



Dear Hon Member,

As you may have noticed, Taxi drivers are in Parliament Square protesting against their unjustified exclusion from the Mayor's Transport Strategy.

Below are five main bullet points outlining our grievances.

## **1. Availability and convenience:**

TfL and the Mayor have omitted any door-to-door service for London's travelling public.

Not everyone wants to, or is able to, get from their origin to their desired destination by walking, cycling or by bus.

Licensed London Taxis may be hailed on the street or pre booked via many apps.

## **2. A travel lifeline:**

Every Taxi is a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle.

Taxis provide 23,000 WAV's.

TfL buses offer only 8,000 WAV's.

Taxi drivers are capable of assisting people with disabilities. Bus drivers are not.

## **3. Safety and reliability:**

Other than the freedom of personal choice for Londoners and visitors to the capital for a door-to-door service; Taxis are essential for Londoners who, at certain times might feel unsafe, such as LGBT, ethnic minorities or lone females coming out onto a strange street, from a relative's home, a restaurant, or business meeting, into an area where they might feel threatened or vulnerable.

Are they expected to walk home?

Or wait at a bus stop?

Some people feel vulnerable on a bus with strangers.

Would all Londoners or visitors to London wish to walk, cycle or travel by bus wearing fine clothes and expensive accessories, or hail a Taxi?

Are London's travelling public expected to lug shopping or cases, in all weathers, onto a bus or down the tube?

This basic freedom of choice is being denied London travellers.

## **4. Manufactured demise of a 365 year icon:**

With Taxis being prohibited from all these new road strategies, Taxi journeys will travel further than necessary, take longer than necessary and cost the passenger more than necessary.

Using a Taxi will no longer be expedient or financially viable for the consumer.

London's Taxi trade will die.

## **5. Where buses go, Taxis go - Law:**

Taxis are denied access to Bank Junction between 7am and 7pm, and due to be prohibited from Tottenham Court Road, Oxford Street, Piccadilly Circus, Holborn, huge swathes of Bloomsbury, Old Street, and from Tooley Street all the way to Greenwich and Lewisham, with the threat of more to come. No one is taking responsibility for this manufactured genocide of London's iconic Taxi trade.

The Mayor, TfL's Commissioner Mike Brown, and various councillors are playing pass the parcel with their responsibilities.

Camden, Hackney and Islington Councils have failed to do any Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA) on their discriminatory road changes. Londoners expect to be protected by every Council's Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

To solve this insulting annoyance of bureaucratic deniability, we propose that a law be drawn up to intrinsically link the rights of Bus access to Taxi access.

There is no reasonable argument to deny Taxis access to all Bus Lanes and access to all roads where buses are permitted.

Taxis need to be protected by law.

What is distressing, is the fact that the part played by Taxis in the 2010 Mayor's Transport Strategy, has been removed from the current MTS, proving this is not an oversight, but a plan to erase Taxis from London's Transport system.

Platitudes from Councils about children and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease might hold water if they did not grant access to buses.

Can one only get COPD from a Taxi?

Ten years ago the media constantly complained about Health & Safety issues, and disabled access was a huge concern at the forefront of political thinking and social planning.

Now, via the gig economy and a financial thirst for deregulation, Health & Safety no longer matters, and disabled access has been relegated to an afterthought.

These protests are not against either House, or its members.

We leave Millbank alone and ensure there is access to all emergency and government vehicles in and around the Square.

The idea of being in Parliament Square is a plea to the seat of power.

The reason we are there three days a week is born from a fear of 'out of sight, out of mind'.

TfL refuse to address our concerns or negotiate.

Therefore we have nothing left but peaceful protest.

Thank you for your time and patience.

Yours sincerely,

Leonard Howard Etheridge.

(Independent Taxi Alliance)

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