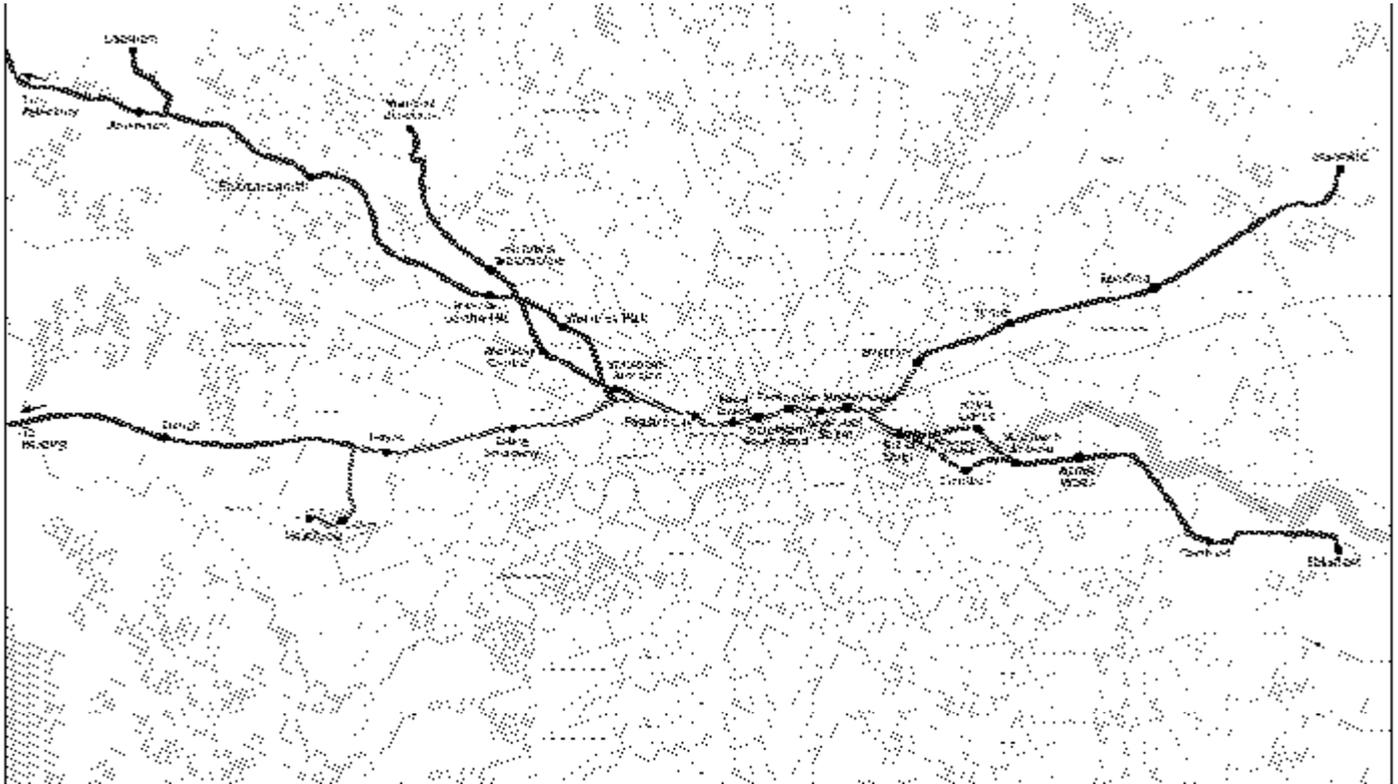


Capital progress on rail



Progress is at last being made on improving the network of London rail links.

Work on the East London Line extension is under way and the "listing" of Braithwaite viaduct in Shoreditch will not stop it, according to Strategic Rail Authority chairman Richard Bowker.

The map above shows various options for Crossrail.

The options were published on 8 March, and after a preferred scheme is announced later in the year, the final route will be selected at the end of the year.

Crossrail could have been built several years ago but Railtrack decided it was not interested in the scheme.

Now a 50-50 joint venture company has been set up by Transport for London and the SRA to take it forward.

The company is called Cross London Rail Links and it now talks about Crossrail one (the scheme above) and Crossrail two, based largely on the idea of a Chelsea-Hackney line.

There are however new possibilities. The north-east end of Crossrail two could go to Chingford, the Lea Valley line and Stansted, the Epping branch of the Central line or even Finsbury Park or Barnet.

If you want to contribute to Railfuture's debate about the options, put your views briefly on paper and send to Crossrail,

Railfuture, The Colourworks, 2 Abbot Street, London E8 3DP.

The Crossrail website is at <http://www.crossrail.co.uk>

Another exciting project is the possible return of trams to central London.

The £300million London Tram project would link King's Cross and Euston via Waterloo, as shown on the map, right.

A report published at the end of February showed that the scheme would deliver £7billion worth of regeneration and would also help to alleviate unemployment because it would link up Lambeth and Southwark – where unemployment is almost double the London average – to the centre.

"We believe the London Tram represents the best deal for commuters, local residents, businesses and employees alike, and we urge Mayor Livingstone to accept our proposal," said Councillor Tom Franklin of Lambeth Council.

One of the scheme's declared aims is to make central London more accessible for key public sector workers like nurses, teachers and police officers. The accompanying regeneration will also aim to provide nearly 7,000 affordable homes for key workers and 5,000 free-market homes. The tram which is expected to create 80,000 new jobs, is being promoted by the Cross River Transit Partnership.

Cross River Transit, 2001

