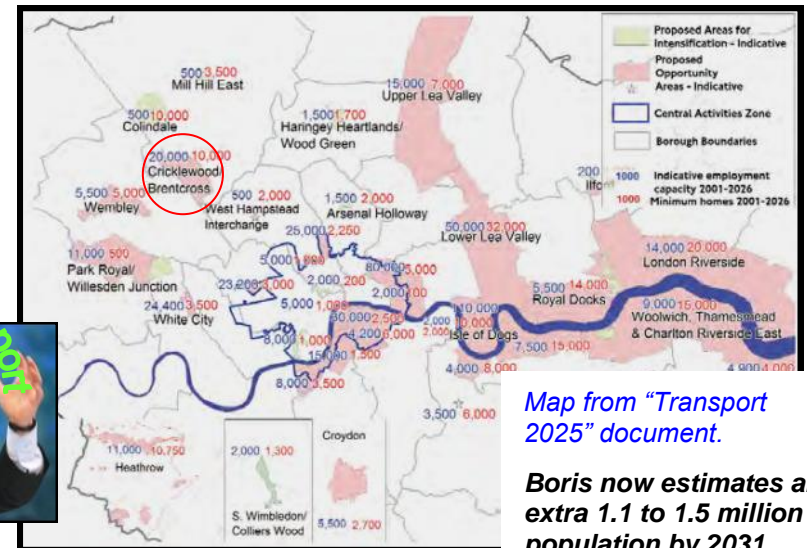


*Threats to possible orbital light-rail in outer London from the current **Brent Cross** planning application...*



*(We need safeguarding in place, for better times!)*



Boris photo: Ian Jones

Map from "Transport 2025" document.

**Boris now estimates an extra 1.1 to 1.5 million population by 2031.**

# Brent Cross: transport

WILL Brent Cross traffic levels add “**29,100**” extra vehicles every day to our roads, which is the 2004 figure (including West Hendon) or “**9,000**” as now stated by the developers? It depends who you ask.

Either way, there are environmental features in the Brent Cross transport plan — but not enough, and not of the right kind.

- The proposed **Brent Cross Thameslink station** will only be four train-lengths away from both Cricklewood and Hendon stations. That **£220-million** would be better spent upgrading the existing stations<sup>(1)</sup>, and contributing to one phase of a “**North and West London Light Railway**”, mainly sharing existing, hardly-used freight corridors and abandoned track-beds. Closure of **Cricklewood station** currently has “plausible deniability” — **but no train that stops there, or at Hendon (or at Kentish Town) will ever be able to stop at the so-called “local town centre / transport hub” of Brent Cross.**
- The planned branded-bus “**Rapid Transit System**”, virtually all within the Brent Cross site, is now considered “temporary”. But special bus routes, on reserved roads, could be converted into a wider light-rail system in the years ahead (instead of spending **£50-million** on the Staples Corner road junction).

The light railway could realistically include *other* development sites at **Colindale, Mill Hill East, Wembley and Park Royal**. It would interchange with *every* Underground and main-line railway in north and west London. Most of the routes are already there. We believe our plan will produce an attractive cost-to-benefit ratio for a new orbital light railway in outer London, to cope with the rising population.



Brent Cross will be the same size as Canary Wharf in 1999, when only light-rail (DLR) stations provided a decentralised transport system. That is a better choice here as well, and a way to connect to the surrounding area, instead of building one centralised main-line commuter station, plus only road access.

## Notes:

- (1) The government UDP inspector made comments about retaining Cricklewood Thameslink station, and the developers are therefore suggesting step-free access.
- (2) The “RTS” at Brent Cross Northern Line station involves the demolition of housing, to provide a turning circle.

In both the above cases, we believe this is *abortive investment*, because both may be of only short-term benefit. Whether or not ‘private’ Section 106 expenditure pays for this is irrelevant — it is better to benefit the public realm with *long-term infrastructure*.

# Brent Cross: **now or never**

THE REST of this document gives our views on how the Brent Cross planning application (C17559/08) will make **future** implementation of light-rail at Brent Cross **effectively impossible**. (In other words, the **current** planning application needs to be rejected, and resubmitted\* only after modifications.)

The “Campaign for Better Transport - London Group” has held discussions with the Brent Cross developers. Unfortunately, we were only offered co-operation in considering a “Phase One” light-rail scheme **if we signed an undertaking not to oppose the planning application**. This “poisoned chalice” was rejected.

We made the point to the developers that, unlike the “Third Heathrow Runway” for instance, we were not totally **against** their scheme — we just wanted it modified. To no avail.

Barnet has always publicised plan C17559/08 as a “draft” application, but it is not — there are extensive “full” applications within it. They include the complete road system, and in particular, the **demolition** of Tempelhof Avenue road bridge across the North Circular Road, suitable for light-rail use in the future. **(It is there already, at no cost!)**

Read our submission, opposing the planning application, on: [www.bettertransport.org.uk/london\\_local\\_group](http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/london_local_group).

\* Only by **rejection** can Barnet Planning charge another planning fee.



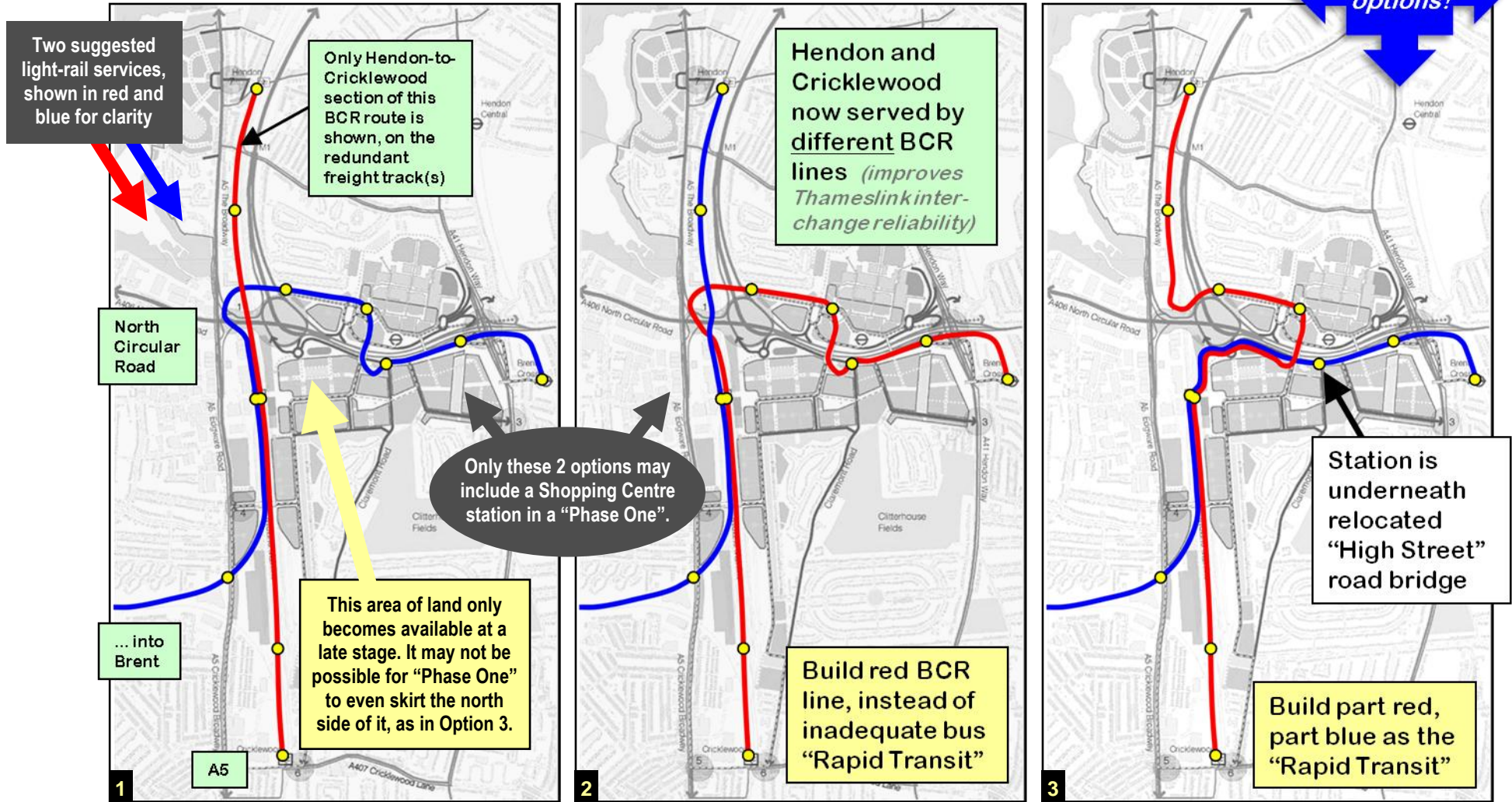
*Do we really want more of these brutalising and alienating pedestrian bridges? The plans for Brent Cross say that we do! They will have “step-free access”, as though that makes them acceptable in this new “town centre”. (Our web site has more detailed arguments .)*



**ROAD NEWS:** You will no longer be able to drive **south** on the A5 and turn **west** on the North Circular (except via new “spaghetti junction” roads at point “A”). **Why did the Highways Agency and TfL agree to this disbenefit?**

# One of our (complicated) "Light Rail Options" slides ...

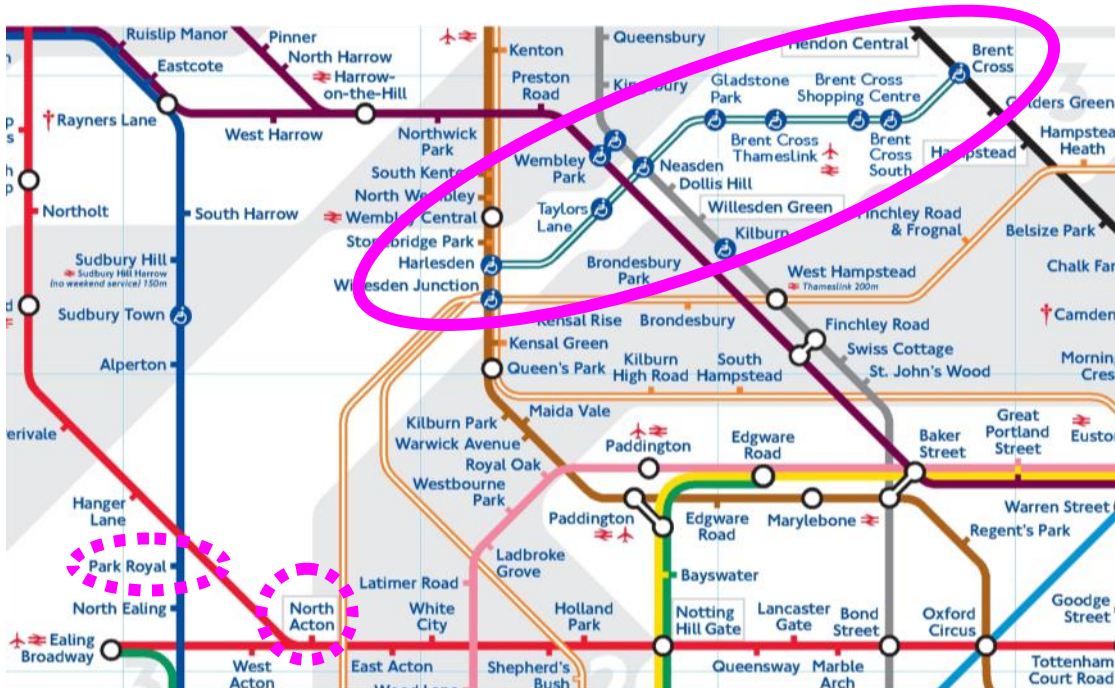
## A "Brent Cross Railway" (BCR) ?



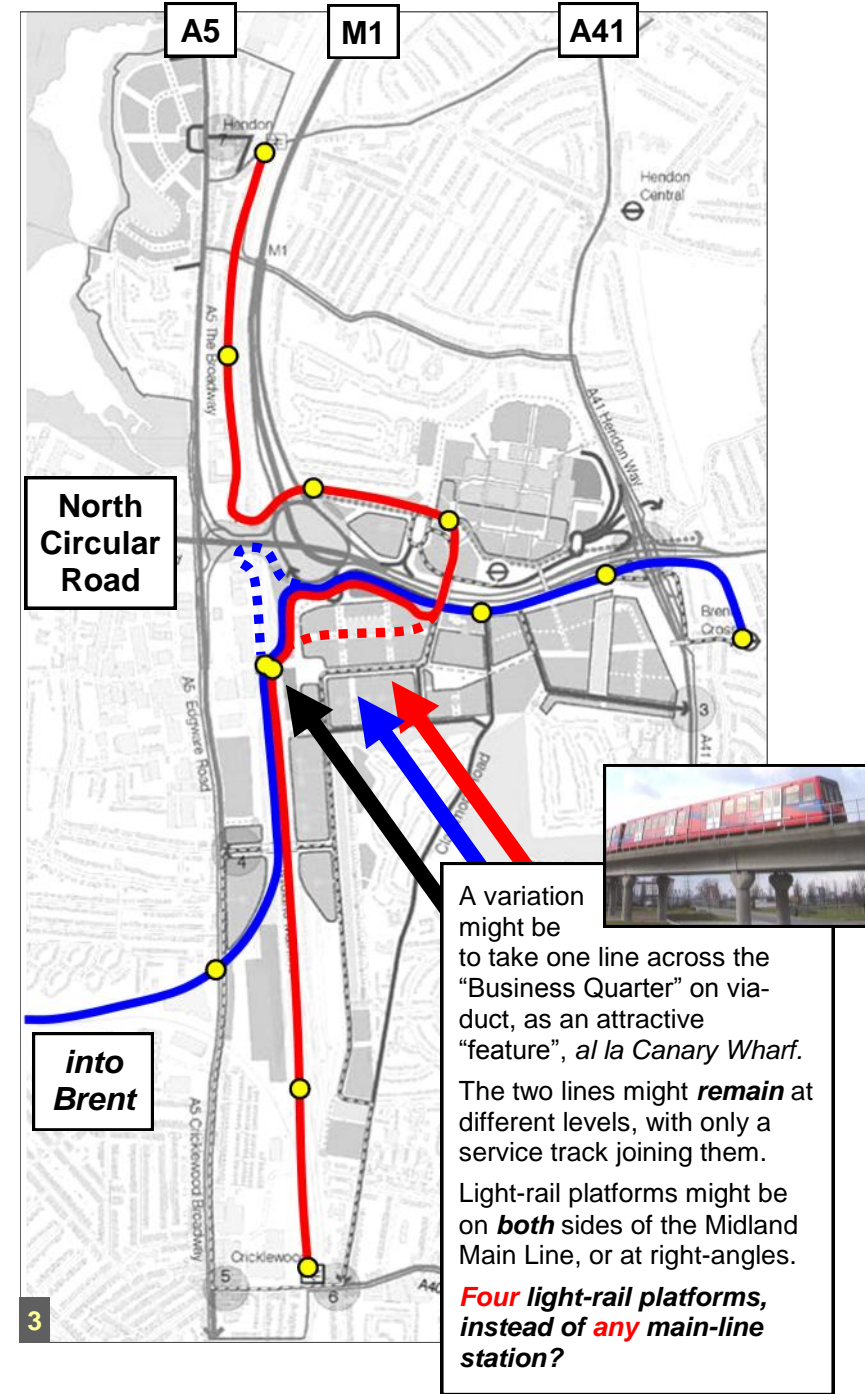
FOR US to claim that [the light-rail scheme cannot be added later](#), we need to say what the rail scheme actually *is*. Unfortunately, we are unable to fully do so. There are many uncertainties about the best Brent Cross route, and how a wider scheme should pass through the site. These could only be resolved in a co-operative planning regime!

Some **possible** routes are shown here. *To the right* are two separate light-rail services (coloured red and blue only for clarity).

The “blue” service might form a “Phase One” along a hardly-used freight line corridor across Brent, to North Acton (Central Line), *partly shown below* on an Underground map. Alternatively, part of the “red” and part of the “blue” service could be combined as “Phase One”.



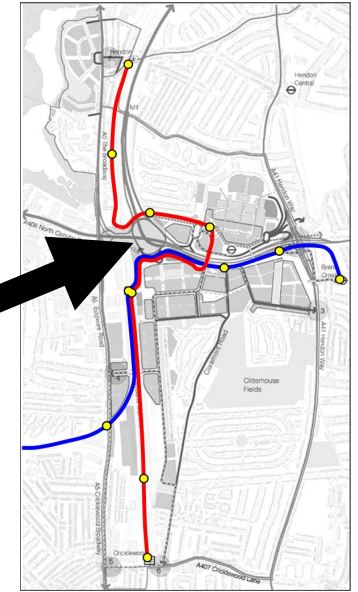
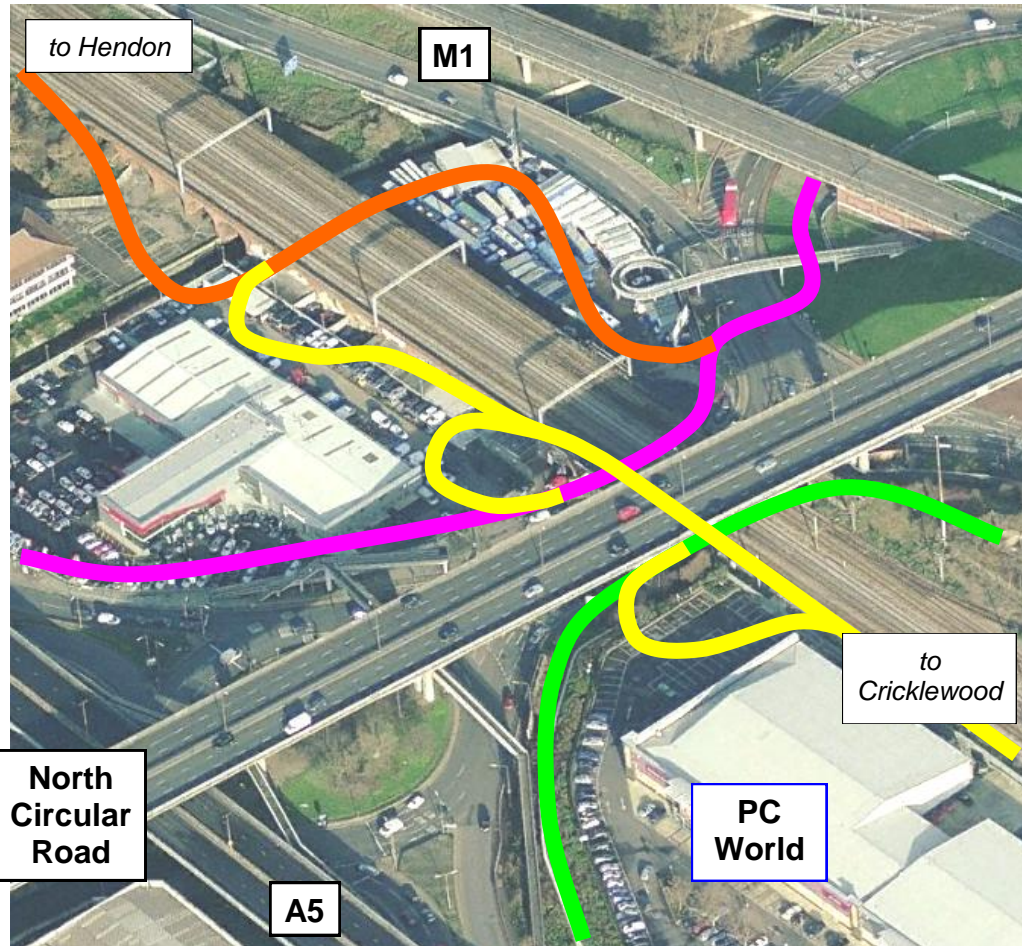
Note: Brent Cross, Neasden and Harlesden stations above do not currently have step-free access.



A variation might be to take one line across the “Business Quarter” on viaduct, as an attractive “feature”, *al la Canary Wharf*. The two lines might **remain** at different levels, with only a service track joining them. Light-rail platforms might be on **both** sides of the Midland Main Line, or at right-angles. **Four light-rail platforms, instead of any main-line station?**

ONE UNKNOWN in any light-rail scheme is the best way to cross the north-south Midland Thameslink main-line railway.

(Although it would be possible to reach south to Cricklewood station with light-rail on the **eastern** side of this main line, continuing further south towards West Hampstead has to be on the **western-side** freight line(s). Given that the Dudding Hill freight line from Brent and Ealing is **also** in the west, it is certain the main-line must be crossed somewhere.)



All the yellow and green lines (*left*) represent possible ways for light-rail (maybe only a single track) to pass **under** the very long railway viaduct, without the need to build an expensive bridge **over** the Midland Thameslink line further south.

The orange and purple lines are routes to allow light-rail to re-join the Midland Main Line freight lines northwards (one of the two tracks is still needed for existing freight) for light-rail to reach Hendon Thameslink station, and on to Colindale.

These are, of course, highly speculative (*some more so than others*). However, light-rail can use curved track down to only fourteen-metres-radius, and also climb and descend steeply.

*There is more discussion on crossing the Midland Main Line, and passing through other parts of the Brent Cross area, on our web site.*

# Downtown “Brent Cross Town Centre”

Continuing the colours from the last page, the purple line and the green line could become two routes. We believe **two services** may prove justified, and using **completely** separate tracks increases time-table resilience.

(The short broken-yellow line might be a service track to join them.)

**Shopping Centre light-rail station** — the Bus Station would be **also** be moved near here, instead of the intention to locate it next to the noise and fumes of the ten-lane North Circular Road.

Alternative locations for Tempelhof Ave., without demolishing our light-rail bridge!

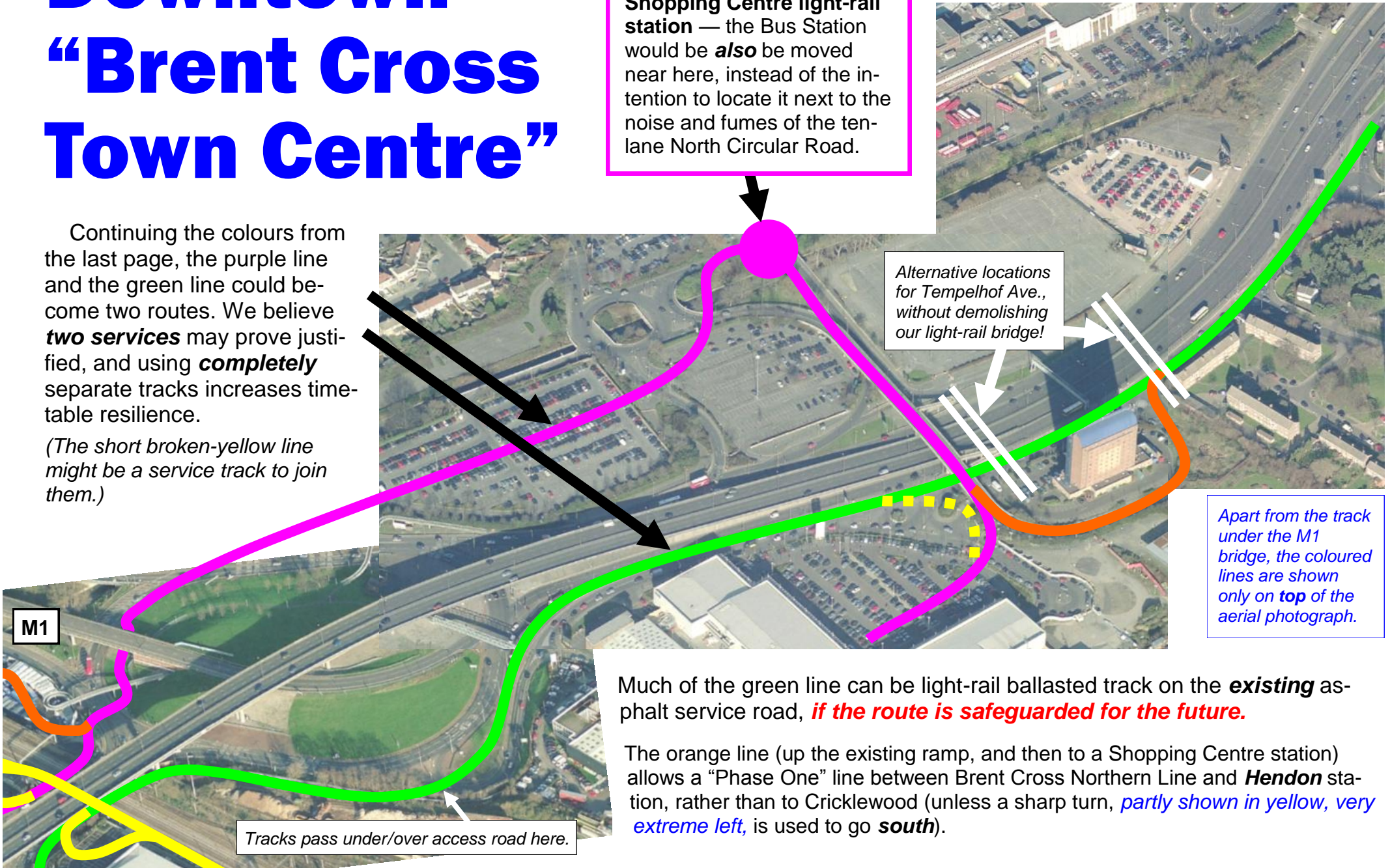
Apart from the track under the M1 bridge, the coloured lines are shown only on **top** of the aerial photograph.

Much of the green line can be light-rail ballasted track on the **existing** asphalt service road, **if the route is safeguarded for the future.**

The orange line (up the existing ramp, and then to a Shopping Centre station) allows a “Phase One” line between Brent Cross Northern Line and **Hendon** station, rather than to Cricklewood (unless a sharp turn, **partly shown in yellow, very extreme left**, is used to go **south**).

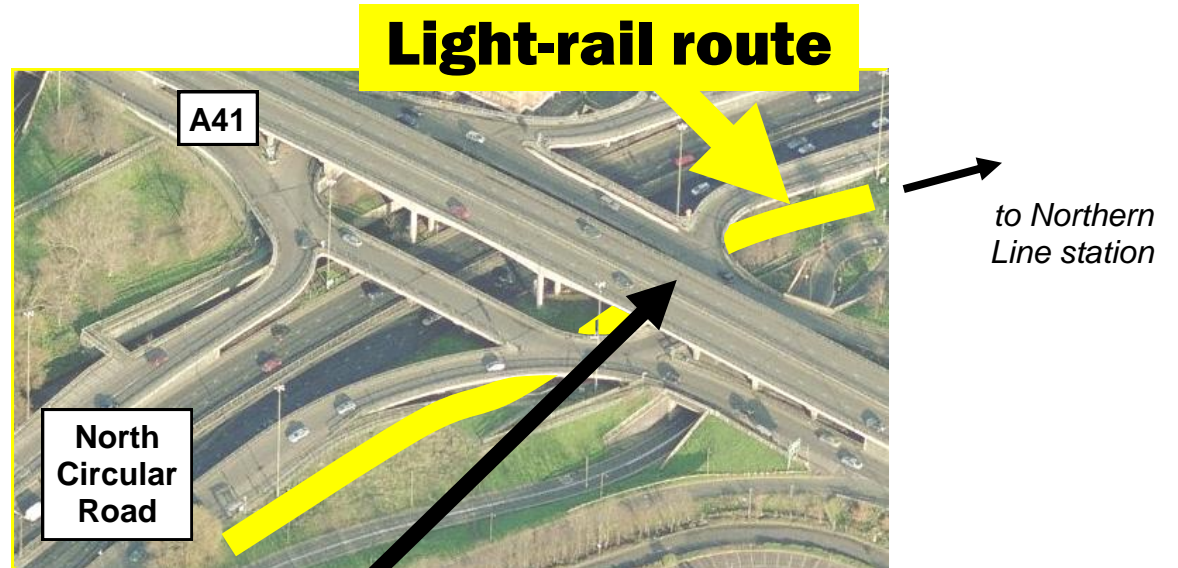
Tracks pass under/over access road here.

M1



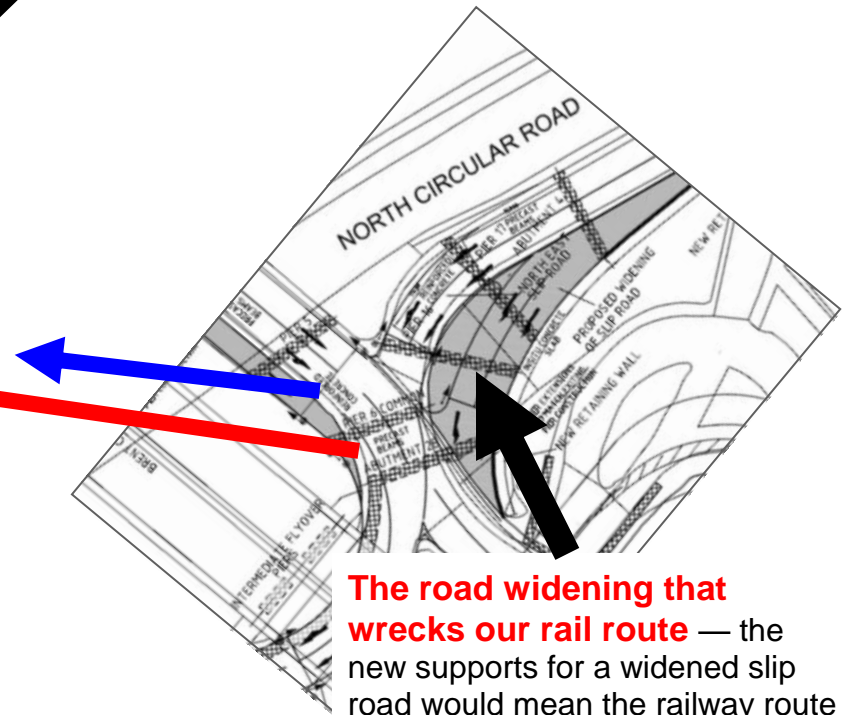
# A41 roundabout changes

(continuing possible light-rail track eastwards, and to Brent Cross Northern Line station ...)



Either **this** span, or more likely, the **next** span to the left, could be used for light-rail.

Only a single track is needed to the terminus at Brent Cross Northern Line station.



**The road widening that wrecks our rail route** — the new supports for a widened slip road would mean the railway route would become impossible — and permanently so.

# Brent Cross tube station

**New entrance to Shopping Centre** — we do not object to enlarging the A41 roundabout, since it means closing the short (and dangerous) slip road off the North Circular, just to the east, on the line of the light railway (at point \*).

## Don't blame us

It is not **our** fault that the developers need to change their plans — we must reduce climate change, road congestion and air pollution, and this application does none of those things. The “Development Framework” was drawn up without sufficient publicity, including in neighbouring Brent and other boroughs, and the developers have treated it as an approved planning application.

Public consultation sessions have often been staffed by PR people who have known virtually nothing about planning — “fill in a card,” they said, and **real public debate** for the last five years (people keep telling us) has been derisory.

Purchase of derelict land for the single track light-rail line is needed here. (A foot-path route must still be determined.)

North Circular Road

Northern Line

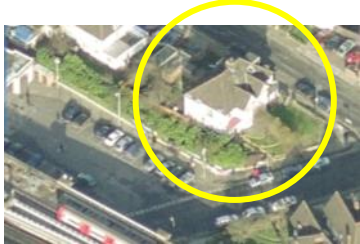
A41

Light-rail route

End of our line!

The light-rail station is at ground level, on TfL land.

(This is lower cost than raising to tube platform level, although there is space to do so, and we have previously suggested it.)



Unnecessary house demolition for what would be a **short-lived** “rapid transit” bus service.

