

# merge Businesses reveal plan for West London orbital



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**A** new north-south under-ground line in West London could ease the area's chronic traffic congestion at a cost of only £1.75bn, says a new plan from West London Business, the sub-region's chamber of commerce.

The orbital metro, which stems from initial studies originating in 2002, addresses "the strategic deficiency in the orbital public transport network" and lack of options for travelling north-south.

The metro would link Brent Cross in the north to Surbiton in the south. According to a report produced for West London Business by Capita Symonds the most promising route would pass through Wembley, Park Royal, Ealing, Brentford and Richmond. It would enable a high level of modal shift from car, reducing pressure on the road system, as well as providing for trips which are not practical via the existing public transport system.

The new route would connect together 20 radial rail or tube lines to create a cohesive network, and would act as a feeder to Crossrail. It would make public transport an option for many journeys that at present can only sensibly be undertaken by car. Destinations such as Heathrow and Wembley Stadium would become accessible from anywhere in west London.

Frank Wingate, chief executive of

West London Business, said: "For the business sector in West London, the worsening traffic congestion, hindering the flow of personnel and products, is the number one barrier to further growth and investment."

The new metro would feature minimal surface works and interruption of existing transport services. Construction, says the report, should be relatively uncomplicated because of suitable strata and the lack of other tunnels to avoid.

The system would use driverless trains operating a high frequency, along the lines of the new metro in Copenhagen. Journey time for the 25km from Brent Cross to Surbiton would be 28 minutes. The high frequency would allow stations to be relatively small, with a plan area of typically 20m x 60m.

About two-thirds of journeys to jobs in west London take place by car. The main tool to control traffic growth in the last decade has been to limit car parking permitted for new development. This is seriously affecting the provision of new jobs in west London, says the report.

West London Business plans to ask Transport for London to undertake a more detailed study and will be seeking support from local councils. Funding sources could include income from road pricing or the increasing tax revenue arising from escalating oil prices.



New metro would be "relatively simple" to construct