CONNECT 4: SESSION 3

Speaker	Organisation
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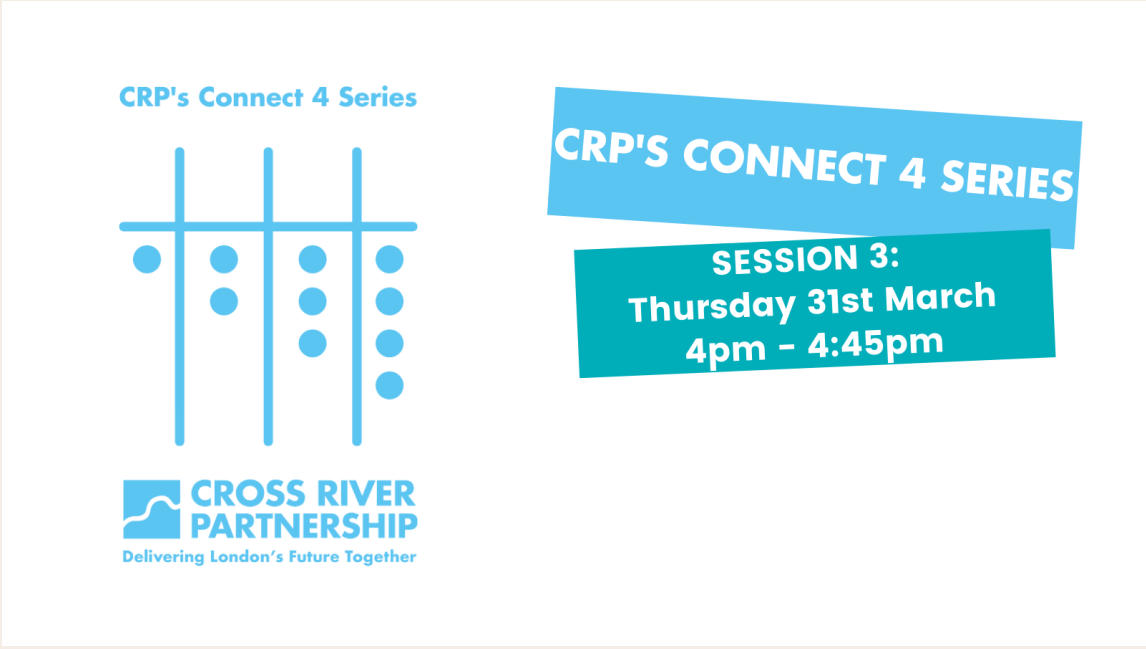
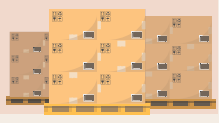


KEY FACTS

Rail freight already moves the need for 7 million lorry journeys each year, which saved around 1.4 million tonnes of Carbon Dioxide emissions. TfL's London Rail Freight Strategy, published in May 2021, reports that CO2 emissions per tonne of freight delivered by rail are 76% lower than by road. Rail freight also produces up to 10 times less small particulate matter and 15 times less Nitrogen Oxide than road haulage.

Goods that are easier to consolidate and lend themselves to bulk packaging will be best for freight by rail: High value goods, bulk items and non-perishable goods.



35% of London's HGV traffic is related to construction. Construction Logistics Plans are key tools for planners, clients/developers, construction contractors and their supply chains. They can improve air quality by using modern, low emission vehicles, using rail and water freight where possible and re-timing deliveries.

RESOURCES

- CRP's Connect 4 Series: Session 3 Presentation slides
- CRP's Annual Report and Business Plan
- 'High speed UK rail freight service aims to overtake trucks for logisitcs' Financial Times
- Construction Logistics and Community Safety: Construction Logistics Plans
- Tideway: Traffic and Road Logistics
- CRP's Clean Air Logistics for London

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Sustainable Cities: Reinventing the River
Thursday 28th April 2022, 4pm - 4:45pm

Jacobs momentum transport consultancy CROSS RIVER PARTNERSHIP Delivering London's Future Together

Question: How can the rail freight/last-mile process be best optimised by containerising deliveries in a way that is consistent with each last mile solution (porterage, cargo bike, van etc)?

Answer: Different land uses have different goods requirements and these vary in the level to which they can be delivered by different means. For example, higher value, higher margin goods like higher end consumer items may have the capacity to have a porterage operation from stations. Goods from smaller suppliers serving restaurants are more difficult to manage. Cargo bikes have a high capacity and can even support construction deliveries, so largely they can be interchanged with vans. The challenge comes in the earlier stage, in the Distribution Centres, where goods will need to be sorted by postcode a step sooner, and then 'picked' loaded onto train carriages pre-sorted.

Question: Given that successive Governments have prioritised passenger movements by rail over freight with the result less freight is carried by rail today compared to 40/50 years ago, why should this policy change?

Answer: There's a major push to improve the pedestrian and cyclist environment on the street side, as well as provide passenger capacity on the rail network. The urgency to introduce rail freight comes from the impetus to improve road safety and air quality for pedestrians. With the introduction of the Elizabeth Line and HS2 as major pieces of infrastructure relieving some capacity issues, combined with the lasting effects of the pandemic on travel patterns, there is an opportunity now to introduce freight onto the rail network via passenger trains as well as existing freight trains.

Question: A challenge for all sustainable transport is finding the land or micro mobility hubs, last mile delivery centres, consolidation centres etc. Could this be addressed by using railway land combining the many functions with rail freight?

Answer: Absolutely, and this is something that Network Rail (soon to be GB Railways) are honing in on. TfL and Network Rail are both major landowners, not just at stations but also on railway sidings. They have facilities that can integrate operational and development requirements better than they currently are. In these spaces, Network Rail have the power to bake in requirements for forward looking delivery hub operations, amongst other things. The balance here is the need to develop housing, especially affordable housing, as well as integrating operational requirements within a financially sustainable model.

Question: Why aren't railways used to carry freight into and through central London? Both Thameslink and Crossrail provide a great opportunity for the latter, particularly with declining passenger numbers.

Answer: The challenge with the likes of the Elizabeth Line and Thameslink is that they both operate, especially in the peak periods, with very high service frequencies, meaning the stopping time at each platform is quite low. The means that the opportunity to load/unload goods diminished. Increasing stop times at platforms could have quite a significant impact in peak period passenger rail capacity and passenger experience, hence why Momentum Transport have looked more towards rail termini stations.

Question: This study looks at the delivery end of the rail route, but there is also a process for getting goods onto the train. This adds another step in the chain, which adds cost and time. What thinking was done about this end of the process?

Answer: Momentum Transport have looked into the supply chain that operators currently use, from ports to Distribution Centres, onto urban logistics centres and then to delivery. These facilities are built around major maritime and then road infrastructure, which is a major challenge. The introduction of rail introduces another 'break point' in the supply chain, which adds cost. Within the road-based freight model, operators now are using last mile logistics hubs within very central London. The City of London Corporation have bought one forward in Farringdon, with plans to bring more forward in the coming two years. This is expensive real estate that a rail-based operation might avoid.

Question: The small number of recent construction sites that make use of rail or water are major public sector schemes with this built into the original plan for the scheme. How can the use of rail and water solutions be encouraged for private sector construction projects?

Answer: One way to encourage use of rail and water would be to set up a wharf-side or railhead consolidation facility where materials could be stored and called off by smaller developments as needed. Depending on where the development is, a cargo ferry service could drop these off at wharves near the development itself. This would nearly always involve a last mile by road. This should not negate the need to look at the sourcing of bulk materials such as aggregates that can be brought in by rail or water to the London area so that most of the journey from actual source is by those modes.

Question: Can you make central business districts low traffic neighbourhoods? Is this realistic given construction, delivery, service and waste traffic?

Answer: In construction, the use of CLP principles would help minimise related traffic delivering materials, plant and equipment through the use of consolidation centres and maximising load utilisation. But this depends on the size of the development and the programme. Defined routes keeping such traffic away from residential streets as much as possible may mitigate the impact. Delivery and servicing currently use a wide range of companies doing those things, so one way to reduce it would be to plan for a single company to do the last mile for couriering in a defined area, but there are the obvious commercial arrangement issues as to what company would get that work and how the others would pay for it, and what mode would be best (e.g. cargo bike, EV van etc). For waste in construction, again vehicle movements could be minimised through reducing the amount of collections, depending on the storage capability on the site(s). Doing these at night would reduce congestion during the day but then the noise angle comes in and council restrictions may apply, as well as higher wages for night work. Household waste is generally taken by the council and are usually fortnightly now so one pick up per two weeks isn't going to make much difference. Business waste movements could be reduced through only one company or less companies than normal doing them, consolidating loads into one larger vehicle through commercial arrangements.

There are many interventions that can be used to reduce traffic, but there is no silver bullet, which is why it's so difficult. There are examples such as Barcelona, where they have trialled low traffic areas, effectively creating zones where deliveries and servicing are managed, but we need to be careful not to simply push the traffic into other areas. There are of course highly innovative approaches that can be considered such as in waste management but these can often only applied to new developments. The key point to emphasise when considering new developments is how they are going to be serviced once operation needs to be considered at the design phase.

Question: Is it ever viable for single construction developments (not of strategic scale such as Tideway or Cross Rail) to use Rail or River Freight? Are there any examples?

Answer: Although not construction related yet, DHL have launched a Riverboat Thames Service - DHL Guide, which uses vessels along the Thames but again, last mile is by road (albeit by cargo bike or EV). Some small parts and tools etc could use such a service.