link between parking and urban centre success. Where there was research, it was often not backed up by survey data or other robust evidence.

However, where there was research, the main findings were as follows:

- **More parking does not necessarily mean greater commercial success.** A well managed parking scheme, where spaces ‘turn over’ frequently can help to increase the number of visitors coming to a town centre and thereby help business.

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- **There is no such thing as ‘free’ parking.** The costs of developing and maintaining parking spaces and then enforcing proper use to ensure good traffic flow have to be borne by somebody. In the case of local authority operated parking (on street or off street) any costs that are not covered by parking revenue falls to local Council Tax payers.
 - **Shopkeepers consistently overestimate the share of their customers coming by car.** In some cases, this is by a factor of as much as 400%. In London, as well as other cities, the share of those accessing urban centres on foot or by public transport is much greater. Walking is the most important mode for accessing local town centres; public transport is the most important mode for travel to international centres, such as Oxford Street.
 - **Car drivers spend more on a single trip; walkers and bus users spend more over a week or a month.** In 2011, in London town centres, walkers spent £147 more per month than those travelling by car. Compared with 2004, spending by public transport users and walkers has risen; spending by car users and cyclists has decreased.
 - **A good mix of shops and services and a quality environment are some of the most important factors in attracting visitors to town centres.** If both these are poor, then changes to parking or accessibility are very unlikely to make a town centre more attractive.
 - **There is very little evidence of the impacts of parking on the night time economy.** This is an area that needs more research.
 - **Boroughs collect a lot of data on parking but there is less information available on town centre economic factors.** Finding ways to coordinate data collection across departments could be helpful to monitor the impacts of parking policies.

What are the main recommendations for London Councils and its members?

Recommendation 1: Regular borough data collection - linking parking with town centre health checks

Collecting regular data on parking supply, charging and linking this to data collected as part of town centre health checks could help monitor any impacts of parking policies on urban centre success.

Recommendation 2: Making best use of borough capacity

London Councils could help boroughs with their town centre and parking data collection by providing guidance, exploring joint procurement of data collection and running events for officers from the different relevant borough departments.

Recommendation 3: Further research into the night-time economy

London Councils and Transport for London could jointly commission an independent study on parking and the night time economy. This would focus on establishing how night time economy workers and visitors travel and look at the links between parking and night time deliveries.

Recommendation 4: Publish an annual parking review

London boroughs (like other UK local authorities) are encouraged to produce annual parking reviews by the Department of Transport. These usually just focus on parking revenues. However, if enlarged to include information on how that revenue has spent on projects supporting the local economy, they could be useful tools to explain the economics of parking to interested parties.

Recommendation 5: Actively promote town centre improvements part funded by parking revenue

In combination with the annual parking review (see above), boroughs could be more actively promoting how (limited) on street parking revenue surpluses are being ploughed back into transport projects.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Project brief and research questions

London Councils commissioned The Means in July 2012 to carry out a desktop review of current research into the relevance of parking in the success of urban centres. The commission followed the publication of a number reports that addressed the issue including The Portas Review and the CEBR report on behalf of the West Ending campaign, which looked at the impact of introducing parking charges in the evenings and on Sundays in the West End of London. The study team were tasked with looking at the evidence in relation to the following research questions:

- Is there a correlation between the amount of free / cheap parking and commercial activity? If so, is this correlation causal or coincidental?
- How do people travel to town centres? What types of visitor are most profitable to business owners? Is this profitability attributable to their choice of mode?
- How important is the availability and cost of parking, in comparison with other factors, in attracting visitors to town centres?
- How important is parking to the night-time economy? How many visitors to bars, restaurants, theatres, casinos and night clubs are driving home after spending the night drinking?
- How many people working in the night-time economy choose or need to drive home? How can (or should) councils make allowances for this group?
- What can councils, businesses and other stakeholders do to increase footfall and hence prosperity in town centres?
- What further research might be useful in helping councils improve their policies in this area? What gaps in knowledge and understanding exist, and how could these be addressed?

The aim was to provide London Councils with impartial advice that was directly relevant to London. The brief also specified that the project should consider different categories of town centre (e.g. metropolitan centre, major centre and district centre).

2.2 Structure of this report

This report includes all the findings, the search for relevant research, secondary data, as well as the results of a questionnaire sent out to all 33 London councils. It is structured as follows:

Section 3 explains the methodology used, including the search terms for the literature review, the information requested from boroughs as part of a questionnaire and how the project team sought to find data sources from other initiatives across the UK.

Section 4 sets out the results of the literature review in the context of each of the research questions. This includes details of the review of both academic and 'grey' literature. Here the 'grey' literature includes studies published by government organisations, agencies, NGOs or foundations, including some reports by independent researchers for organisations such as the RAC Foundation and the British Retail Consortium.

Section 5 reports on the results of the questionnaire sent out to London local authorities. This included a review of parking policy, parking supply and costs in up to two of their urban centres. It looks at the data available and suggests ways in which boroughs could collect and collate data in the future.

Section 6 sets out the results of market research carried out in three shopping centres in outer London on mode of travel and spend. It then brings together data on the importance of parking for retailers and other town centre businesses as collected by The Means as part of previous work.

Finally, Section 7 draws on the findings of sections 4 to 6 to set out a response to each of the research questions, to recommend areas for further research as well as ways in which data could be collected to help meet gaps in knowledge in the future.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Academic literature search

The literature search has been conducted in two parts: academic journal articles and sources, and so-called 'grey' literature which is mainly reports from interest groups, NGOs, government bodies or industry associations. Both types of sources have been scrutinised to ensure that their findings have been based on evidence rather than opinion or hearsay.

The academic literature search used the 'Ethos' search function at The British Library, as well as books held in hard copy at the library. This search function is one of the most comprehensive in the world, covering all sorts of publications from academic journal articles, to Phd and Masters theses. We focused on articles published in the last 10 years to ensure that the evidence is relevant to the current context, however if there was a particular reference that is often quoted from the 1990s, this was also included. In some cases the source was pre-2000 but is relevant due to the strong theoretical foundations.

To ensure that this review is of direct relevance to the London context, the focus has also been on articles that based their studies in the UK and the rest of Europe, where there are similar levels of public transport provision and a comparable approach to land use planning. However, some USA examples have been included. These are generally when high quality research has taken place on aspects of parking that are transferable to most urban areas, e.g. the economics of parking. Various different search terms were used to find as many sources as possible and these are summarised below.

Table 1 Search terms for academic literature

Search Term	Results
1. Urban centre parking UK	No relevant results
2. Urban centre parking	No relevant results
3. Urban car parking	No relevant results
4. Car parking	English Partnerships (2006) Car Parking, What works where, English Partnerships, London. (Not relevant to research aims on review of article)
5. Urban parking	Anderson, S. and de Palma, A. (2004) The economics of pricing parking Calthrop, E and Proost, S. (2006) Regulating on-street parking Shoup, D. (1999) The trouble with minimum parking requirements
6. Parking economics	Shoup, D. (1997) The High Cost of Free Parking Bonsall, P. and Young, W. (2010) Is there a case for replacing parking charges by road user charges? Ferelli, G. (2008) An Analysis of the city centre car parking market: The supply side point of view Whitehead, D. (2005) Transport charging interventions and economic activity
7. Parking control	Rye, T., Cowan, T., and Sephenson, I. (2005) Expansion of a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) and its Influence on Modal Split: The Case of Edinburgh
8. Parking policy	Litman, T. (2012) Parking Management Palmer, D. and Ferris, C. (2010) Parking Measures and Policies Research Review Marsden, G. (2006) The evidence base for parking policies – a review
9. Parking and night time economy	Kelly, J. A.; Clinch, J. P (2009) Temporal variance of revealed preference on-street parking price elasticity
10. Parking at night	No results

In some cases further articles were found by looking at references in those selected by the search process above, and all results were then assessed for quality using a matrix devised for the project

(see appendix). Those that were not relevant to the core research questions were discounted; in some cases only a very limited part of the articles were retained as relevant. All were found to be of sufficient quality to be included in the study in that they provided evidence that was relevant to the research questions.

3.2 'Grey' literature search

The 'grey' literature search also focused on publications from the last ten years. As with the academic literature, there was a focus on publications from the UK, but some also from the rest of Europe. This included one major EU study that brought together results from research across 15 countries (COST Action 342 report (2006)) and also included the reports already identified in the Project Brief.

Online searches were also made using the search term 'parking town centres' and the websites of the following organisations checked for any relevant information:

- British Parking Association (BPA)
- Associations of Town Centre Managers (ATCM)
- RAC Foundation
- AA Foundation
- Independent Transport Commission
- Transport for London.

To ensure that no relevant studies were missed, The Means contacted a number of parking experts and authors of previous reports that had surveyed all available literature sources. The Means also approached night time economy specialists where reports and data appeared to be particularly scarce.

3.3 Borough questionnaire and data from three outer London shopping centres

In order to supplement the literature, it was important to collect data on current parking policies in London from the local authority boroughs, as well as their data on urban centre vitality. All local authorities in London were requested to provide details of their current parking policy for at least one urban centre, or ideally two areas per borough. The objective here was to get a mix of different urban centres for comparison using the Mayor of London's London Plan Categories (see Table 2 below for summary). In each case, this involved drawing on data on parking and economic development.

Table 2 London Plan Urban Centre Categories

Category	Description	Examples
International Centres	London's globally renowned retail destinations with a wide range of high-order comparison and specialist shopping with excellent levels of public transport accessibility.	West End Knightsbridge
Metropolitan Centres	Serve wide catchments which can extend over several boroughs and into parts of the wider South East region. Typically they contain at least 100,000 sq.m of retail floorspace with a significant proportion of high-order comparison goods relative to convenience goods. These centres generally have very good accessibility and significant employment, service and leisure functions.	Croydon Uxbridge Kingston Sutton
Major Centres	Typically found in Inner and some parts of Outer London with a borough-wide catchment. They generally contain over 50,000 sq.m of retail floorspace with a relatively high proportion of comparison goods relative to convenience goods. They may also have significant employment, leisure, service and civic functions.	Barking Camden Town Eltham Richmond
District Centre	Distributed more widely than the Metropolitan and Major centres, providing convenience goods and services for more local communities and accessible by public transport, walking and cycling. Typically they contain 10,000–50,000 sq.m of retail floorspace. Some District centres have developed specialist shopping functions.	Willesden Green Upper Norwood/Crystal Palace Rainham New Malden
Neighbourhood and smaller local centres	Typically serve a localised catchment often most accessible by walking and cycling and include local parades and small clusters of shops, mostly for convenience goods and other services. They may include a small supermarket (typically up to around 500 sq.m), sub-post office, pharmacy, laundrette and other useful local services. Together with District centres they can play a key role in addressing areas deficient in local retail and other services.	

Source: Annex 2 of the 2011 London Plan

The questionnaire was devised to collect up-to-date data on parking supply (number of spaces per type) and parking costs, as well as economic development data. This included business hereditaments, i.e. the unit used by local authorities and to charge business rates, footfall, commercial vacancy or 'voids' and business turnover or 'churn'.

The questionnaire was developed in collaboration with London Councils and with input from borough officers and sent out to officers in charge of parking. They were requested to coordinate with relevant colleagues and departments (e.g. economic development) for the data relating to 'health' of urban centres and encouraged to send back any relevant reports, studies that had been commissioned and details of any projects undertaken (e.g. 'free parking' trials).

To complement the data from the boroughs, The Means commissioned their market research partner the ROI Team to review some existing data collected on behalf of The Mall Corporation. This is based on exit interviews with shoppers at three Outer London shopping centres. These included their mode of travel and spend, as well as analysis on social economic profile.

3.4 Information from other urban centres

To investigate whether there was any other relevant data available, all London Business Improvement Districts (BIDS) with high streets or urban centres in their areas were contacted. In addition, requests were sent out to the 23 BIDS from the rest of the UK that are focused on town or city centre areas for any data linked to parking or initiatives that included parking offers with the aim of attracting more footfall and spend. This unfortunately did not result in any data being submitted.

4.0 RESULTS OF LITERATURE REVIEW

As shown by the methodology, the literature search has been undertaken using a system to capture as much relevant information as possible. However, there is a lack of literature on the main points of the research questions. There is also a complete lack of evidence surrounding the question of parking in the night time economy. The following therefore is a comprehensive review of what little literature is available.

Marsden (2006) suggests the gap in research is because the reasons for parking policy are a mix between revenue raising activity for local authorities without deterring visitors and urban vitality, and the need for Transport Demand Management (TDM). Furthermore Ferilli (2008) in his review of literature looking at the supply of parking in Edinburgh, explains that most literature is from the perspective of the end user of the parking, which means that it looks to 'satisfy' their demands.

The lack of academic research is mirrored in the lack of other literature drawing on robust data. Most reports are either commissioned by organisations seeking to influence transport policy or by the parking industry. The two notable exceptions to this are the 2006 EU COST Action 342 report and the results of surveys undertaken on behalf of Transport for London.

4.1 Parking supply and availability

4.1.1 General parking

Looking at studies of Edinburgh, Hu and Saleh (2005) explain that the main barrier to people shopping in the city centre is the access to, and supply of, parking spaces. In the context of unrestrained parking with no transport demand management measures, such as charging policy, this is made worse. They conclude that the income generated can be used to help improve accessibility to public transport and reduce traffic which helps those who have no option but to drive.

Further supporting evidence that there must be management of parking to some degree can be found in Marsden (2006). He adds that management of the provision and use of parking spaces initially emerged out of:

"important concerns about the safety and obstruction of traffic flow on streets"

caused by excess vehicles looking for parking as the one of the most important aspects of accessibility of town centres.

Our research for this report has highlighted how there is very little data collected in a consistent way on parking in general. Bates and Leibling in their recent report for the RAC Foundation (RAC Foundation 2012) report that local authorities are supposed to collate and publish data, both on parking supply, income and expenditure. National government also strongly recommends that they produce an annual parking report, but very few local authorities do so. Bates and Leibling highlight that this difficulty with getting hold of current data also applies to London, where in their view:

“parking issues are potentially most serious and where more research has been undertaken than elsewhere in Great Britain”.¹

Using data from surveys carried out in 1999 and again in 2005 by the MVA Consultancy, they compiled the following table for non-residential parking bays.

¹ Bates, J. and Leibling, D. (2012) p. vi

Table 2: Change in number of non-residential off-street and on-street parking bays (1999-2005, thousands)²

% change	Off-street, non-residential				On-street, non-controlled			On-street controlled
	POS public	PNR employee	PNR other	All non-residential car parks	OSN un-controlled	OSN single yellow/red line	OSN total	OSC total*
Bays (2004) London	222	671	378	1,272	2,152	604	2,736	459
Change (1999 to 2004)								
Central area, inside Inner Ring Road	-21	-46	+235	-26	0	-28	-48	n/a
Between Inner Ring Road and North/South Circular Roads	+18	+3	+84	+24	-9	-14	-11	n/a
Between North/South Circular Roads and London boundary	-3	+29	+71	+31	-9	+3	-7	n/a
All London	-4	+29	+74	+27	-9	-4	-8	+177

Source: MVA (2005)

POS = Public off street car parks; PNR = Private non-residential car parks

*These OSC figures are not available for the central and other areas as defined, being based on borough estimates. They also exclude (at least) Lewisham, where no estimates are available.

²Quoted in Bates and Leibling, (2010) p. 18

Even if data on parking supply is patchy, there seems to be agreement that parking in town centres has an important role to play. The RAC Foundation and the British Retail Consortium in their 2006 report 'Motoring towards 2050: Shopping and transport policy' highlight the need for well managed parking that is "*well located, well signed and well maintained*".³

This approach is similar to that recommended by the ATCM. In a British Parking Forum paper, published in 2006, it sets out seven main factors that should be considered for town centre parking supply. These are:

1. Quantity and convenience: quantity must match the size of the town centre and in smaller centres, must not be more than five minutes' walk away from the main shops
2. Payment and control: payment on departure encourages a longer shopping trip and therefore greater spend
3. Free short stay: a very limited amount of free parking (first few minutes) helps short visits and customer satisfaction, but it must not be open to abuse (ACTM is not an advocate of free parking)
4. Pricing structure: tariffs should be limited to up to three hours to discourage the use of parking spaces by commuters
5. Security: car parks need to be well designed, maintained and managed, with uniformed patrols and CCTV
6. Quality: car parks are often the 'gateway' to the town centre and should reflect the need to meet high customer expectations
7. Signage: highway signs including variable messaging boards can help drivers to find available spaces more easily.

Public opinion on parking in town centres also seems to point to the importance of parking supply. The RAC Foundation and the BRC study (2006) sort to find out shoppers' views on transport policy in general, including parking. GfK NOP was commissioned to survey 1,000 adults over 17 years old in June 2006. The survey found that 44 per cent of respondents had experienced problems with finding a parking space in the last 12 months and 11 per cent had got a parking ticket. This compares to 54 per cent experiencing congested roads and 10 per cent experiencing problems with finding a secure cycle or motorcycle parking space. The survey also found that the availability of parking varied in importance according to the type of goods being purchased, with 85 per cent saying it was important when buying groceries, 76 per cent for household goods and 60 per cent for clothes and shoe shopping.⁴

³ RAC Foundation and British Retail Consortium (2006) p. 4

⁴ RAC Foundation and British Retail Consortium (2006) p. 8

More recent research carried out by the Department for Transport / ONS in their Omnibus Survey of 2008 found that, given a list of occasions when parking causes a problem, parking for shopping was mentioned by 30 per cent of respondents, compared to 38 per cent for visiting hospital and 21 per cent for personal business (banking etc.).⁵

4.1.2 On-street parking

Shoup (1999) explains that the availability of free or underpriced curb (on-street) parking creates a classic problem. Studies have found that between eight per cent and 74 per cent of cars in congested traffic were cruising in search of curb parking, and that the average time to find a curb space ranged between three and 14 minutes. Shoup explains towns and cities can eliminate the economic incentive to cruise by charging market-clearing prices for curb parking spaces. That is to reduce the 'cruising' time, on street parking locations need to charge to create turnover of the space. Shoup puts this 'vacancy' rate at around 15 per cent. Depending on the location [or time], to achieve the same 15 per cent vacancy rate, it is needed to charge more than at locations [or times] with less demand.

These figures relate to US cities, where in many cases there is a significant gap between low cost on street parking (traditionally coin fed meters) and off street car park charges. However, his arguments could be seen to be transferable to areas that are considering whether to lower their on street parking charges or eliminate them altogether.

The argument against market-priced curb parking is that the public see it as a revenue generator for the local authority. Data from Shoup (1999) shows that charging can yield between five per cent and eight per cent of the total land rent in a USA city, and in some neighbourhoods can yield more. This has problems the users cannot always see the direct feedback on this revenue to schemes and projects that the authority may be funding from the proceeds.

4.1.3 Off- street parking

There is little relevant or contemporary research into the parking provision or economics of off-street parking facilities. Shoup (1997, 1999) estimated that in 1999 the cost of developing a parking space in a 'parking lot' was in the region of US\$20,000⁶. Shoup also explains how this cost has risen consistently. Figures in the TRL report (2010) based on an analysis of European parking development costs estimate that these are around €35,000 per space (US\$45,000 or £28,250 at today's rates). However, there is some uncertainty about what is included this cost; underground spaces cost much more to construct than an above ground structure.

Litman (2012) provides supporting evidence to show that in urban centres the area needed for a 'parking lot' takes up space that could be used for other things such as retail. As land prices increase,

⁵ Quote in Bates and Leibling (2012) p. 77

⁶ This calculation is based on the costs of developing parking at the UCLA in California. Car parking spaces are generally larger in the USA than in Europe.

so do the development costs. This means fewer parking schemes are economically viable unless the costs of development are recouped via charging the users.

An example of where the cost of provision is causing a local authority to change their policy can be seen in Rye *et. al.* (2005), where they explain that Canterbury reduced its city centre parking numbers and increased parking costs by 50 per cent yet saw no reduction in city centre trade⁷.

4.2 The cost of parking (parking economics)

4.2.1 Free (cheap) at point of use

'Free parking' is one of the recommendations of Mary Portas in her independent review of the future of high streets commissioned by Prime Minister David Cameron and published in December 2011.

Portas cites two examples in support of her ninth recommendation that:

"Local areas should implement free controlled parking schemes that work for their town centres and we should have a new parking league table".⁸

Portas goes on to quote the cases of Chester with a 'Free After Three' campaign, including parking free of charge from 3pm in the city centre, and Swindon where short stay parking charges have been reduced in the town centre. However, no data is provided on the impacts so we cannot see whether these have been beneficial or detrimental to trade.

Hu and Saleh (2005) provide anecdotal evidence in Edinburgh that there is support for cheaper or free parking using survey data. They explain car drivers were asked in the survey about what would encourage them to shop more; 38 per cent of car users stated cheaper parking and 15 per cent stated better public transport. The same survey done outside of the Edinburgh city limits showed that only 16 per cent stated cheaper parking would encourage more shopping trips.

One of the most difficult balances in an urban environment is between shopping locations within the same town or city, as raised by Bonsall and Young (2010). They explain that competition between city centre retail facilities and suburban, or out-of-town, centres means that economic objectives in town centres may warrant a reduction in the price of short stay spaces and or increases in their numbers to attract greater footfall. However, as Hu and Saleh note above, parking prices are not the only tool available to towns or cities in improving the perceived accessibility to retail centres.

⁷ Rye et al are quoting research reported on in Valley, M. (1997) *Parking Perspectives* Landor Publishing, London.

⁸ Portas (2011) p. 25

Shoup (1997) in a US context highlights that the problem is neither a shortage of parking nor an excess of cars, but fundamentally it is free parking. This is supported by evidence that free parking is fundamentally unfair as it is essentially a subsidisation of car driving by those who use alternative modes of transport. Shoup (1999) develops the case by explaining how the cost of free parking “*stimulates the demand for vehicle travel*” which in turn puts pressure on town planners to allow higher minimum parking requirements, negatively impacting accessibility.

The same argument can be found in the 2010 TRL report, which explains that parking is only free at point of use because its cost has been allocated to higher prices or charges that are not obvious at the point of use. The authors go on to highlight the fact that therefore everyone pays for the provision of parking.

Finally, the COST report (COST Action 342 (2006)) clearly concludes that unregulated free parking just results in places being occupied by workers for a long period of time and not visitors, who have short term parking needs. This was confirmed by trials in a number of different German cities. A trial in the city of Herford for free parking for the first half hour found that it resulted in no rise in gross sales, a rise of 75 per cent in the number of drivers parking for less than half an hour and an increase in traffic volume.

4.2.2 Charging for parking

Using studies from Edinburgh, Rye *et. al.* (2005) highlight that if there is an increase in cost of parking, then there are five major effects on driver behaviour. Drivers either:

- change parking location,
- change the start time of journey,
- change mode,
- change destination or;
- abandon the trip.

Using this evidence it would be fair to assume that change in parking location, change in destination and trip abandonment may negatively impact on shopping trips or spend. While this evidence suggests that the cost of parking may have an effect on economic vitality, this assumes that parking is the only concern to motorists.

TRL (2010) highlights research by the DfT into motoring habits which suggests that there are other more important factors that limit car travel. The results of the research are that:

-
- 35 per cent of people limited car travel because of fuel costs
 - 28 per cent because of the lack of availability of parking
 - 27 per cent because of the cost of parking.

This view is backed up by Bates and Leibling in their report for the RAC Foundation (Bates and Leibling (2012)). Using data from the National Travel Survey, they have found that (excluding any charges for residential parking) the average cost of parking per vehicle is about £42 per year. Assuming 1.14 cars per household, this works out as about £47 per household per year. They compare this cost to the amount spent on fuel, which is estimated to be £1,600 per vehicle per year.⁹

Bonsall and Young (2010) also note the wider impacts of charging by explaining how it can influence local authority and town centre management policy making. It can be 'politically difficult' to implement charging and this therefore often leads to inertia or unwillingness to trial different policies. However TRL (2010) explains how a strong response is needed, as charging users directly is more efficient and generates more revenue without the imposition of a 'tax.' They continue that there are a number of benefits to charging. It can:

- Increase space turnover leading to easier access to spaces
- Reduce number of spaces required to meet demand, leading to less development cost
- Encourage long-stay parking outside the Central Business District (CBD), helping to make town centres more attractive
- Reduce other problems: congestion, pollution and energy consumption
- Generate revenue to pay for space provision and roads or public transport.

Rye *et. al.* however does go on to say that where a town or city provides alternative options or modes such as Park&Ride, then city centre trade will not be affected, as shown by a study of Canterbury.

Rye *et. al.* (2005) makes an important point in support of charging, in that at the time of writing in UK examples the effect of pricing policies must be at least neutral overall given that "few if any" policies have been reversed. They do however continue that there are very limited examples of literature that makes a link between pricing policy, mode choice and economic impact.

4.2.3 Price structures

Bonsall and Young (2010) point out that there is some evidence to suggest that high parking charges have an adverse impact on retail takings, particularly if the city centre stores are competing with other

⁹ Bates and Leibling (2012) p. vii

stores where parking is available, such as out of town retail centres. This can be defined as a 'willingness to pay' for the cost of a service when perceived against another service that may have a different price. Bonsall and Young expand on this point by quoting a study by Lockwood in 2002. This found that high prices (above £3-4 per hour at that time) may indeed suppress retail activity. However, they qualify this by saying that there must be a balance with congestion that free or low cost policies will create.

Kelly and Clinch (2009), in a study of Dublin, looked at how parking patterns changed in light of changes to the pricing structure (i.e. pricing 'brackets'), in an environment where there is already pricing implemented for on-street parking. The most notable result is that even with a 50 per cent increase in cost, there is very little change to the patterns of parking, implying that willingness to pay is not necessarily an issue in this case. However, they do note that the pattern is not uniform and that the biggest change in user pattern is the 08:00-09:00 user group, who are more likely to be commuters than shopping or leisure drivers, implying that price of parking is *not* conducive to encouraging retail spend. They also looked at the impact of 'late night Thursday shopping' (with free parking). However they conclude that the success of this initiative was not as a result of the free parking, but as a result of shops being available midweek outside of normal business hours.

Other 'offers' that retailers may use to encourage shopping trips and high yields have been tested in Melbourne, Australia, where the retail organisations will exempt their customers from the cost of parking (i.e. provide free parking) on the condition that they exceed a threshold of expenditure in the store. Therefore this discourages those who are parking for work which is cited as a negative impact of unrestrained and/or free parking.

In opposition of offering free or cheaper parking as an offer to attract people to retail centres, the TRL report (2010) (citing evidence from Betts (2009) and Litman (2010)) explains that parking fees can be correlated to the level of service in an area (quality of retail mix). For example a convenient, diverse and quality mix of retail will attract people to one centre over another, even if the second centre offers free parking. They continue that pricing structures are often most objected to, not by the user, but by retailers who believe that parking fees discourage customers. However as an example of the unbalanced nature of retail centres, some of the most successful charge for parking, and some that offer free parking are economically unviable simply because the real pull [or push] factors are the shops themselves.

4.2.4 Cost of provision

There is a wide academic and professional understanding that the provision of parking spaces is expensive. However, an exact figure and details of what it covers is hard to find for a UK or European context. TRL (2010) quote a figure from the UK Department for Transport of £300-£500 year, but do not give details of whether this includes the initial set up costs. They also quote Shoup (1997) who in his study of parking at the University of California calculated that the cost of a parking space (capital

cost, plus operation and maintenance costs) was \$124 per space per month¹⁰. Shoup (1999) states that the cost of providing a parking space is also not evenly spread across the shoppers as the cost of providing free (or paid) parking spaces raises the cost of goods.

In the case of providing local authority parking spaces, Marsden (2006) makes the point that local government has to act within a framework of good governance and be fiscally responsible. Therefore there are practical financial implications of balancing revenues and costs of managing parking for an area. Simply put, if an authority provides parking for free, the money must either come from other budgets or from higher taxes of which both have impacts to the wider population, not limited to people using the car park.

The development of the case for charging Shoup (1999) explains that without some form of demand management, increases in car numbers create more traffic congestion which in turn provokes calls for more local remedies, such as street widening, junction redesign and upgrade or introduction of digital traffic management systems and higher parking requirements. All of these options have high costs to authorities.

4.3 How people travel to town centres

4.3.1 The car and shopping in the UK

UK National Travel Survey 2005 data analysed in the RAC Foundation & British Retail Consortium (2006) study found that trips to go shopping, and for personal business (e.g. banking) account for 31 per cent of all car journeys, compared to 21 per cent of journeys made for commuting or business travel. The car accounts for over 60 per cent of shopping trips and over 80 per cent of shopping mileage in the UK. When asked why the car is chosen, 65 per cent quote 'convenience' as the main reason, with 'carry-ability' at 46 per cent. Cost was quoted as the main reason for 32 per cent of respondents; however, as the study points out, many people are not aware of the costs of public transport and don't even consider it.

Looking to the future the study concluded that:

- Even with the increase in internet sales, it is expected that 78 per cent of all shoppers will still make a journey to the shops to browse and compare.
- Goods bought via the web are more likely to be home delivered and therefore it is possible that shoppers could switch to public transport for the trips they make in order to address concerns about 'carry-ability'

¹⁰ TRL (2010) p. 34

-
- It is not clear whether shopping on-line will ultimately lead to an increase or a reduction in trips.

4.3.2 Shopper behaviour versus shopkeepers' perceptions

Mingardo and van Meerkerk (2011) explain that the call for free or cheaper parking is often most prominent from retailers, as they believe that no parking equals no business. Mingardo and van Meerkerk explain that there are three assumptions made by retailers that are used to support the argument: 1) most shoppers drive; 2) drivers are the 'best' customers; and 3) the choice of shopping destination is strongly influenced by availability of parking.

Sustrans, in their report from 2006, gives details of one of the few surveys to establish how shoppers travel and their shopping behaviour compared to how *shopkeepers thought* their customers travelled. It quotes the example of a similar study carried out in Graz, Austria in the 1990s where retailers significantly overestimated the number of customers traveling by car and underestimated those coming on public transport, by bicycle or on foot.

Sustrans replicated the survey used in Graz in two neighbourhood shopping streets in Bristol with 840 customers and 126 retailer interviews. They looked at how far shoppers were travelling, by what mode and how many shops they visited per trip. The key findings were as follows:

- Shopkeepers overestimated how far their customers were travelling. For example, they estimated that 12 per cent of customers lived within half a mile, whereas the real figure was 42 per cent.
- Walking rather than cars (as thought by the shopkeepers) was the most frequently used mode
- According to shoppers, traffic reduction and environmental improvements would improve shoppers' experience, as opposed to parking (the top priority for shopkeepers)
- Those travelling by bus, cycling or walking are more likely to visit two to five shops than those arriving by car.

Table 3 below sets out the results of the study in Graz, compared with the results from the Sustrans study in Bristol when it comes to mode share.

Table 3 Shoppers choice of travel modes versus shopkeepers' estimates: Graz and Bristol

City	Walk Actual	Walk Estimated	Cycle Actual	Cycle Estimated	Bus Actual	Bus Estimated	Car Actual	Car Estimated
Graz	44%	25%	8%	5%	16%	12%	32%	58%
Bristol	55%	42%	10%	6%	13%	11%	22%	41%

Source: *Sustrans (2006)*

This clearly shows how shopkeepers in both studies overestimate the role of the car and underestimate the importance of walking, the bus and the bicycle as modes of travel for their customers.

4.3.3 Travel to town centres in London

The available literature points to significantly different travel patterns in London than in other parts of the UK. Bates and Leibling, in their recent report (Bates and Leibling 2012), highlight the fact that, whilst there seems to be evidence for the growth in car ownership in the rest of the UK, this is not the case in London. They show how the population of London has increased since 2001 but the number of cars has actually decreased by over 100,000. This decrease is not uniform across the boroughs; the largest is in Southwark (14,000), with Ealing, Kensington and Chelsea, Richmond and Waltham Forest seeing drops of 8,000 or more. However, five boroughs saw an increase: Greenwich (8,000) Westminster (6,000), Tower Hamlets (4,000), Havering (3,000) and Camden (1,000).¹¹

¹¹ Bates and Leibling (2012) p. 30

Table 4 Changes in populations, households and car ownership in London

(thousands)

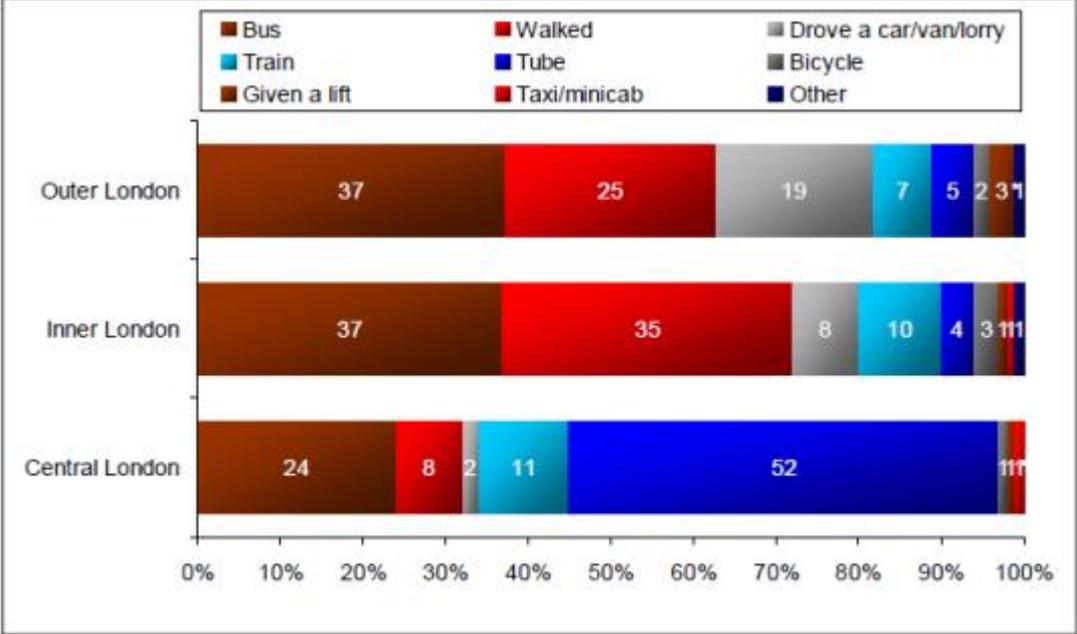
Statistic	Date	Inner London	Outer London	London
Population	2001	2,646	4, 348	6,994
	2007-10	3,024	4,572	7,597
	Incr %	14	5	9
Households	2001	1,220	1,796	3,016
	2007-10	1,341	1,892	3,233
	Incr %	10	5	7
Cars	2001	781	1,912	2,693
	2007-10	730	1,846	2,576
	Incr %	-7	-3	-4
Cars/household	2001	0.64	1.06	0.89
	2007-10	0.54	0.98	0.80
	Incr %	-0.16	-0.09	-0.10

Source: Bates and Leibling (2012)

Transport for London has commissioned research since 1999 on the way people travel to town centres and the amount they spend. The most recent report from June 2011 looked at six metropolitan centres, four major centres, four district centres and one international centre (Oxford and Regent Street). 4,746 visitors were interviewed in March 2011, with approximately 300 interviews per centre.

The research found that walking is the most popular mode for getting to district town centres; bus is the preferred mode for travelling to metropolitan or major centres; and the Tube is the most popular mode for getting to Oxford Street. These proportions are presented in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 Means of access by town centre location in London (2011)



Weighted base: Central London 321; Inner London 1,904; Outer London 2,521
 * = less than 0.5%

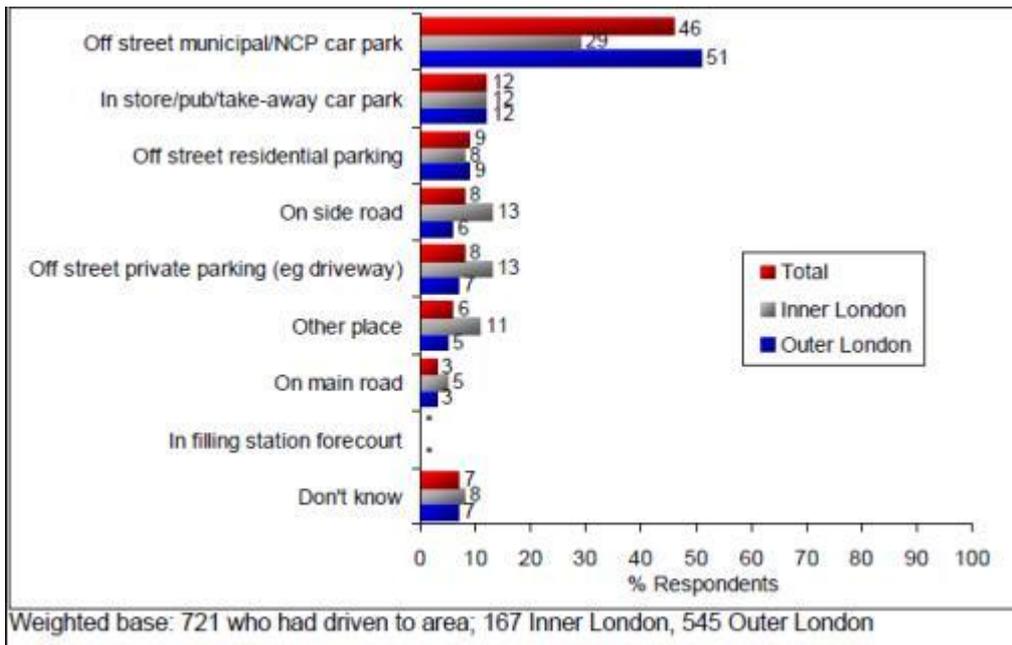
Source: Transport for London Town Centre Study 2011

The study also found that there has been a steady decrease in the proportion of trips made by car over time and a corresponding increase in walking across all town centre categories.

For all types of town centre, in terms of frequency of visit, those who walk were the most likely to visit five days or more (50 per cent), followed by cyclists (37 per cent visit five days a week or more). Twenty seven percent of bus users visit five days a week or more, with car users being the least likely to do so - only 14 per cent.

Of those that drove, the vast majority parked off-street. Figure 2 shows parking location by centre type.

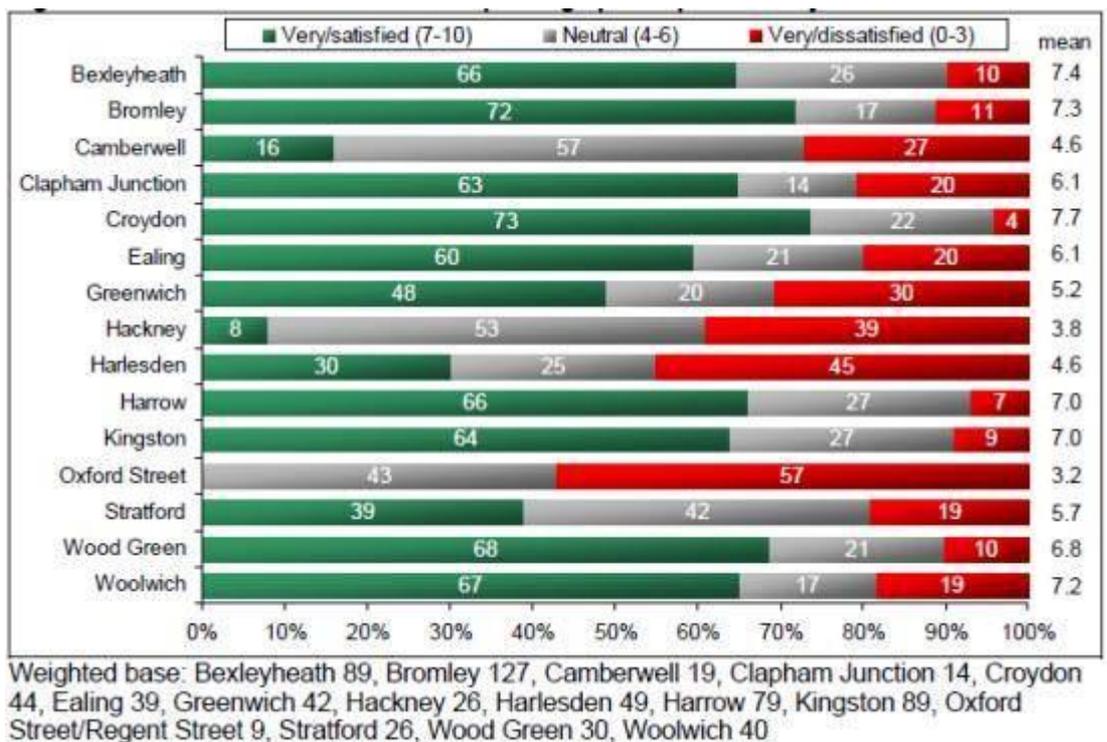
Figure 2 Parking location by Inner or Outer London



Source: *Transport for London Town Centre Study 2011*

The majority of those interviewed were satisfied with parking provision. However, there were some significant variations between centres, as shown by Figure 3.

Figure 3 Car borne shoppers satisfaction with number of car parking spaces by town centre



Source: *Transport for London Town Centre Study 2011*

The study also looked at average spend by mode. Whilst those travelling by car had the highest spend per visit (£41), with those walking only spending £26 and cyclists £21, this changed when looking at the average spend over a week and then a month, as shown by Table 5.¹²

Table 5 Average Spend by Week and by Month by mode – London town centres 2011

Average Spend	Car	Train/ Tube	Bus	Walk	Cycle
Per Week	£56	£59	£70	£93	£47
Per Month	£226	£239	£282	£373	£188

Source: *Transport for London Town Centre Study 2011*

The report also highlights changes in spend since the first data was collected in 2004. Spending by public transport users and walkers has risen. Spending by car users and cyclists has decreased.¹³

Similar methodology to that used in Bristol and Graz was used to look at the behaviour of shoppers in 2008 in Camberwell in south east London as part of the EU OPTIMUM 2 project (SEA-RENUÉ 2008). The study involved three different surveys: an on-street survey of shoppers; interviews with shopkeepers and a survey of nearby residents.

The results of the survey in Camberwell corroborated the results of those in Graz in Bristol namely that there is a difference between how retailers think their customers travel and how shoppers interviewed actually travel. This is set out in Table 6 below. There is a 15 per cent difference between the perceived number of shoppers who drive and the number that actually do. There are similar large differences between how shopkeepers perceive their customers are travelling for the other three main modes, implying that retailers do not have accurate impression of their customer base in Camberwell.

¹² Transport for London (2011b) p.48

¹³ Transport for London (2011b) p.53

Table 6 Perceived and actual main mode of shoppers in Camberwell (2008)¹⁴

Bus		Car		Walk		Bike	
Retailers perception %	Actual %						
31	63	17	3	33.5	15	5	3

There are other key differences between what retailers think their customers spend when broken down by mode used. In the survey they were asked to rank their customers by how they travelled, from the highest to lowest spend per visit to the town centre. The results show that 26 per cent thought that their highest spending customers came by car.

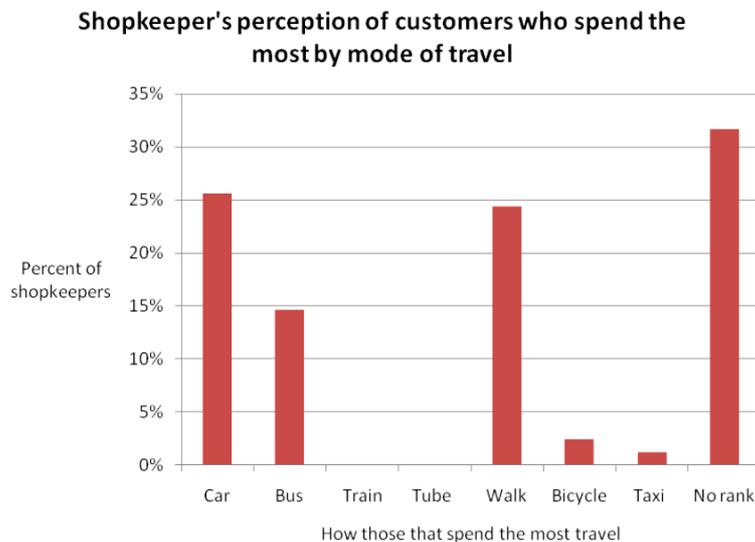


Figure 4 Shopkeepers' perceptions of customers who spend the most by mode of travel – Camberwell 2008¹⁵

While this graph is useful in demonstrating what retailers think of which mode users spend the most, there are 32% of retailers that have not ranked their shoppers. This indicates that they could not determine what mode their customers actually use.

The Camberwell study looked at what the shoppers actually spent in comparison to what mode they used to travel to the shops, as shown in Figure 5 below. This data should be read with a degree of

¹⁴ SEA-RENUE (2008) p. 36

¹⁵ SEA-RENUE (2008) p. 38

caution as the low numbers of people who used the car or bicycle means that some of the percentages only represent 1 or 2 shoppers. However given the high number of people who used the bus, these figures can be seen as representative.

Figure 5 Spend per week for shoppers as percentage of travel by each mode – Camberwell 2008¹⁶

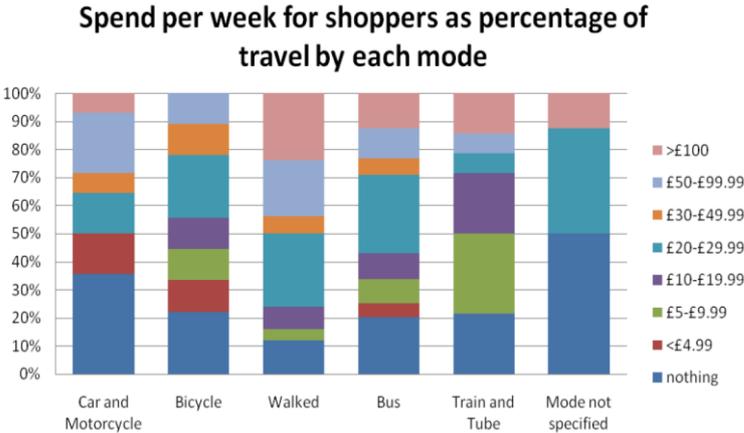


Figure 5 shows that the car represents the highest percentage of those who spent nothing and the lowest percentage of spend over £100; only 50 per cent spent over £10. In comparison 65 per cent of those who came by bus spent over £10. This figure is even higher for walkers: over 80 per cent spent at least £10, and around 24 per cent of walkers spent over £100. This does not tally with the shopkeepers' perceptions.

4.4 The role of parking in urban centre attractiveness

Bonsal and Young (2010) raise the issue of what are the main 'pull' factors in attracting visitors to a shopping or town centre location. They explain that social, environmental and economic factors all have a part to play.

Marsden (2006) notes that there is relatively limited evidence on the behavioural response to 'parking policies' in terms of urban vitality. He continues that, based on data in Sharp (2005), there is no difference in the average spend by car drivers or users of public transport. In fact the highest average

¹⁶ SEA-RENUE (2008) p.39

spend is by walkers. Indicative of this is that he could find no link between the provision and convenience of parking spaces and their economic performance.

Teller and Reutterer (2008) evaluated shopper choice in their study. Their survey comprised more than 2,000 on-site interviews with customers of an inner city shopping street and a competing peripheral shopping mall. The results showed that the tenant mix and the atmosphere, unlike parking and accessibility, exerted the most influence on attractiveness for shoppers.

One of the most important conclusions of the 2010 TRL report is with regard to the role of parking as a factor in attracting custom:

*“Critics often claim that parking pricing spoils local economic activity by discouraging customers, but it actually provides both economic benefits and costs. It increases turnover of parking spaces which makes finding a space easier, reduces the number of parking spaces required at a location which can provide financial savings, and can reduce traffic problems such as congestion. General levels of provision may affect access modes, in turn, impacting on the quality of the shopping environment”.*¹⁷

An example of how public perceptions can be reported without sound scientific basis is found in the RAC Foundation and British Retail Consortium report from 2006. This highlights parking as one of the factors that influence retail investment in town centres and the “poor alignment” between town centre planning policies transport policies. It states that:

*“Insufficient parking provision reduces the viability of the town centre as a retail trading location”.*¹⁸

However, this statement is not backed up by any data or suggestions of the criteria that might be used to measure what is ‘sufficient’.

The report goes on to cite the results of a survey carried out amongst shoppers in 2003 and again in 2006. Parking was mentioned by 25 per cent of respondents as influencing their choice of shop in a survey carried out in 2003. However, more general access was mentioned by 45 per cent (and again in a similar survey in 2006), with price attracting a higher score still at 65 per cent (55 per cent in 2006).¹⁹

¹⁷ TRL (2010) p.76

¹⁸ RAC Foundation and British Retail Consortium (2006) p. 28

¹⁹ Data from IGD Consumer Unit 2006 reported in RAC Foundation and British Retail Consortium (2006). Details of the methodology including sample size are not given.

The COST report (COST Action 342 report (2006)) provides an example of when retailers were asked what they thought their customers valued most. It highlights the case of Apeldoorn in The Netherlands, where parking charges were increased in conjunction with the introduction of discounted public transport tickets. There was an increase in the number of public transport journeys, but no significant issues recorded in terms of reactions to the increased parking charges. When surveyed, the shopkeepers said that their customers choose where to shop on the basis of the quality of the retail offer rather than parking charges.

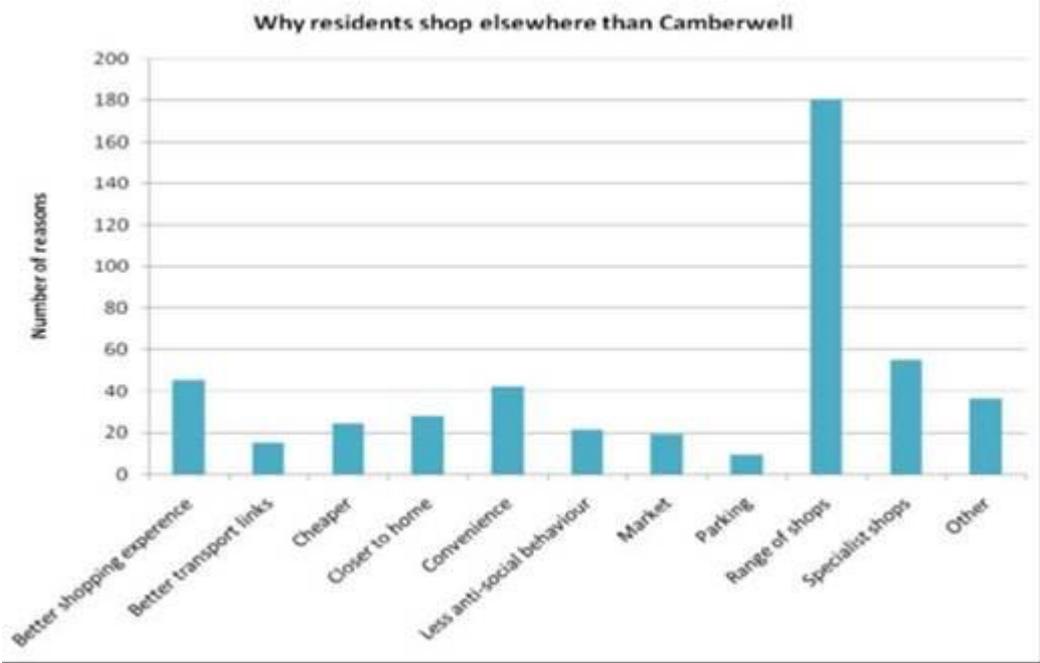
This was corroborated by the British Parking Forum position paper on parking in town centres (British Parking Forum 2006). It concluded that:

“It must be clear [...] that good access arrangements are a necessary but not sufficient pre-requisite for a successful town centre. A poor range of shops or other facilities or a poor quality environment can never be compensated for by any degree of parking or public transport access.”

The Camberwell Shoppers Survey (SEA RENEUE 2008) also looked at what would attract more local residents to shop locally. Responses to a local residents survey (n= 444) indicated that the main reason for choosing not to shop in Camberwell was the range of shops. When asked what would encourage them to shop in the area, the most frequently quoted response was a more varied range of shops; including both more well-known high street retailers and independent shops that would create a unique look and feel for Camberwell. There was also strong support for more high quality cafés and restaurants.

There is little mention that the availability of parking or the cost of parking is a factor in increasing shopping trips in this instance. For existing shoppers, this may be because only 3 per cent were accessing Camberwell by car. However, as Figure 6 below shows, for Camberwell residents who shop elsewhere, parking is the least important factor. In fact as noted above, the range, quality and availability of specialist shops are all more important. The range of shops was the most important by 69%.

Figure 6 Reasons why Camberwell residents shop elsewhere²⁰



²⁰ SEA-RENUÉ p. 54

More recently, data from the Transport for London 2011 Town Centre Study, focused on interviews with visitors to 15 town centre areas, found that parking was very unlikely to be mentioned as the main priority for improvements. The results varied by the location of the town centre, but a 'better range of shops', 'cleaner streets,' or in Central London 'less traffic' were the top scoring factors. This has a certain irony in that providing more parking could be seen as encouraging more traffic and therefore causing more traffic, the very thing that makes town centres less attractive to main potential shoppers. 'More or easier parking' was mentioned at most by six per cent of respondents (in Outer London) as being the most important factor.²¹

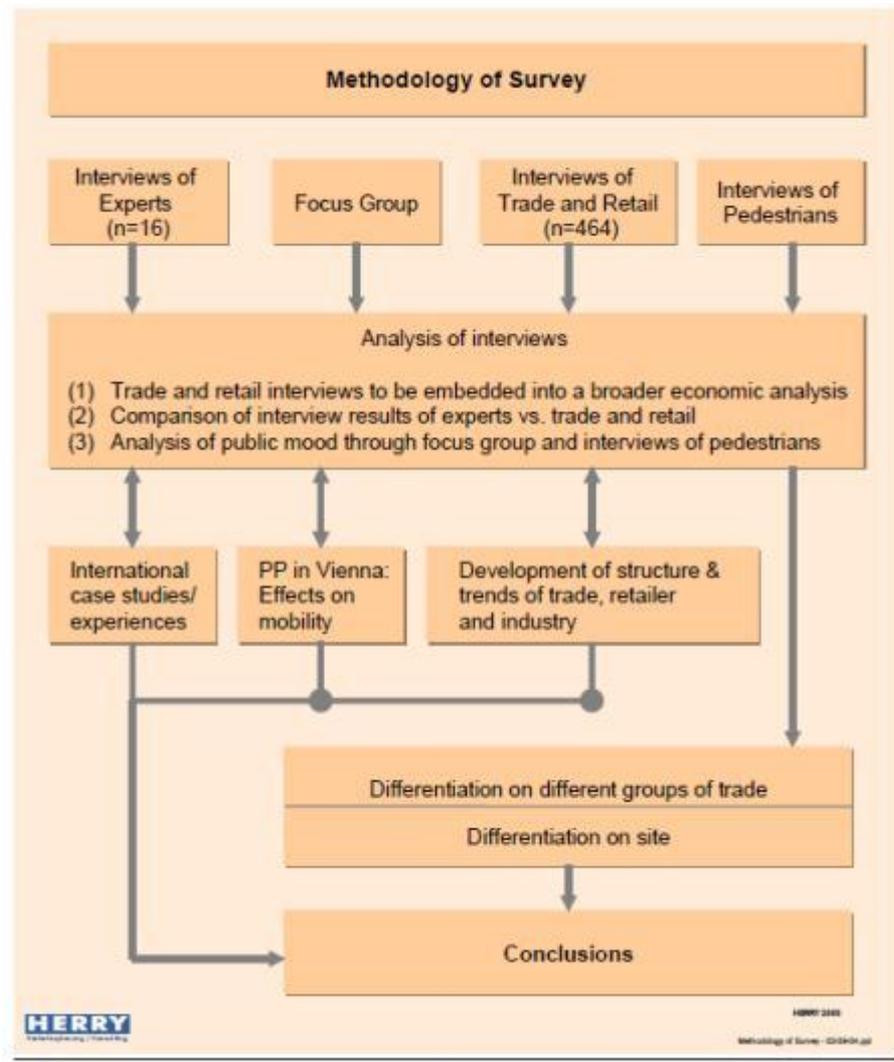
4.5 The impacts of parking on the local economy

There is very little data on the impact of parking on the local economy. One recent article reporting on research in The Netherlands and an example quoted in the EU COST Action 342 report are two of the exceptions.

The COST Action 342 report sets out how Vienna introduced parking management including limiting the number of hours that drivers could park their cars on-street and fees for any time after 10 minutes. A methodology was developed in 2003 to measure the impacts of the phased roll-out of parking management including fees since 1993. Figure 7 illustrates this process:

²¹ Transport for London (2011b) p. 38

Figure 7 Vienna Parking Management - Impact Survey 2003



Source: COST Action 342 Report : Appendix 8

The study found that the introduction of the parking management system had no direct impact on the local economy. In particular:

- Parking policy in Vienna was only of minor importance when compared to structural changes in trade and retailing over the previous decade
- Retailers were often critical of local transport policy due to them attributing other problems to local transport
- The study could not find any correlation between a reduction in turnover and the implementation of the parking management policy
- Within the sample of companies researched (n= 464), the study could not find any link between the implementation of the parking policy and companies that had relocated.

The study also concluded that the parking management system had resulted in higher turnover of spaces in car parks and the decrease in the search time for spaces.

However, the COST Action 342 report also highlights that the effect on the economy needs to be tracked over time: it may be that the impact of introducing restrictions will result in some initial reduction in retail turnover. The report suggests that:

*“Providing the size and scale of the measures taken was right, after a period of turbulence a new equilibrium will be settled, resulting in equal or higher turnover”.*²²

The report goes on to recommend that regional coordination of parking policy will avoid economic shift, i.e. shoppers or businesses moving elsewhere.

The COST report also included a useful summary table on the impacts on residents, workers (commuters) and visitors (shoppers) of particular parking measures:

²² COST Action 342 (2005) p. 14

Table 7 Overview of the general economic effects of different parking measures

Type of measure	Target group	Effect
Reduction long-term parking	Residents	Enhancement of residential quality (property values)
	Workers	No (hardly) shifts in workplace perceived
	Visitors	Might reduce the number of visitors unless occupied by other measures
Introduction of residents parking scheme	Residents	Enhancement of residential quality (property values)
	Workers	No (hardly) shifts in workplace perceived
	Visitors	Might reduce the number of visitors unless occupied by other measures
Introduction of time- restrictions	Residents	None if accompanied by residents parking scheme
	Workers	No (hardly) shifts in workplace perceived
	Visitors	More place for visitors
Introduction of paid parking	Residents	None if accompanied by residents parking scheme
	Workers	No (hardly) shifts in workplace perceived
	Visitors	More place for visitors
First half hour Free parking	Workers	No (hardly) shifts in workplace perceived
	Visitors	Creates more traffic without adding visitors
Creating Park & Ride	Workers	Enhances accessibility
	Visitors	Attracts in principle visitors and enhances accessibility

Source: COST Action 342 Report p. 96

Perhaps the most interesting finding is that of Mingardo and van Meerkerk in their 2012 for the Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services (Mingardo, G. and van Meerkerk, J. (2012)). Using data from Dutch national sources on (1) parking variables; (2) the physical characteristics of the shopping area and; (3) demographic and economic characteristics of the shopping area, they looked at the relationship between parking charges and retail turnover in 80 urban centres of different sizes from city to district centres. They found that there was a statistically significant relationship between parking tariffs and turnover. Contrary to what might be expected and what is often believed by retailers, higher parking fees are linked to higher retail turnover. Although this may seem strange, a simple explanation could be that the highest levels of turnover correspond to the most attractive shopping areas overall.

The only exception to this was for regional centres, but as the authors note, this was only the link with parking capacity, rather than price.

*“An important exception must be made for regional shopping areas, i.e. those shopping areas that have a regional catchment area and, accordingly, might be particularly oriented towards car travel. In this case parking capacity, but not price, does have an influence on turnover”.*²³

4.6 Parking and the night-time economy

The issue of parking and its links with the night time economy is very under researched. Searches for journal articles dealing directly with the subject revealed no results. Contact with academic specialists in the night-time economy and with parking experts confirmed that there was very little work in this area other than to highlight the issues of security and vandalism.

As in the case of academic literature, there appears to be a shortage of reports and data on parking and the night-time economy. One recent exception is the report produced by the Centre for Economic and Business Research (CEBR) for The West Ending Campaign in 2011 (CEBR 2011). The report was commissioned in the light of the City of Westminster proposing to introduce parking charges for on- street parking from 18:30 to midnight Monday to Saturday and on Sundays between 13:00 and 18:00.

The report claims that these proposals would result in:

²³ Mingardo, G. and van Meerkerk, J. (2012)

-
- reduction in turnover of £800 million across West End businesses (£145 million for retailers; £330 million for hospitality industry and £314 million for the entertainment industry)
 - £125 million additional employment costs due to the reduced supply of labour and business response to higher wage demands
 - A potential threat to 5,100 jobs.²⁴

However, it has a number of major weaknesses which call into question the figures quoted above. The most obvious are set out below. First, it is based on the assumption that between 20 and 25 per cent of those accessing the West End at night are doing so by car. This is not backed up by any kind of survey of travel behaviour and is based on a 2001 figure for modal share for those travelling to work in Westminster (11 per cent). Recent data from Transport for London shows that the day time share for travel to work to Central London by car is 6 per cent.²⁵ Even taking into account the impacts of the Congestion Charge, it is likely that the share of travel by car after 1830 is significantly lower than the 20 to 25 per cent estimated by the CEBR.

Second, it is based on 2001 Census figures for the working population of Westminster including the ONS social economic classifications for occupations and a number of assumptions on the make-up of the night time working population, which again are not backed up by any specific recent data on the night-time economy.

Third, the report sets out a number of conclusions and assumptions that are based on calculations that are not fully explained: the methodology, in particular, is not well explained. In addition, the sources for key statistics (dates etc.) are not given. Given the criteria for this review was to include studies that were backed up with either reliable primary or secondary data or have been peer-reviewed as part of an academic journal editorial process, it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions from this report.

Given the lack of data in this area, some recommendations on how this gap might be most usefully filled can be found in Section 7.

²⁴ CEBR (2011) p.4

²⁵ Transport for London (2011a) p.40

5.0 PARKING IN LONDON URBAN CENTRES

This section draws together the results of the questionnaire sent out to parking officers in all London boroughs in late August 2012, with a deadline for completion in early September. This deadline was extended for those who were keen to submit the data but due to staff capacity issues needed more time. Every borough was contacted at least once by telephone to check if they had any issues with the questionnaire. The boroughs were requested to provide data on two urban centres, corresponding to the categories set out in Annex 2 of The London Plan (Mayor of London 2011).

Responses were received from 12 out of the 33 London local authorities (36 per cent). In the vast majority of cases, responding to the survey involved collaboration between officers from either parking or transport planning with officers responsible for town centre management or economic development more generally.

This section sets out the main results of the survey in terms of:

- The strategic aims and principles that govern parking policy in each of the boroughs, with particular regard to non-residential parking
- The consistency of the data collected and its potential in helping to understand the relevance of parking for urban centres in London
- Suggestions for future data collection on town centre parking for boroughs.

5.1 Review of borough parking policies

5.1.1 City of London

The City of London's parking policies are contained in two documents: their Unitary Development Plan, which was published in 2002 and is valid until 2014, and the Local Implementation Plan published in 2011.

The main thrust of the City's parking policy is to recognise that unregulated car use would be detrimental to the life of the City and that parking should be regulated to limit car use so as to protect essential movement and in particular public transport movement.

The City's policies (Trans 16, Trans 21, Trans 22, and Trans 23) are all encouraging of public transport, and where a car is used, short term visitor parking is favoured over long stay parking. Other City Policies (Trans 18, Trans 19 and Trans 20) broadly seek to discourage car use for work and indeed seek to discourage car ownership by residents.

Other than a potential source of revenue to fund other developments, the Local Implementation Plan does not appear to reference parking explicitly; not perhaps surprising since the main thrust of much of the City's policies is to prevent further parking provision, and policies already address how existing parking should be managed. However there are explicit statements on managing the street scene and how streets should be used and it is implicit in these that street parking for cars is likely to reduce over time.

5.1.2 Barking and Dagenham

Rather surprisingly for a study of this type, the borough has provided a copy of its Parking Enforcement Policy document. Parking enforcement has been a contentious issue ever since there has been regulated parking and in particular since local authorities took full responsibility following the Road Traffic Act 1991. Further research shows that the borough's Local Development Framework dated July 2010 has a parking policy statement, Policy BR9, but this is concerned with parking provision in new developments and the design of on-street parking facilities. The Council does not appear to have a policy on setting parking charges to achieve a specific objective.

The Local Implementation plan references other policy objectives which seem to be targeted at "improving public transport connectivity to facilitate economic development/regeneration". Clearly the borough sees mass transport access as more relevant than car access to the future economic well-being of local retailers.

5.1.3 Camden

The London Borough of Camden has published a Parking Services Enforcement Protocol which unambiguously states that their objective is to reduce traffic and encourage the use of more sustainable modes. Local development policies are concerned with planning standards for new developments.

The local development framework has as an objective to reduce traffic in the borough by 15% from 2001 levels.

5.1.4 Croydon

Croydon has also provided its enforcement policies. This is in the form of a spreadsheet explaining the parameters that control if/when enforcement action should be taken for each type of parking offence. The policies do not address the rationale for providing parking and how it should be charged for/paid for. Historically the borough did own and operate a number of large off-street car parks in central Croydon but these have been disposed of to the private sector, leaving the borough with a small number of surface car parks.

In the borough's Unitary Development Plan, the borough's parking policy is "Using parking policies, alongside other planning and transport measures, to promote sustainable transport choices and reduce reliance on the car for work and other journeys". The Council also has a set of fairly restrictive planning standards for new developments including retail. There is no policy on charging for parking.

5.1.5 Enfield

The London Borough of Enfield has provided a short report by consultants on "Parking Charges and Town Centre Vitality". The work was apparently driven by feedback on proposals to raise parking charges by between 33-100 per cent. The study has some interesting results:

- Car travel is a minority mode in all of the borough's centres
- In just about all the centres safety is of greater concern than parking
- Although car users tend to spend more per trip, walkers spend more per week, suggesting that shopping centre regeneration might be better aided by improving accessibility on foot.

5.1.6 Greenwich

The borough has developed a parking charging policy. It sets charges for its parking to raise capital to achieve a number of objectives which do not include offering free or low cost parking for car access to retail opportunities. Like other London boroughs, the borough is focussed on supporting sustainable transport modes; however the Council's pricing policies do explicitly favour shoppers in commercial centres.

The borough recognises that street parking management should be limited to those areas where excessive parking causes congestion, and seeks flexibility in the way street parking is provided.

As in other boroughs, Greenwich operates a restrictive planning standard for new developments.

5.1.7 Haringey

Haringey has provided a number of reports about behaviour and parking in Wood Green. The reports contain no policy information but do show again the relative unimportance of car based travel in this location.

Looking at the borough's web page the Local Development Framework does not appear to be in place and the Unitary Development Plan's policies seem to be limited to setting planning standards for new developments. The Council's policies do include provision for car-free housing. The detailed stated policy is somewhat at odds with statutory guidance which clearly states that if a developer wished to

develop car-free housing in an area where the Council's criteria were not met, "under provision" of parking would not alone be sufficient grounds for refusal.

5.1.8 Havering

The Havering Parking and Enforcement Plan contains a detailed description and rationale for the borough's involvement in parking. Parking is provided and managed to meet certain objectives. It is judged that in parts of the borough public transport is not good enough to allow restraint-based parking controls, with the implication that elsewhere it is.

The Local Development Framework is in preparation and so at the moment the Council's wider policies appear to be somewhat fluid. The only detail of the Council's services that would appear to align with the Portas philosophy is the seasonal provision of a free park and ride service to Romford Town Centre.

The borough has supplied a useful document setting out proposals for improving Hornchurch; significantly the only reference to parking is in the context of aesthetic improvements to local parking facilities. There is also some documentation relating to Romford which shows inter alia that Romford Town centre, with a limited number of charged-for spaces, manages to generate about 50 per cent more turnover than nearby Lakeside, which has some 13,000 free parking spaces.

5.1.9 Islington

Islington's Transport Strategy and Local Implementation Plan (LIP) was adopted in 2012. There is a separate Parking Policy Statement which is currently being drafted. The objectives and targets of the LIP are generic and do not specifically reference parking provision or use. However the LIP does state that all new developments in the borough will be car free, apart from provision for the disabled.

Car ownership is lower than the rest of inner London but spatial car density is higher. In response to this the borough has promoted car clubs and now has the biggest car club in the UK, which is serviced by designated street parking facilities. The only reference to car parking in the LIP is in the context of some street parking at Archway. This seems surprising given that the car accounts for 17 per cent of trips starting in the borough.

The Parking Policy Statement recognises the importance of car use to the local economy, with 17 per cent of 112,000 workers commuting into the borough doing so by car. The parking policy statement recognises the need to manage the projected growth in population and employment to prevent parking demand exceeding capacity. Within this management regime the highest priority is given to the parking needs of local residents, people with disabilities, suppliers of goods and services, businesses, and their customers (i.e. shoppers). The Council has implemented adjustable tariffs for street parking, with charges rising and falling according to demand. The statement in the LIP that states that new

developments should be car free is somewhat at odds with the inclusion of planning standards in the Parking Policy Statement.

The borough's policies can be summarised as seeking to minimise additional parking and to manage what they have in favour of their highest priority user groups, which appear to include shoppers.

5.1.10 Kingston Upon Thames

The Council's parking policies state that they aim to manage parking to achieve modal shift *and* retain the economic vitality of town centres. There is no commentary on how these potentially conflicting policies might be reconciled.

There is a policy hierarchy which places shopper provision below the needs of more sustainable modes of transport and people with disabilities, but above taxis, residents and the servicing of businesses. There is potential for policy conflict here, since there is little point favouring shoppers' needs over the ability of businesses to supply the very goods and services they seek.

5.1.11 Southwark

The London Borough of Southwark has published a Transport Plan which sets out a three year programme lasting to 2014. The document does not appear to address parking in any significant way. It certainly does not see parking as a significant contributor to the future of the borough, other than certain surface car parks being seen as development opportunities. Street parking is seen to provide spatial opportunities for other uses such as cycle parking and tree planting (Policy 1.6) and the emphasis for enforcement is on the management of places where parking is not allowed (Policy 7.5). Interestingly the priorities for street space reverse the logic of Kingston and put the service needs of local businesses above those of shoppers.

The borough's Core Strategy document leans heavily towards policies that minimise parking as a way of reducing car use to improve the environment. However reference is made to the need to ensure that there is adequate parking in town centres, "adequate" being defined in the context of public transport accessibility.

5.1.12 Tower Hamlets

Tower Hamlets outline their view of shopping and parking in their document Managing Development, published as a part of the Local Development Framework. The presumption is that there will be no car parking provision, although larger supermarkets will be considered further on the basis of a Transport Assessment if the assessment demonstrates need.

The Council also has a Parking and Traffic Enforcement Policy document. This document makes reference to EU research as a part of the COST 342 Action which found no correlation between parking charges and economic vitality²⁶.

5.1.13 Westminster

The City of Westminster is one of the the biggest municipal parking operator in Europe and contains shopping areas of international significance such as Oxford Street, Bond Street and Mayfair. These areas have some of the densest public transport networks in the world. Its parking policies and the way it operates its parking must work to promote the economic health of the retail environment. In this context the City recently let all of its off-street parking facilities to a private company which operates them on a fully commercial basis.

The City's policies are contained in the City Management Plan published in draft in November 2011. The parking policy aim is "To ensure that adequate parking provision is made in new developments, whilst also encouraging the use of more sustainable modes". Adequate is not defined. This statement is made in the context of an overall objective of traffic reduction.

Policy CMP 5.20 relates to public off-street parking and broadly seeks to maintain the status quo. Additional parking would only be allowed where there is a proven local need and there is a presumption against loss of parking except in specific well defined circumstances.

On-street, Westminster has to deal with the competing demands of many local residents living in properties that pre-date the car and the local access and service needs of the business communities. There are about three times as many residents' spaces as there are metered spaces.

5.1.14 Commentary

The thirteen boroughs that have responded have formulated their policies in the context of:

- Historical planning guidance
- Statute
- National Guidance and
- The Mayor's Transport Strategy.

²⁶ As reviewed in Section 4 above

Most of the boroughs have common themes; all boroughs policies are based on the overarching principle of reducing traffic and supporting more sustainable transport. In terms of parking policies this principle is given effect by setting minimum maximum car parking standards for new developments. The only other area of parking which the boroughs have consistently addressed in written policies is the decriminalisation of parking.

The only indication that policy regarding the provision of new spaces should be at all flexible is in Havering. In this borough it is recognised that in some areas public transport services may not be adequate and as such an inflexible, 'one-size-fits-all' parking policy is not suitable. By contrast the two inner London boroughs of Islington and Tower Hamlets both seem to promote a future where parking is either not provided as part of a new development or where it will only be allowed in tightly defined and exceptional circumstances.

The policy of minimal new provision derives from the then revolutionary ideas first promoted in the Greater London Development Plan of the 1970s. Prior to this parking provision had been on a "predict and provide" basis with developers expected to accommodate all of their site's parking needs either within their cartilage or by commuted payments to the local authority to make the required provision in a nearby public facility.

Parking provision based on a one space per x square meters has the attraction of being easy to understand, however research has shown that the relationship between floor space and trip generation within a particular type of land use is weak.

The boroughs are much exercised on the operation of their parking enforcement programmes. Many have explicit policy statements about what they do, how they do it and why they do it. The high profile nature of this aspect of parking is almost certainly driven by the adverse publicity that local government parking enforcement has received over many years.

All the Councils remain relatively silent on charging for parking, and the extent to which parking should be priced to encourage rather than to deter car use. Where charges are mentioned, the charge is seen as necessary to manage, limit or deter car use, particularly when other modes are available.

However none of this addresses the issue of whether there is any understanding of the importance of parking provision to urban areas or how to assess and establish a supportive charging regime. What little evidence there is suggests that, particularly in London, car use and hence car parking is actually not that large a component of the transport system used by shoppers. There is also a lack of evidence in any of the available documents to suggest that parking price is a significant factor in determining whether or not customers choose to shop in certain areas when compared to other factors such as proximity, familiarity, retail offer and disposable income.

The documents are also silent on the impact of edge of town or out of town retail. For example, they provide no comment on whether such developments pull demand away from traditional centres or what policies might be needed to reverse such a flow (although it is understood that there may be other research available).

It seems that there is little understanding and no policy on the issues that prompted this research, or rather that such policies in existence tend to point towards reducing car dependence rather than encouraging or facilitating greater car use. In terms of retail sustainability there appears to be little or no evidential basis for saying whether this is a good or bad thing.

5.2 Overview of borough questionnaire results

5.2.1 Parking Supply Data

One of the aims of the borough questionnaire was to see to what extent it could be possible to compare data on parking supply with that collected on the ‘health’ of town centres. Table 8 sets out the categories of data requested on parking supply.

Table 8 Parking supply data requested from boroughs

Parking Space Type	Number	Hours of Operation	Fee Structure
On-street short term parking (up to 2 hours)			
Off-street short term parking (up to 2 hours)			
Residents permit and/or shared used parking spaces (within 250m of urban centre)			
Non-paying residential street parking (within 250m of urban centre)			
Other long term parking spaces (within 250m of urban centre)			
Privately operated short term spaces (up to 2 hours)			
Privately operated long term spaces (more than 2 hours)			

All boroughs were able to supply detailed data for on-street and off-street parking under their control as set out in Table 8 above. There were some variations as to whether this data directly linked to the urban centre in question, but most used GIS or equivalent techniques to select an appropriate area to cover. However, very few boroughs were able to give any data on privately operated parking. The

exceptions included boroughs like the City of Westminster who have outsourced their off-street parking to private operators.

5.2.2 Town Centre 'Health' Data

There was a much greater variation in the data available on the economic status of the urban centres in question. Here, three different 'indicators' were proposed in the questionnaire. This was partly to see which types of data were collected regularly and could be used in the future to monitor the impacts of parking supply or charging changes on town centre vitality. These were:

- Footfall
- Empty property or 'voids' (often just for ground floor or retail properties)
- Business turnover or 'churn'.

The boroughs were encouraged to choose the two urban centre areas for which they had the most available data.

Table 9 below shows the extent to which the data in these three categories was available for the urban centre areas chosen by the boroughs.

Table 9 Urban centre economic data available from boroughs

	Borough Council Name	Destination	Centre Type	Area Size (km ²)	Footfall Date	Footfall (average per day)	Commercial Vacancy Date	Commercial Vacancy - Retail % (Number)	Business hereditaments (<i>Retail Units</i>)	Business Churn Rate
International	City of London	City of London	International	33.2	2011	300,000 to 370,000*	2011	8% (157)	15000 (1929)	
	Westminster	West End	International	5.4	August 2012	858,571	2008	6.7% (30) Oxford St // 8.5% (17) Regent St.	20000##	
Metropolitan	Croydon	Croydon	Metropolitan	232	2011	29486				
	Haringey	Wood Green	Metropolitan		2008	32142	2007	5.1%		
	Havering	Romford	Metropolitan	228	2012	61643	2011	14.10%		
	Kingston	Kingston	Metropolitan	0.5	August 2011-12	56986	July 2012	6%	351 (556)	
Major	Barking and Dagenham	Barking	Major		2012 Q3	100,000**	February 2012	14%	260	
	Greenwich	Woolwich	Major	1	June 2012	76,369	2012	10.5% (35)	231	
	Greenwich	Eltham	Major	0.4	May	5545	2012	3.40%	232	

	Borough Council Name	Destination	Centre Type	Area Size (km ²)	Footfall Date	Footfall (average per day)	Commercial Vacancy Date	Commercial Vacancy - Retail % (Number)	Business hereditaments (Retail Units)	Business Churn Rate
					2012					
District	Camden	Kentish Town	District	1	2011	19753***	2011	9%	480	
	Camden	West Hampstead	District	0.88	2011	22547***	2011	5%	230	
	Haringey	Green Lanes	District				2007	8.8%	245	
	Havering	Hornchurch	District	36.1			2011	5.50%		
	Islington	Angel	District				April 2012	5%		
	Kingston	New Malden	District	0.15			July 2012	5%	123 (161)	
	Southwark	Camberwell	District	0.15	2012	1200 - 1600 per hour#				
	Southwark	The Blue	District	0.04						
	Tower Hamlets	Roman Road East	District	7			2009	19% (44)	(231)	
	Tower Hamlets	Bethnal Green	District	3.8			2009	0%	159	

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	Borough Council Name	Destination	Centre Type	Area Size (km ²)	Footfall Date	Footfall (average per day)	Commercial Vacancy Date	Commercial Vacancy - Retail % (Number)	Business hereditaments (Retail Units)	Business Churn Rate
	Westminster	St John's Wood	District	1.6			2007	3%	(98)	
Neighbourhood	Islington	Archway	Neighbourhood				April 2012	9.20%		

* workforce not footfall

** for whole quarter

***London Underground Station exit data

#based on pedestrian count data

##VAT registered businesses

Sources: multiple (available on request)

Commercial vacancy or void data was the most commonly available, but was not always up to date. In six of the 18 areas for which this data was available it more than 3 years old and as such may pre-date the economic downturn. Footfall data was only available for 12 out of the 21 areas. In five cases, this was not based on time series 'camera' recorded data but on other sources, such as one-off pedestrian flow counts or London Underground station exit data. There were no instances where boroughs could provide data on either the rate of business churn (new businesses moving in/old businesses closing or moving out) or business turnover.

It was interesting to see that many boroughs had commissioned 'town centre health checks' or similar studies. However, these were only commissioned every few years (perhaps due to their cost). These studies did not always include data on how customers accessed town centres or an audit of the parking provision, whether borough or privately operated.

5.3 Suggestions on future data collection for boroughs

Feedback from the borough parking officers charged with collating the data suggested that bringing together data on parking and town centre economics was rarely, if ever, done.

The lack of consistency in the data made it impossible to make any valid comparisons. Ideally the relationship between parking supply, costs and commercial voids, as well as changes in footfall, could be examined. This would require at least an annual void survey and time series footfall data as provided by footfall cameras. It would also be interesting to examine retail or other business turnover in different town centres over time and compare that with the proportions of those arriving by different mode.

Where there are already baseline figures for commercial voids and footfall cameras in place, it would be relatively cost-efficient to collect the data suggested above. Business turnover is more complex as it would require boroughs to access commercially sensitive data. However, where there are Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) or town centre partnerships in place, it could be appropriate to ask them to include questions about changes in turnover year-on-year rather than actual figures in their regular business surveys. Data on the mode used to access town centres is regularly collected by Transport for London (see section 4 above) and could be used in this instance.

Another method commonly used to measure town centre health is average spend per visitor. Again, this is collected by Transport for London in their town centre surveys. It could also be a useful proxy measure for boroughs to monitor any impacts of changes in parking policy.

Perhaps the most significant improvement would come if those working in departments with responsibilities for parking were able to coordinate with those responsible for town centre management when it comes to commissioning or undertaking town centre ‘health checks’. In this way it could be possible to include key data on parking supply, turnover/occupancy rates and tariffs, including any changes made since the last similar report was published. It would then be possible to examine any potential link with retail health, and boroughs would be able to extract better value from these studies. Crucially, they need to be carried out regularly to be able to monitor trends and identify town centre areas that require extra intervention, whether that be promotion or public realm improvements that increase footfall and dwell time by those coming by all modes.

Table 10 sets out summary of these recommendations together with some indication of the resources that would be required.

Table 10 Suggested data collection for boroughs – Parking and urban centre success

Data Category	Ideal £££	Useful ££	Adequate £
Footfall / Visitor Numbers	Footfall cameras at all key locations	Footfall camera data at one key location	Annual pedestrian flow count at peak time of day
Commercial Voids	Quarterly survey	Annual survey	Survey every 2-3 years as part of town centre health check study
Business Turnover (change or % change only)	Quarterly survey	Annual survey (as part of wider BID or town centre partnership survey where appropriate)	Survey every 2-3 years as part of town centre health check study
Shoppers Mode and Spend	Annual survey (when not covered that year by TfL)	Survey every 2 years	Every 3-4 years as part of TfL Town Centre Survey
Parking Supply and turnover/occupancy	Annual review	Review every 2 years	Survey every 2-3 years as part of town centre health check
Parking Tariffs	Annual review	Review every 2 years	Survey every 2-3 years as part of town centre

In all this research, the size of town centre should be considered. The above recommendations apply primarily to District, Major or Metropolitan areas. International areas are likely to require the most extensive data collection, and resources can often be pooled with land owners and developers. For the many Neighbourhood centres, it may not be possible to collect this data as regularly. Here it may be a case of ensuring that at least shopper mode and spend, and commercial void data is recorded every few years.

Finally, it could be helpful for boroughs to carry out more research into what drives commercial activity in urban centres and looking at what makes a location attractive for shoppers and other visitors alike. This could be in the form of a standard survey that looks at all aspects of management, from cleanliness to the use of public spaces. To make it more cost efficient, it could also be in partnership with their neighbours and/or with London Councils. Parking would then be set in the wider context of what makes urban centres function well.

6.0 PARKING IN LONDON URBAN CENTRES – SHOPPERS AND BUSINESS OWNERS

To complement the data collected from the boroughs, The Means engaged the ROI Team to carry out specific analysis on data collected from three London-based shopping centres owned by The Mall Corporation. In addition, The Means reviewed its own data collected as part of town centre health check and Business Improvement District feasibility studies.

This section sets out the main results from these two sources.

6.1 How shoppers travel to London shopping centres

The ROI Team reviewed some existing data based on exit interviews with shoppers at three Outer London shopping centres²⁷. This research was commissioned by The Mall Corporation, the owners of the shopping centres. The Mall Corporation has eight shopping centres across the UK with three in London. Most of these shopping centres are to be found in town centres (as opposed to out-of-town) locations, making the data particularly valuable for the purposes of this study.

The Means first accessed this dataset in 2011, with a focus upon five shopping centres UK-wide which, according to ROI Team, gave a good representation of the situation throughout the estate. The key findings were as follows:

- The majority of The Mall customers are not arriving by car; public transport is the main mode of access in every case, and pedestrian shoppers are present in significant numbers
- There has been a decline in car use across all centres over the last five years
- Car-borne shoppers shop less frequently, although they have a high spend per visit
- Car-borne shoppers have the lowest spend per month
- The 'Urban Prosperity' ACORN category of shopper (second only to 'Wealthy Achiever') is the highest-represented among walk-up shoppers. This is a category particularly sought after by shopping centre providers.²⁸

²⁷ We are unfortunately not able to name the shopping centres for the purposes of this report.

²⁸ ACORN is a data management company that seeks to understand how people use their environment or an organisation. Using 400 variables combined with post code data they track social, economic, political and technological changes.

There are five categories used: 1) Wealthy Achievers 2) Urban Prosperity 3) Comfortably off 4) Moderate means 5) Hard Pressed. Each of these categories contain between three and four groups.

For the purposes of this report, The Means asked ROI Team to analyse more recent data from three London shopping centres, with a base sample of 1,418²⁹.

Four hundred interviews were carried out at each location, using a combination of closed and open questions. The times of the interviews and the sampling frame were consistent with footfall data for each centre.

Parking facilities are provided by the shopping centre and in each case apply Monday to Sunday. Table 11 below sets out the parking tariffs.

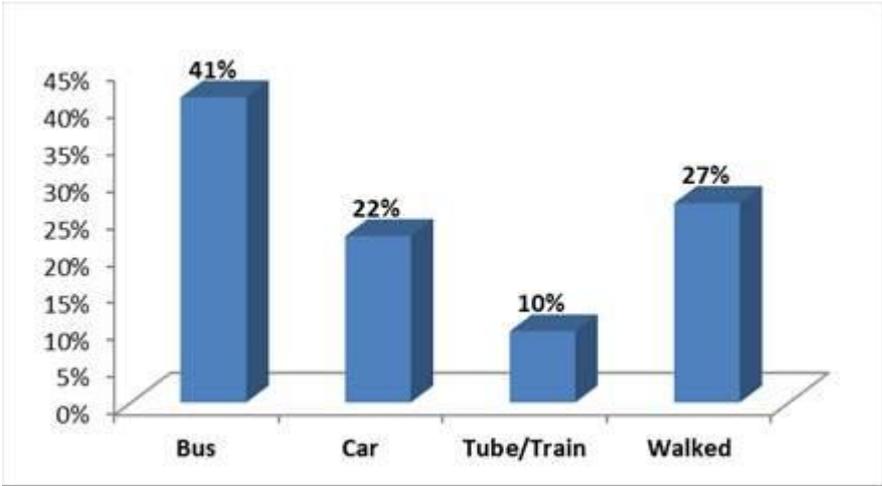
Table 11 Parking Tariffs for the three Outer London Shopping Centres (The Mall Corporation)

Centre A	Centre B	Centre C
Up to 1 hour £1.00	Up to 2 hours - £1.00	Up to 2 hours - £1.40
1 to 3 hours £2.00	2-4 Hours - £2.00	3 hours - £2.40
3 to 10 hours £3.00	4-8 Hours - £5.00	4 hours - £3.00
over 10 hours £6.00		5 hours - £4.00
	Over 8 hour until 23:00 - £10.00	6 hours - £6.80
Free parking on entry after 6pm for the first 4 hours.	Vehicles left after 23:00 - £25.00 per night	8 hours - £11.00
		8 hours to closure - £16.00
	All day parking now available Monday to Friday - £4.00	All day Sunday - £2.70
		All tariffs discounted with borough resident card

Source: ROI Team

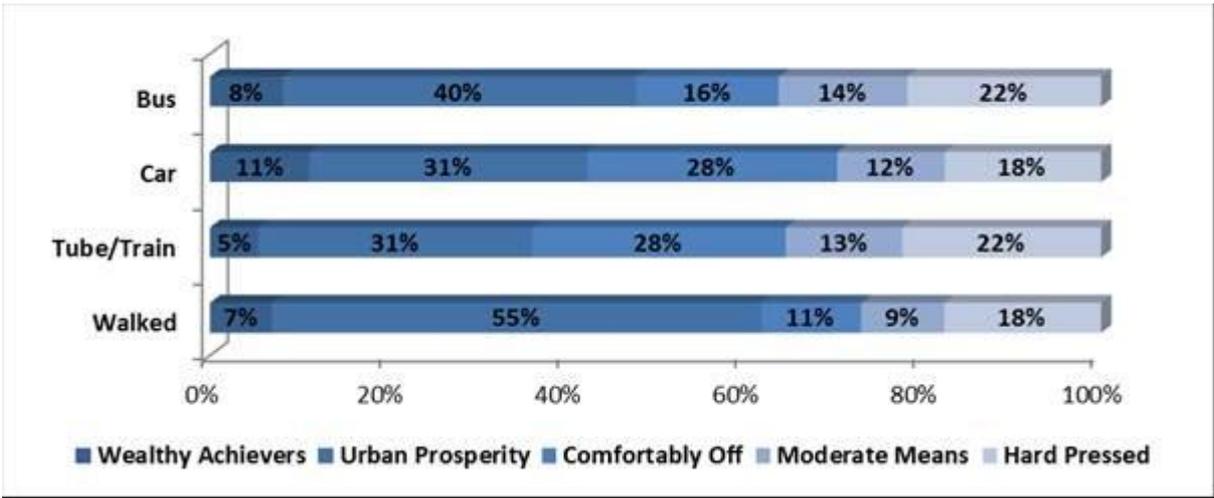
The findings for the aggregate data are set out below, with more detailed charts to be found in Appendix 3.

Figure 8: How did you travel to this shopping centre today?

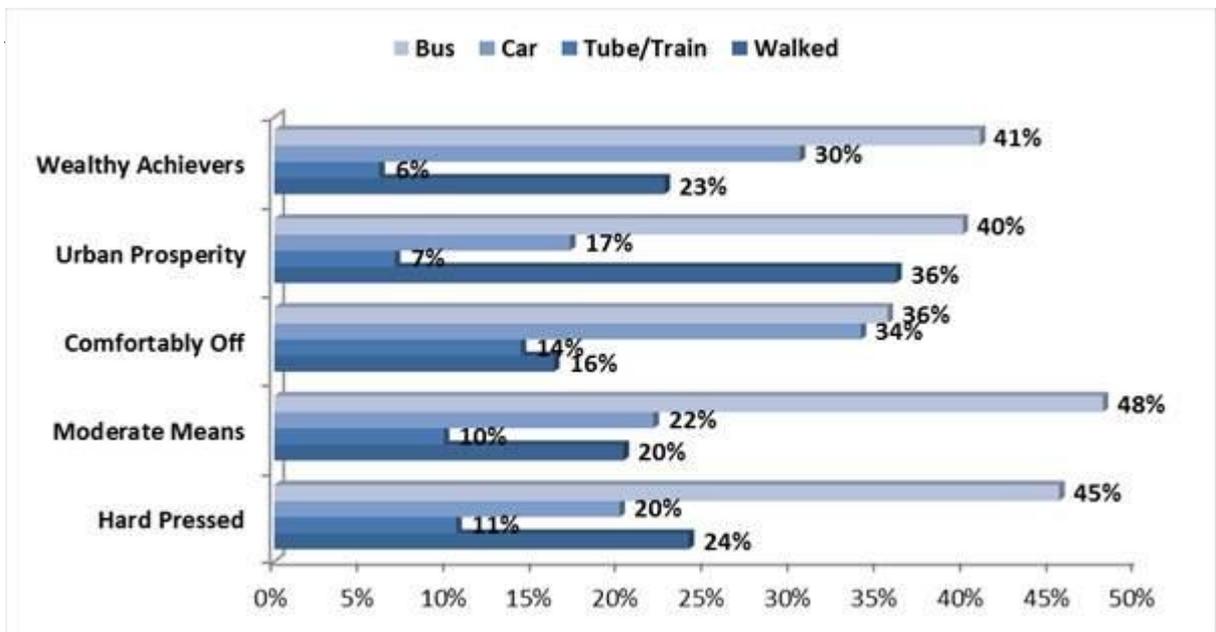


The three centres are all to be found in Outer London areas. While there is a high level of public transport use, there is also a higher level of car use than would be expected in Inner London locations.

Figures 9 and 10: Shopper Profile by travel – (ACORN Category)

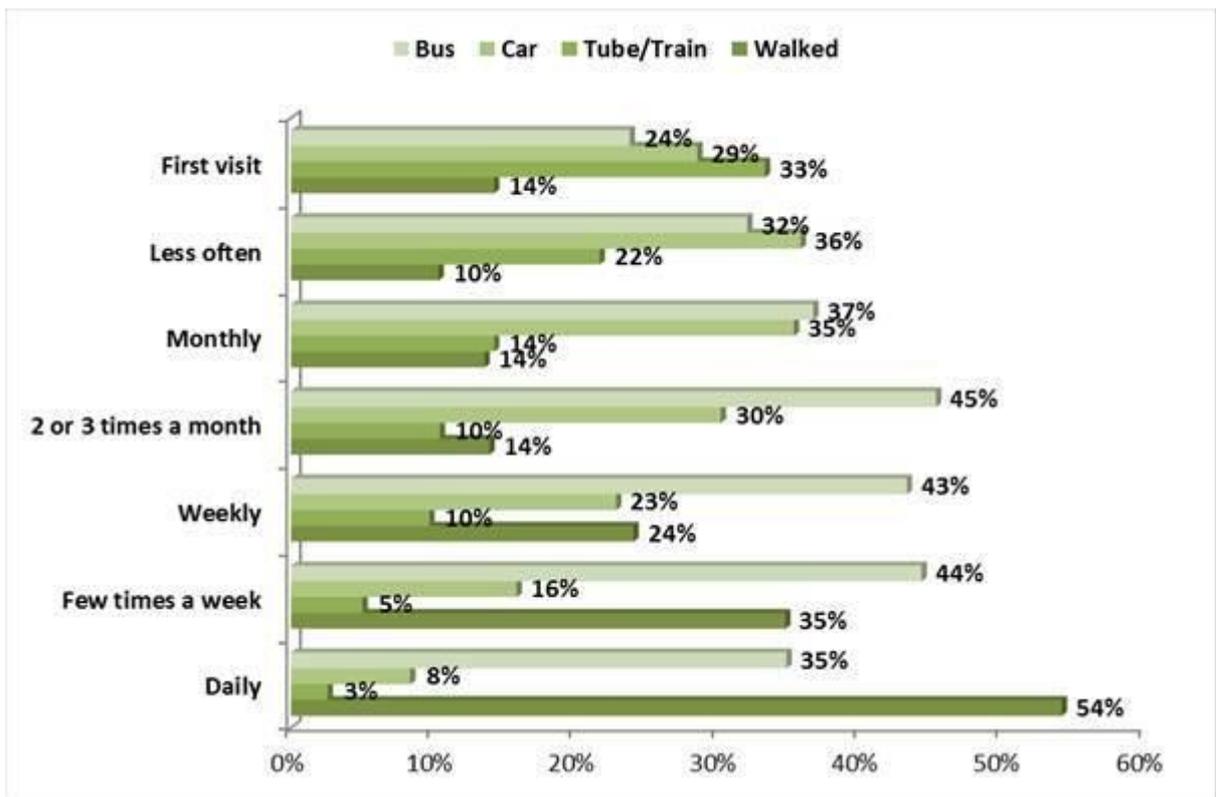


Once again the walkers are dominated by the 'Urban Prosperous' category. Interestingly, this category also makes a significant showing among bus travellers.



Looking at the same data from a different perspective, it is once again striking how many 'Urban Prosperity' centre users are committed to walking. This is perhaps indicative of the fact that users in this category are choosing to live, work and shop in the same areas. The 'Wealthy Achievers' by contrast have perhaps 'settled down' at some remove from the centre and are using their cars more extensively, and walking less. Nevertheless the level of bus use in the 'Wealthy Achiever' category is striking.

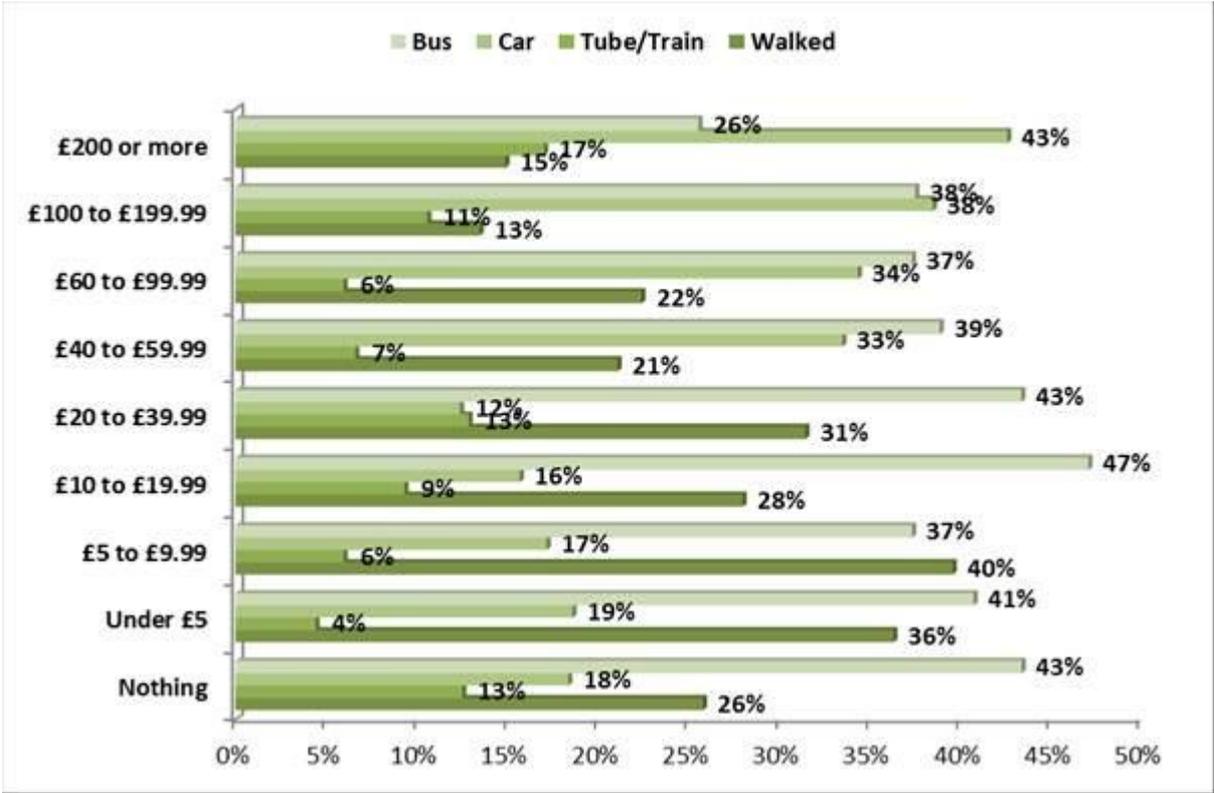
Figure 11: How often do you visit this shopping centre?



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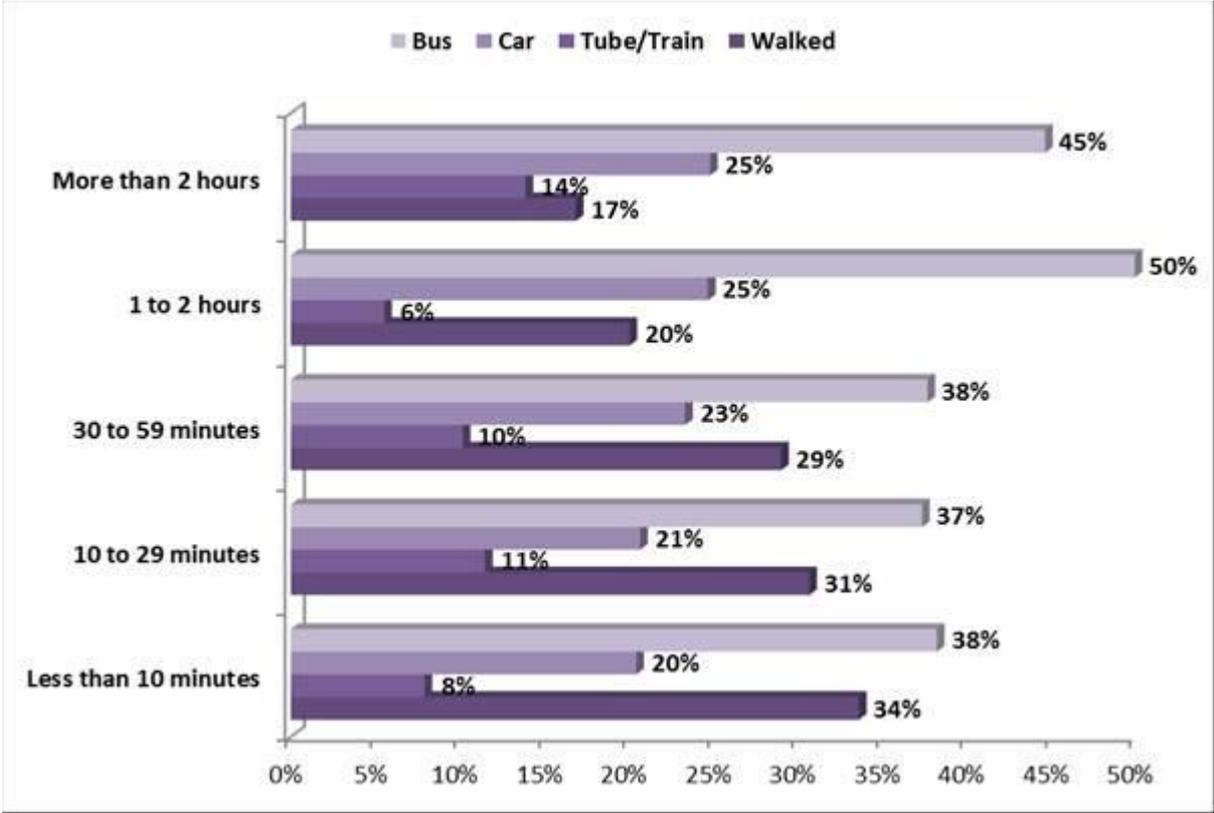
This chart shows that, perhaps not surprisingly, the more frequent the visits to the centre, the greater the likelihood that the user will walk. Equally, the less frequent the visits to the centre, the greater the likelihood that the user will come by car.

Figure 12: How much have you and your party spent in total here today?



Only in the highest spending category ('£200 or more') did car drivers represent the highest percentage of users. In most other categories public transport represented the highest percentage. Only in one category ('£5 to £9.99') did walk-up shoppers have the highest representation.

Figure 13: How long have you spent in this shopping centre today?



While walkers visit the centres more frequently than users of other modes, they are more likely to spend less time there. Car drivers, on the other hand, are more likely to spend more time in the centre.

Therefore, we may conclude the following:

- The majority of those shopping at The Mall Corporation shopping centres in London are coming by public transport
- Use of the car continues to decline
- Car-borne shoppers still shop less frequently, although their visits are likely to be longer, and they have a high spend per visit
- The 'Urban Prosperity' ACORN category of shopper (second only to 'Wealthy Achiever') is still the highest-represented among shoppers who arrive on foot.

Further data is required to establish:

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- Whether walk-up shoppers still show the greatest loyalty to the shopping centre (the percentage of respondents agreeing with 'I couldn't get along without it')
- Whether car-borne shoppers still have the lowest spend per month.

6.2 The relative importance of parking for business owners – The Means own data

The Means has carried out a number of surveys in town centres, mainly in south London, in the last few years. These have either been in the context of town centre 'health check' studies or feasibility studies for the establishment of a Business Improvement District. The Means has developed a questionnaire for business owners or senior retail staff that can be used in different town centre settings. It seeks to collect information on the 'health' of the business in question, their views on the top issues for the town centre in question and what they think the priorities are for improvements.

The issue of parking is always included. Businesses are requested to rate it as an issue, in this context the question is prompted, i.e. the response options are read out to the respondent.

Table 12 sets out the results for four town centres

Table 12: Parking mentioned by businesses as an 'important' or 'serious' problem

Survey location	Borough	Survey date	Sample size	Number of businesses	% of businesses
Walworth Road	Southwark	2009	100	58	58.0%
Southall	Ealing	2006	153	128	83.7%
Streatham	Lambeth	2012	90	47	52.0%
Vauxhall	Lambeth	2010/11	74	30	41.0%
TOTAL			417	263	

Parking is mentioned as an important or serious issue by the majority of businesses in all survey locations bar Vauxhall.

When asked what would improve trading conditions, the responses are more varied. The results for the six top scoring issues in three of the town centre area are set out below in Table 13. Data directly linked to this question is unfortunately not available for Southall. However, when asked 'What could be better?', parking was the most cited answer, with over 80% of businesses mentioning it. This figure was higher than for issues such as toilets and street cleaning, but not much more than for congestion in the older part of the town centre.

Table 13 Responses from businesses in Walworth Road, Vauxhall and Streatham : ‘How would the following improve trading conditions?’

	Not a lot	%	A little	%	A lot	%	Total	
Improve greening / planting	40	42.1	40	42.1	15	15.8	95	Walworth Road
More / improve street cleaning	63	65.6	20	20.8	13	13.5	96	
Provide new street furniture	45	47.4	33	34.7	17	17.9	95	
Provide better signage	54	56.8	25	26.3	16	16.8	95	
Increase promotional activity	18	19.1	48	51.1	28	29.8	94	
Improve interaction with local community	42	73.7	10	17.5	5	8.8	57	
CSR	13	25.5	11	21.6	25	49.0	51	Vauxhall
Improved greening / planting	12	20.7	22	37.9	23	39.7	58	
Improved signage	19	35.2	18	33.3	16	29.6	54	
Improved street cleaning	10	16.9	26	44.1	21	35.6	59	
Increased promotional activity for Vauxhall	9	14.8	22	36.1	29	47.5	61	
New street furniture	11	21.2	22	42.3	19	36.5	52	
Improved greening / planting	15	16.5%	29	31.9%	47	51.6%	91	Streatham
New street furniture	24	27.3%	26	29.5%	38	43.2%	88	
Better signage/mapping	38	45.2%	20	23.8%	26	31.0%	84	
Increased promotional activity for Streatham	15	16.9%	14	15.7%	60	67.4%	89	
Community engagement programme (CSR)	30	31.3%	30	31.3%	36	37.5%	96	

The results of this question corroborate the evidence set out in the literature review above: parking is considered important by business owners in town centres, but it is by no means the most important issue when it comes to factors that would improve trading conditions. Other factors such as increased promotional activity, greening and planting, and signage often score more highly.

It is sometimes the case the businesses mean different things when they highlight parking as an issue. Rather than simply parking for customers, it could be parking for loading and unloading, short term parking to enable customers to pick up heavy items (furniture etc.) or even parking for them and their staff. This level of detail is not picked up by The Means surveys; additional research would be needed to investigate further.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final section is divided into two parts. The first part highlights the conclusions from the literature review and the evidence from the other secondary data collated and analysed as part of this review. The second part sets out a number of recommendations. These concern both what would be helpful in terms of future research, but also how London Councils and its members can make best use of their existing resources to monitor any relationship between parking and urban centre success.

7.1 Conclusions

There is very little research that has directly addressed the question of the relevance of parking to urban centre success. Where research exists, it is often not necessarily specific to a UK context. This review has therefore sought to highlight the results of the research that does exist and to look for patterns in terms of its results.

7.1.1 Parking supply and availability

The lack of research into parking means that there is a general lack of accurate data in terms of parking supply. The situation is slightly better in London where boroughs are likely to be responsible for the majority of parking spaces. However, even here, most local authorities are currently not producing annual Parking Review, as recommended by the Department for Transport or a Parking Audit, as suggested by Transport for London.

With most researchers and stakeholders agreeing that parking is important for town centres, it is difficult to examine how without accurate data about supply, both public and private.

7.1.2 'Free' Parking

Mary Portas in her review into the future of high streets recommends that

“Local areas should implement free controlled parking schemes that work for their town centres”.³⁰

The problem is that there is no such thing as ‘free’ parking. All the research reviewed, including that sponsored by industry associations such as the British Parking Association highlights that somebody has to pay for the development and maintenance of parking spaces, as well as the management of any enforcement regime to ensure their efficient use. This cost may fall to developers and private businesses in the case of shopping centres or large retail stores. Most on street parking is the responsibility of local authorities and therefore it local taxpayers who pick up the cost of provision if revenue is not sufficient to cover costs.

³⁰ Portas (2011) p. 5

As Shoup and the COST Report indicate, the introduction of 'free' parking often does not have the desired effect in terms of increasing visitors or shoppers to any area³¹. In fact, it most often leads to a reduction in turnover of spaces, i.e. longer parking stays mean less visitors per day, with the most usual beneficiaries being local workers. This means that retail sales reduce rather than increase.

7.1.3 How people travel to town centres

As with the availability and cost of parking, there has been relatively little research into how people travel to town centres and what impact that has on their shopping behaviour when they are there.

The evidence from all the available studies into how people travel to town centres is that the share of those that come by public transport, walking or cycling is greater than that of those that come by car. There are some variations in this. Town centres with poorer public transport links will see higher levels of car use. Smaller urban centres within cities are likely to see higher levels of walking and cycling.

However in all the studies that looked at shoppers' mode of travel, shopkeepers have consistently overestimated the proportion of their customers who come by car. In some cases this overestimation approaches 100 per cent compared to the actual figure. In the case of Camberwell, in 2008, shopkeepers overestimated the share of shoppers coming by car by a factor of over 400 per cent

The analysis from the Camberwell study, from the Transport for London Town Centre Survey and of the shopping centre data by the ROI Team shows that those who don't come by car are responsible for a larger average spend. Whereas car drivers may spend more in a single trip, those that come by bus spend more per week and per month. The biggest spenders in London are those that walk.

Part of the reason for these results may be that car ownership is declining in London overall. As Bates and Leibling show (Bates and Leibling 2012), there are only five boroughs where car ownership is increasing. This in itself doesn't mean that there is a corresponding decrease in car trips; it may be possible that even if ownership is declining, the average number of trips or length of trips is increasing. However, leave open the possibility that more Londoners may be choosing other modes for more trips.

Even if the majority of those accessing urban centres are doing so by other modes, that doesn't mean that there is not the necessity to cater for those using the car. This becomes more of a concern when it comes to those who rely on the car to access shops and services, such as disabled drivers and to some extent older people, when they are unable to easily access bus stops.

³¹ Shoup (1999); COST Action 342 (2006)

7.1.4 The role of parking in urban centre attractiveness

Parking is often perceived as important to town centre business in attracting customers. The Means own survey data demonstrates this as does the RAC Foundation and British Retail Consortium Report from 2006.³² However, the evidence from studies focusing on shopper surveys suggests that other factors may be much more influential in the choice of shopping location. Some of the most frequently quoted are the mix of retail and environmental improvements or creating a pleasant atmosphere in which to shop.

Here there is also an irony: congestion is one of the factors that are often cited as making a urban centre location unattractive, yet retailers still perceive parking as being one of the main reasons for lack of footfall. Well managed parking that reduces the need for searching could be one way to improve the attractiveness of town centre. At the same time, reducing congestion makes it easier for those on foot to access town centres.

7.1.5 The impact of parking on the local economy

The limited research into the impacts of parking on the local economy suggest that there are no adverse impacts of a well-managed parking scheme on the local economy (COST Action 342 2005). Research carried out in The Netherlands even suggests that a well-structured parking system, could even be beneficial to town centres³³. If set appropriately, parking charges results in a higher turnover of visitors and therefore potentially higher retail turnover. The only exception to this finding was for regional centres, drawing on relatively large regional catchment area, where access by car could be one of the factors that determine shopping location decisions.

7.2 Recommendations

7.2.1 Recommendations for future research and data collection

Recommendation 1: Regular borough data collection

The evidence from the information collated from the boroughs as part of this review suggests that there are often unable to answer the questions of whether parking policies have an impact on their town centres. Section 5.3 suggests some ways in this could improved by:

- ensuring greater coordination between those charged with looking at town centre vitality and those responsible for parking and other transport related projects (public realm etc.)
- including parking supply and tariffs in any town centre health checks
- linking with existing surveys, such as the Transport for London Town Centre Survey to ensure to make best use of resources

³² RAC Foundation and British Retail Consortium (2006)

³³ Mingardo and Van Meerkerk (2012)

-
- choosing a variety of economic indicators to collect on a regular basis such as footfall, commercial voids, business turnover, shoppers' surveys (mode and spend).

If collected regularly, this data could help to paint an accurate picture of the relationship between transport improvements, parking and urban centre success, whether they be the high profile 'International' centres or the many 'District' and 'Neighbourhood' centres that serve the daily needs of London's population.

Recommendation 2: Making best use of borough capacity.

The borough questionnaire highlighted the difficulties that many boroughs have with coordinating data collation that is outside their day to day and statutory responsibilities. Here London Councils could help by:

- Providing guidance on data available from other sources such as Transport for London
- Working on an agreed common format for data collection in key areas, such as parking supply and tariffs
- Exploring the feasibility of joint procurement for certain types of study, such as town centre health checks, to help ensure a consistency in approach
- Training sessions and seminars to enable officers from different borough department to meet and plan data collection together.

Recommendation 3: Further research into the night-time economy

There is a very clear lack of research into the links between parking and the night time economy.. This would be a very useful area to commission some more research specific to the London context. This could be an area where London Councils and Transport for London could jointly commission an independent study. Ideally, this research would:

- Focus on establishing how night time economy workers and visitors travel
- Investigate the extent to which night time workers are car dependent
- Look at night time economy spend by mode
- Examine parking occupancy in borough and private car parking
- Include an analysis of night time deliveries, looking specifically at enforcement issues and how to ensure that freight vehicles can access town centre businesses.

7.2.2 Other recommendations

Finally, there are number of ways in which boroughs could be better positioned to address concerns about the impact of parking on their urban centres.

Recommendation 4: Publish an annual parking review

London boroughs (like other UK local authorities) are encouraged to produce annual parking reviews by the Department of Transport. These are supposed to set out details of parking supply, the cost of provision and revenues. Evidence from the borough questionnaires and from the recent study for the RAC Foundation suggest that these reviews are not commonly produced. If well set out and enlarged to include how parking revenue is spend on projects, these could be useful tools to explain the economics of parking interested parties.

Recommendation 5: Actively promote town centre improvements part funded by parking revenue

Under rules set out in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, boroughs are generally not allowed to use the money raised from on street parking revenues on anything other than local transport projects.

In combination with the annual parking review (see above), boroughs could be more actively promoting how (limited) parking revenue surpluses are being ploughed back into transport projects. In particular it would be helpful to raise the profile of those projects which are improving access to town centres by other modes (walking, cycling and bus), making them more attractive as shopping or leisure destinations.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE – BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX TWO – DETAILS OF DATA COLLECTED AT THREE LONDON SHOPPING CENTRES
(ROI TEAM ON BEHALF OF THE MALL CORPORATION)

See separate document appended

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