

Big Shift Car Free Days

Car Free Days are an opportunity for communities and businesses to take a space typically reserved for cars and open it up to public use. The Big Shift provided the opportunity for three Car Free Days in 2023. Using our learnings and reflections from this past year, we are sharing the opportunity to close a street to cars and open it to people in 2024 to a broader audience.

This document will provide an overview of past examples of Car Free Days, how the process of arranging them will work, and an explanation of what we will need in your proposal.

Previous Car Free Days

Voltaire Road

- Planned by Clapham Business Improvement District (BID)
- This Big Shift Car Free Days took place over four weekends from Friday 8 September to Sunday 1 October 2023.
- Each weekend the road was closed to vehicles from 6pm Friday to 6pm Sunday.
- During the day, businesses extended their tables and chairs into the road.
- On Saturdays from 4pm – 8pm acoustic music was performed from a stage in the middle of the road.
- These Big Shift Car Free Days were mainly focused on providing space for businesses, as such there was a positive reception of the businesses in the space.
- Lessons were learnt however the reception to the event overall was largely positive.
- Limited information sharing, with residents, prior to the events was raised as an issue.
- These Big Shift Car Free Days were a trial testing the success of closing the road to vehicles and activating the space, with a view of more regular or even permanent closures.



Hannen Road

- Hannen Road had been located by Lambeth Council's Soak up Lambeth programme as a site for the potential installation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to reduce flood risks.
- Soak up Lambeth, Station to Station BID, A Small Studio and University of Greenwich collaborated to host co-design workshops during a Big Shift Car Free Day. The desire to have a car free day was driven by local insight that the space could be improved to better suit the road's uses.
- Prior to the road closure on 3 September, A Small Studio hosted a resident only engagement event to discover their priorities for Hannen Road. Afterwards, the collaborators met for a debrief and to discuss future steps.
- The Big Shift Car Free Day itself included three different activities for everyone to take part in to show: how they use the road, what they like about the area, and the improvements they would like to see.



Atlantic Road

- Organised by Lambeth Council and Brixton BID.
- The Atlantic Road Car Free Days happened on the 8 and 9 of June, in tandem with the Lambeth Country Show and London Festival of Architecture.
- The event not only provided extra space for pedestrians on a day with heavy foot traffic but also provided activities, seating and entertainment for all ages.

- Businesses and users of the street provided positive feedback on the events and pedestrianisation, which have been recorded using videos.
- Since the event, regular meetings have occurred amongst the organisers and other stakeholders on how to further improve the road for businesses and the public.



Learnings from the events

- **Take good quality photos and film:** A strong comms plan for before, during and after the event needs to be put in place so that the event is properly advertised and celebrated.
- **Talk to your community:** Pre-event engagement is essential to get residents and businesses on board. As there was limited engagement with residents prior to the Voltaire Road Car Free Day, some felt that they had not been properly notified. As Big Shift Car Free Days aim to have a long-term impact in an area, ensuring that everyone's views are heard and that residents in the area feel involved in the process can help with the longevity of the project.
- **Find out what else is happening in the area:** The Big Shift Car Free Day project at Hannen Road had extensively engaged with residents. However, issues arose as some residents were confused and overwhelmed by several other projects that were happening in the area. The future vision for the event could have been made more impactful by all organising parties having a broader awareness of other schemes in the area and clearly communicating how this event fits into wider council schemes.

- **Be inclusive:** Both Hannen Road and Atlantic Road offered activities for people of all ages and provided space for members of the public, not just businesses. Voltaire Road largely created spaces for businesses to spill out into the street and catered mainly for an adult crowd. Big Shift Car Free Days aim to reimagine the space for everyone, therefore creating family friendly spaces and spaces for the public, not just business patrons, and this should be kept in mind.
- **Feedback is essential:** For Car Free Days to have a lasting impact. Each event handled feedback in a different way that worked for the type of event it was. However, what needs to be ensured is that feedback is collected and formatted in a way that the council can use to move forward with the future vision of the Car Free Day.



Car Free Day Process

Organisation of a Big Shift Car Free Day will largely be the responsibility of the Event Manager, with support from the Council.

The following are the responsibility of the Event Manager and team:

- Event management plan
- Site plan
- Traffic Management plan
- Risk Assessment
- Applying for a Temporary Events Notice (where applicable)
- Applying for any necessary licensing
- Providing gazebos / chairs etc.
- Resident engagement before and after the event

Support and examples for the above can be provided by the Council. Any costs incurred from the above will be the responsibility of the organisers.

The Council will arrange and pay for the following:

- The temporary Traffic Order
- Traffic management
- Parking suspensions

We will need at least 8 weeks' notice to put the temporary Traffic Order in place prior to the event.

The Council will require the plans from the organiser to arrange the above items.

The Proposal

For the Council to move forward with your proposal we will need the following information:

- Event title and brief description
- The proposed dates and times
 - What times would the roads be closed and for how long?
- The location
 - Where exactly would the road closure be?
- Purpose of the event
 - Does this event aim to start the process of reimagining the road entirely? Does it aim to help businesses? What will the event result in ultimately?
- Target audience
 - Will this be for the public? Businesses? Does it target older or younger people?
- What activities will take place?
 - Will there be workshops or music, for example?

More detail will help us see your vision for the event and help build the event management plan should your proposal be approved. A well thought out vision for the event will also help your proposal as ultimately, the Big Shift wants to facilitate long-term changes to an area.

To express your interest, for any questions or more information please contact

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