

Bury But Better 2009

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BURY COUNCIL



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Accessibility update



In order to provide a comprehensive assessment of the existing condition and future potential of Bury town centre it is necessary to evaluate existing accessibility and transportation conditions and prospects to support the town. Consequently, it will then be possible to identify transport opportunities within the town that can contribute to its function and determine what transport issues may be necessary to support future development. Any accessibility strategy needs to support public transport services and facilities and other non-motorised modes as well as journeys by private vehicle.

Bury town centre is located approximately 13 miles north of Manchester city centre and acts as a major shopping destination within the northern Greater Manchester conurbation and southern Lancashire regions, as well as for the Borough of Bury itself. The centre also performs a range of other important roles, in terms of employment, education, culture, arts and civic functions and serves as the local centre for Bury Borough with a population of over 180,000.

Following the refurbishment of the Mill Gate Shopping Centre there has been a significant influx in development over the last five years. In particular the retail expansion at The Rock to the east of the town's traditional centre will potentially add to existing traffic levels.

Traffic Network

This section looks at recent alterations to the highway network and any significant change in traffic flow on particular routes allowing vehicles around and into the town centre. As part of the recent development of the town, a number of improvements have been undertaken to allow vehicular access to development proposals to the east of the town. These include the construction of a new link road (Derby Way), connecting the Walmersley Road/Peel Way junction to Rochdale Road and the reconfiguration of the large roundabout at the Angouleme Way/Rochdale Road/The Rock junction into a three arm priority junction. These changes facilitate the extension of the pedestrianised area of The Rock and will link the new Rock development with the existing town centre shopping area. To support development proposals on Chamberhall a new road is also being constructed to allow direct access from Peel Way.

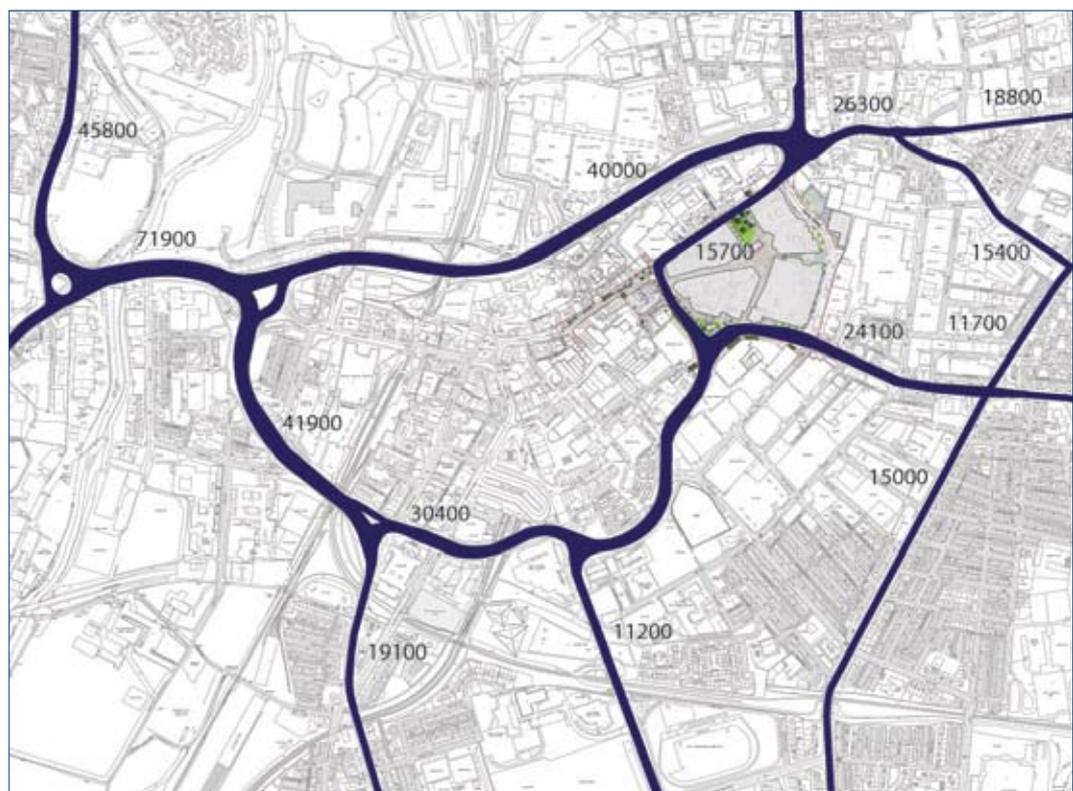
Throughout the Borough of Bury, traffic levels have increased by an estimated 1% on A and B roads since 1999 in comparison to decreases of approximately 2% both nationally and in the whole of Greater Manchester (source: GMTU),

Facing page: Bury Transport Interchange;
This page: aerial view of Kay Gardens and Silver Street

but further analysis is necessary to form a more detailed understanding of traffic levels around and in the town centre itself. The existing main road network with weekday traffic flows (2007) around the town centre is shown on the map below. Traffic volumes are particularly high on routes circumnavigating the town with traffic flows over Bury Bridge at 72,000 vehicles per weekday and 40,000 vehicles passing along the ring road to the north of the town on Peel Way. Flows are lower than this on the southern section of the ring road, where Angouleme Way carries approximately 30,000 vehicles per weekday and are very much less on the eastern section formed by The Rock at 15,700 vehicles per weekday.

Comparison of weekday traffic flows between 1999 and 2005 on routes around Bury town centre show that there have been increases in weekday traffic levels on all significant routes, especially on The Rock (+22%), Market Street(+19%), Peel Way (+17%) and Angouleme Way (+13%) (source: GMTU). The high flows passing through the Bury central area network in the peak periods as a result of this demand

cause heavy congestion at central junctions and queues stretch along some sections of the inner ring road. Traffic counts have been conducted on major routes entering Bury town centre since 1997 and have been surveyed on a three yearly cycle in 1999, 2002 and 2005 thereafter (source: GMTU). This cordon data showing the number of vehicles travelling in and out of the town centre on major routes for 2005 demonstrated that traffic patterns exhibit strong tidality, as was the case since 1997. In particular, journeys in the morning peak are high towards the M60 junctions via the A56, A58 and M66 routes, with similarly high volumes of traffic during the evening peak through the town from the motorway. The number of vehicles crossing the cordon into Bury town centre in 2005 was approximately 4,200 in the morning peak and 3,400 in the evening peak, representing decreases of 5.3% and 5.1% respectively on vehicle numbers entering the town centre in 1999 (source: GMTU). A comparison of traffic levels on each of the routes into town demonstrate that Bolton Street is the busiest route, followed by Haymarket Street, Spring Street and Manchester



Bury Town Centre: weekday traffic count; source: GMTU 2007 flows

Road. The information above, therefore, suggests that while there has been no significant increase in traffic levels on A roads and B roads in the Borough of Bury as a whole, there has been a significant increase in traffic on the ring road and an approximate 5% drop in traffic levels during the peak on routes providing access into the town centre.

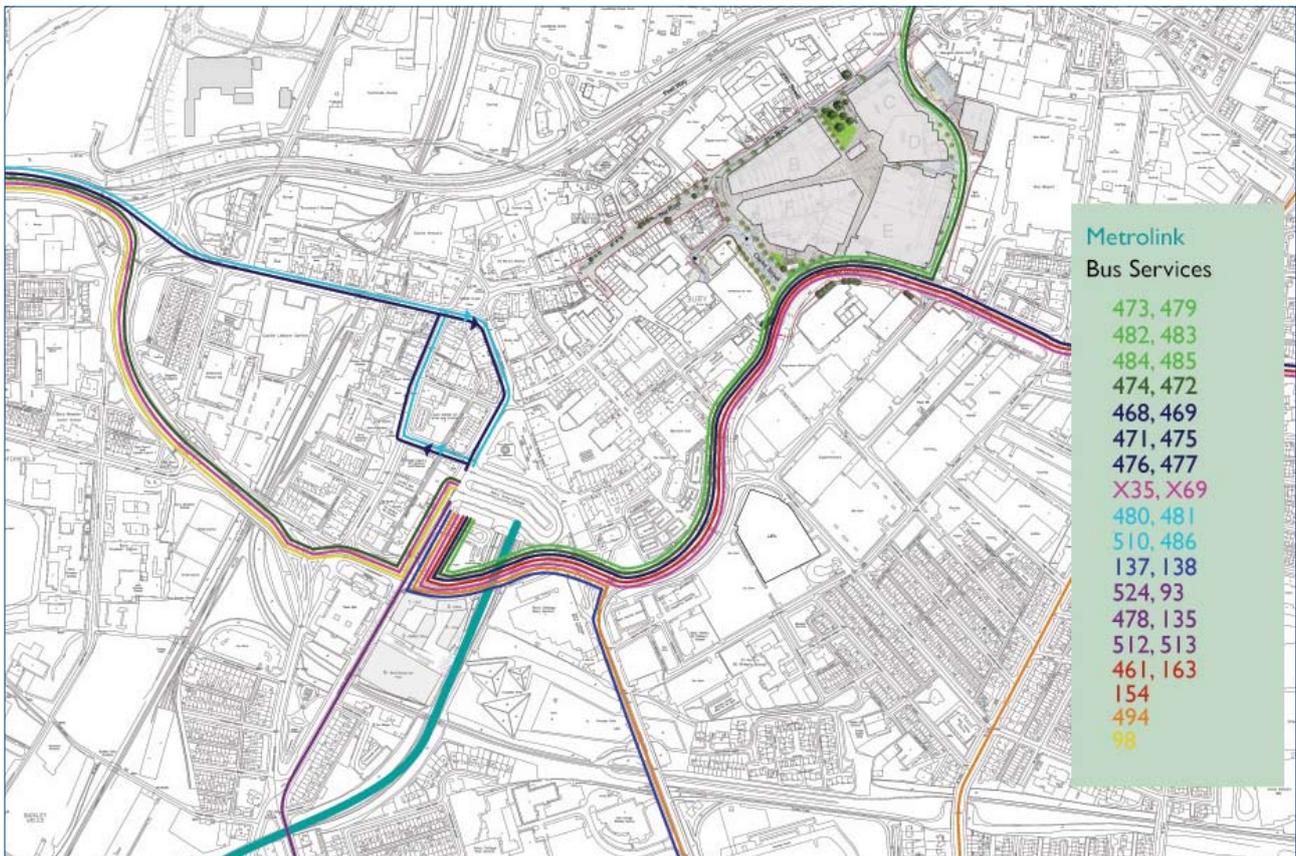
Conclusions:

- Additions to the road network to the east of Bury Town Centre have provided improved access for those wishing to travel to or around the town centre by car.
- Traffic flows in 2007 indicate significantly more traffic along Peel Way to the north of the town centre than along Angouleme Way to the south.
- Traffic levels on the ring road have increased significantly between 1999 and 2005 while traffic levels have dropped on the majority of routes in the town centre itself over the same period.

Public Transport

Bury town centre contains within the ring road an extensive public transport interchange that accommodates a high number of bus services and a Metrolink tram service, providing good public transport links between Bury and other important destinations within Greater Manchester. Bury town centre is, therefore, a major public transport destination for North Manchester and the South Lancashire area, providing interchange facilities between the 33 bus services beyond the Bury borough boundary and the Metrolink system that connects Bury to Manchester city centre, and other towns within Greater Manchester such as Altrincham, Eccles and important working and leisure destinations such as Piccadilly Railway Station and Salford Quays. Within the centre, buses use Bolton Street, Silver Street and Market/Haymarket Street (see plan on page 41). Buses also make use of Jubilee Way/Angouleme Way, especially by those services not terminating at Bury interchange.

Bury Town Centre: public transport provision; source: GMTU (2008)



Tram services to the Metrolink station at Bury Interchange operate at 6 minute intervals throughout the working day (7.15am - 6.30pm) and on Saturdays (9.30am to 6pm) with less frequent services – typically at 12 minute intervals - at other periods (e.g. early morning, evening and Sundays). Metrolink passenger data below compares passenger figures between 1999 and 2007 on the Bury - Manchester line in the morning peak and shows that while patronage levels leaving Bury have dropped by 41%, passenger levels arriving at Bury Metrolink station during the same period have risen by 18%. There have been plans to greatly increase the Metrolink network throughout

Weekday AM Peak 7:30 - 9:30	1999	2007
Leaving at Bury	874	514
Arriving at Bury	686	809

Source: GMTU

Greater Manchester by 2011 to destinations such as Rochdale, Oldham, Droylsden and Salford. However, the recent vote against the TIF/congestion charge proposals suggests that further funding is likely to be needed for the entire transport improvements plan to go ahead. With an increase in tram capacity planned on the system, the Metrolink could significantly improve public transport links between Bury town centre and the rest of the region if the plan was to be

implemented. The GMPTE and Bury Council have also introduced quality bus corridors (QBC) on the A56 and A58 approaches to Bury in order to improve bus journey times and bus time reliability for passengers between different strategic destinations.



Conclusions:

- Bus services provide a comprehensive network of services from Bury Interchange to a large number of destinations throughout Greater Manchester and South Lancashire. Quality Bus Corridor initiatives have improved journey times on a number of important routes.
- Metrolink services provide efficient transport connections to many important destinations in the Greater Manchester area but patronage out of Bury Metrolink station has dropped



significantly between 1999 and 2007.

- Bury Interchange accommodates a significant number of transport services but improvements to the configuration and quality of pedestrian crossings, bus connections and the building itself will further strengthen the role of the facility as an important gateway for the town.

Pedestrian and Cycling Facilities

Pedestrian volumes within Bury town centre are at their highest along The Haymarket, The Mall and Union Arcade, all within the Mill Gate Shopping Centre, during both weekday and weekends, as well as along Union Street and The Rock to the north of the Mill Gate. A number of pedestrian links entering the town centre are popular with considerable pedestrian volumes found during the day along Market Street between Bury College and the town centre. Other busy routes include Peel Way at Parsons Lane, Manchester Road to Haymarket Street across Angouleme Way and Bolton Street subways underneath Angouleme Way east of Haymarket Street and under Jubilee Way at Tenterden Street. The plan at the bottom of the page shows that the number of designated cycle routes within the town centre allow a network of links between different areas both within and outside of the town centre itself. However, both walking and cycling networks in the town centre require

improved lighting, signage and integration with public transport facilities to encourage greater use. In terms of promoting walking and cycling the public realm should provide an attractive walking environment in which it is easy and safe to walk directly to one's destination. This is summed up by the so-called '5 C's':



Facing page:
top: Bury Bus Interchange
bottom: aerial view of Townside Fields, Bury Metrolink station and Bus Interchange

This page:
top: weekday pedestrian count; source: GMTU;
middle: weekend pedestrian count; source: GMTU;
bottom: Designated cycle routes and cycle parking facilities, source: GMTU;
bottom left: town centre cyclists, image courtesy of Bury Council

- Connected (providing a comprehensive network)
- Convenient (direct routes without detours)
- Comfortable (good surface, width, lighting etc)
- Convivial (encouraging interaction and improving personal security)
- Conspicuous (legible routes with good signing).

The most popular cycle routes in or around Bury town centre are on Manchester Road from the south and on Bury Bridge from the north but these are the only flows that are above the Greater Manchester average.

Conclusions:

- Both pedestrian and cycle networks are provided to allow movement in the town centre but their quality and legibility could be greatly improved.
- The ring road around the town centre causes a significant disruption to pedestrians and cyclists although subways do provide safe connections at specific locations. Beyond the town centre (especially to the north) routes suffer from a lack of lighting and can be perceived to be unsafe at night.



Car Parking Facilities

Car parking within Bury town centre is currently provided on- and off-street and through the Mill Gate multi-storey car park, which has 572 long stay spaces. Of the current 3740 off-street parking spaces in the town centre 2309 are short stay and 1431 long stay spaces. The largest surface car park is at Woodfields Retail Park which provides 1032 short stay spaces. Most of the off-street short stay spaces are located around the outside of the eastern and southern part of the ring road – the larger being the Market car park (445 spaces), Trinity Street (229 spaces) and Foundry Street (142 spaces). Within the ring road the largest off-street long stay car parks are at the leisure centre (219), Bury Metrolink (96) and Bolton Street Station (99 spaces). The market



car park is crucial to the success of the market and great care should be taken not to reduce the number of spaces further. There may be scope for an additional deck of parking on the Market car park.

All of Bury's 360 on-street parking spaces are short stay only with the exception of the areas around Hornby Street at the junction of Peel Way and Derby Way, which provide 43 long stay spaces. The majority of on-street parking spaces are dispersed throughout the Historic Core of the town or within the Southern Gateway around George and Cecil Streets. Recent developments such as JJB's, The Rock and Townside have reduced the number of long stay car parks along the ring road (JJB's – 200; The Rock – 286). These will be replaced by a 1,250 space multi-storey car park at The Rock and by decked parking (397 spaces) that is developed as part of the Townside scheme. The Modus retail scheme on Foundry Street will provide another 139 spaces.

Conclusions:

- 3740 off-street parking spaces are currently allocated in the town centre with a 60/40 split between short and long stay spaces. Woodfields Retail Park to the north of Peel Way provides 1032 short stay spaces.
- The car park close to the market is an essential facility, allowing market customers to park close to the market and access the area by vehicle.
- In 2010 a new 1,250 space multi-storey car park will open at the Rock shopping centre.



Transport Tourism

Leisure transport is an important attraction for people visiting Bury with the steam and diesel locomotive heavy rail services on the East Lancashire Railway - Bury (Bolton Street) to Rawtenstall line. The rail services also call at Summerseat, Ramsbottom and Irwell Vale to the north of Bury and there is the possibility that the route could provide commuter services in the future.

Since the original Bury But Better report, the Bury to Heywood line has been reinstated to provide an ELR station at Heywood and there are further plans to extend the line to Castleton village where it already has a link to the national rail network. In addition there are proposals in place to develop the extensive Buckley Wells site and provide a high standard heritage visitor attraction. Bury Transport Museum at Castlecroft is currently undergoing a major restoration and will reopen with an extended visitor facility in 2009.

Conclusions:

- The East Lancashire Railway line has been extended to Heywood and there are plans to develop the Buckley Wells site and extend the line to the national rail network at Castleton, adding to the wealth of transport related attractions in the area.
- Further work has been discussed to see what potential exists to use the ELR as a commuter service, specifically between area to the North of Bury and Greater Manchester

Facing page:
Woodfields Retail Park car park

This page: ELR ticket office on Bolton Street