

As car ownership and use have increased over the past 30 years the reaction to the pressure created by additional traffic demand has often been to increase the level of supply, in other words provide additional road space. There is a growing body of evidence indicating that the benefits of creating additional road capacity are not as significant as was previously believed. In many cases the provision of new road links simply increase congestion problems. This occurs through a process that is known as traffic 'induction'. In 1994, the UK Government-commissioned Sactra report provided evidence on the impact of new road building on traffic levels in the area of the scheme. The report revealed that when new road capacity is provided, overall traffic levels in the vicinity of the scheme actually increase. The evidence does not offer a reliable means of predicting the extent of this traffic increase but case studies suggest that it is typically around 10 % in the short term, and 20 % in the longer term. In our cities, such as Bristol, there is an additional reason as to why the provision of additional road capacity is problematic for city planners — there is simply a lack of available space in which to expand.

# INDUCED DEMAND and TRAFFIC EVAPORATION

## What do they mean and how do they affect Bristol?

Traffic in Bristol is at endemic proportions. There is no evidence that building new roads and widening existing helps traffic flow more easily. In fact the overwhelming body of research suggests the opposite. Passenger cars are getting larger, but Bristol isn't. We need to prioritise space for the transport modes we know work in cities. In the south of Bristol especially fast dual carriageways make cycling unappealing for many. The current cycle route connecting Whitchurch with St Philips Causeways is bitty and difficult to follow. An improved cycle path instead of a new road could literally get people out of their cars and onto bikes and significantly reduce traffic. It would also spare hundreds of residents increased traffic noise and air pollution from extra traffic a "relief" road would generate.



In 2006, consultants Lilli Matson, Ian Taylor, Lynn Sloman and John Elliott examined three major road schemes in detail for an important report for the Countryside Agency and CPRE.

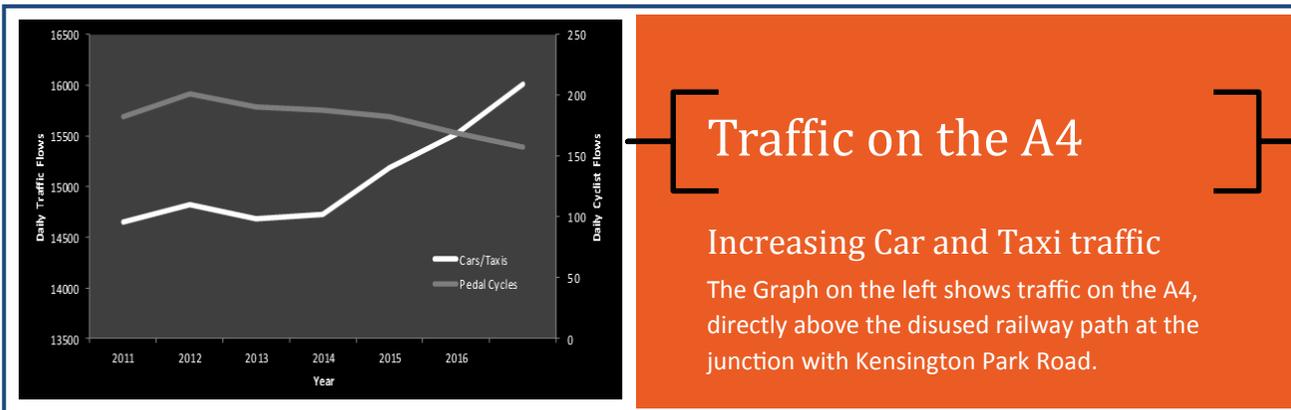
The schemes included the infamous A34 Newbury Bypass which attracted mass protests in 1996. They also examined ten other schemes built since the publication of the 1994 SACTRA report and used data supplied by the Highways Agency's own Post Opening Project Evaluation (POPE) studies.

In the case of Newbury, the report showed that traffic levels predicted for 2010 in Newbury were already reached by 2003 – and that traffic had increased by almost 50% in that period.

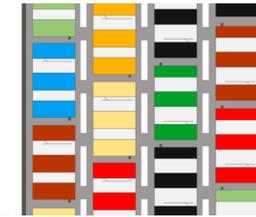
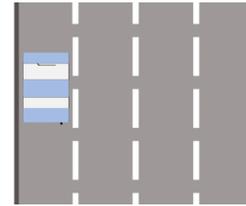
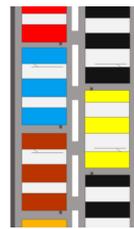
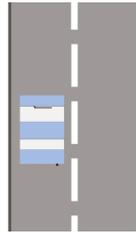
New development around the road was partially to blame for the increases.

In the other case studies the report concluded that:

**"Traffic growth on the routes considered was higher than forecast, sometimes quite dramatically so."**



# INDUCED TRAFFIC



This is Dave. He's driven to work since he passed his test nearly 20 years ago.

Back then the roads were much emptier and it was way better than waiting for the bus.

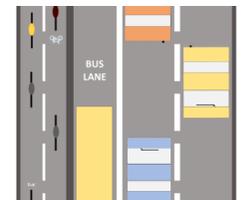
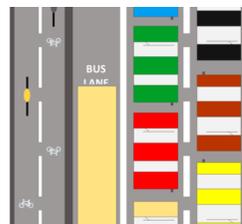
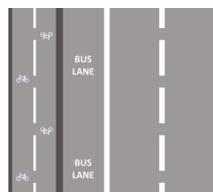
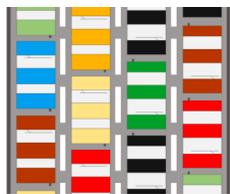
After a few years it got pretty busy and some days Dave spent a long time in traffic. It made him question his daily drive.

A road scheme added a few extra lanes and things soon got moving again. Dave carried on, despite it costing him quite a lot.

However, it didn't take long for this extra space to get filled as people discovered this "quieter" route.

Dave heard about plans for a major widening project. This sounds like it will definitely solve the problem once and for all.

# TRAFFIC EVAPORATION



This is Suzie. She sits in traffic most mornings and evenings to and from work. She wants something to be done about it.

To her shock it was proposed to convert some of the road space to a bus lane and cycle path.

This made the traffic worse than ever. She sat in her car watching one or two cyclists and the odd bus cruise past. Suzie was furious

At work she was telling her colleagues all about it. However, Simran pointed out that the cycle path had made the journey on her bike much nicer.

Suzie had always thought cycling was too dangerous. But the cycle path went right from her house to the office. She decided to give it a go.

Suzie hasn't looked back and now joins hundreds of cyclists on the path. The road is emptier than ever, as drivers use the bus and cycle path.