



Shops go down the Tube in major revamp of stations

- Bosses want shops and cafés in Tube stations
- Revamp will see similar set-up to rail stations and airports
- Strategy is aimed at boosting revenues
- Prime retail space available underground as ticket halls empty



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Matthew Beard

19 March 2013

Tube bosses are to embark on a major revamp of stations to emulate the commercial success of shopping at railways and airports.

New convenience stores, cafés and "virtual supermarkets" at Tube stations will be part of a retail revolution aimed at exploiting the 24 million daily Underground journeys.

Transport for London's commercial strategy is intended to boost its revenues by making the most of prime retail space which has become available because the use of ticket halls has plummeted 65 per cent since the introduction of the Oyster card.

The retail overhaul will begin with Embankment, Oxford Circus, Piccadilly Circus, Baker Street, Old Street, South Kensington, Vauxhall and Harrow-on-the-Hill this year.

TfL will shortly showcase its plans by fitting out a prototype Tube station to show how the next generation will look before the commercialisation programme starts late next year subject to planning consent.

Managing director of London Underground Mike Brown said: "Our customers rightly have increasing expectations of us. We are looking at how we might improve the environment and services offered at our stations while improving the journey experience and supporting the wider communities in which

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our stations are located."

Commuters will be able to shop at "virtual supermarkets" — already commonplace in the subway in Shanghai and Seoul — using their smart phones. They will be able to scan barcodes from electronic screens with pictures of the products which will be delivered to their homes within 48 hours.

Baroness Jo Valentine, Chief Executive of London First, said: "This is a very good starting point and good news for retailers and commuters in London. London Underground is sitting on a large property portfolio and much more can be done to maximise its commercial potential.

"Every pound raised can help support future investment and keep fares down for hard-pressed commuters. It could also make the experience of travelling on the tube more enjoyable".

TfL wants to further exploit the rise in internet shopping by opening collection points at stations so commuters do not have to wait in for goods ordered online but can collect them on their journey home.

The so-called Amazon boxes have already been successfully tested at Brent Cross shopping centre. TfL, which has beefed up its commercial development team under director Graeme Craig to push through the plan, is also targeting supermarket chains.

Supermarkets' "corner stores" — their growth business — are expected to be introduced on the Underground, especially in Zone 1, following the success of Marks & Spencer at Green Park.

But they insist that they will not recreate the "clone town" syndrome in which chain stores have usurped independent traders in Britain's high streets. It is all a far cry from TfL's existing roster of retailers which are limited to smaller concessions on platforms and ticket halls for newsagents and dry cleaners.

TfL believe some of the revenue generated from the new retail areas can be used to redevelop sites.

Tubes earmarked for possible retail development include the roof of Embankment Tube station and Westminster while others such as Victoria will be ruled out on the basis that they already suffer overcrowding in peak hours. At other stations, London Underground offices at street level above the Tube station could be turned into shops, under the plan.

TfL admit they will have to catch up with other modes of transport.

Network Rail has created shopping mezzanines at Waterloo and King's Cross while Heathrow airport earns 17.5 per cent of its revenues from commercial space. TfL insist that the proposal is not a means to cut station staff from its payroll — a move that would be fiercely resisted by the unions.

Mr Brown said: "We remain committed to having our staff on each of our stations, across the London Underground Network, with visible assistance for our customers where they need it most."

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- miserable ole git** 16 hours ago
Before coffee bars and cafes, free to use toilets should be installed and kept open human hours not control freak office hours, much better the aroma of freshly ground coffee than you know what.
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- ASLEFshrugged** 2 days ago
Mike Brown spent a year running Heathrow before he came back to the Tube, obviously it made a lasting impression on him.
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Well he must be an expert on waiting around!
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Terrible idea. More space would be better.
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- Labels** 3 days ago
A terrible idea; you cannot compare a tube station to an airport or even a big train station. They are places you want to get out, a.s.a.p., from, not stay in and not sip coffee.... I cannot think of anything more claustrophobic.
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- Anonymous** 1 day ago
At important stations like Piccadilly Circus many people arrange to meet each other but often have to wait for the other person to arrive so a coffee shop with seats would save having to stand around for sometimes up to an hour!
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- Anonymous** 3 days ago
Great idea, more opportunities for Romanian pickpockets to steal your wallet...
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- Anonymous** 3 days ago
And someone suggested Indian takeaways !
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- mikeploкта** 3 days ago
Existing concessions are certainly not limited to newsagents and dry cleaners. The ticket hall at Canada Water station has an estate agent and a cafe as well as a newsagent.
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- PatrickDalston** 3 days ago
This is nonsense. You only have to look at the mess that has been made at St Pancras where you have to fight your way past the shops to get to your train - and Paddington is almost as bad. Stations as someone else has said are for catching trains. As for airports - you only have to look at the original photos of Stansted when it opened, clear passenger areas, plenty of room, and now it is difficult to know where to find the planes!
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- dougfuters** 3 days ago
How about a chain of Indian Takeaways?
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- Anonymous** 3 days ago
Vindaloo on Bakerloo ?
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- Anonymous** 3 days ago
Main problem is how inaccessible stations are with the lack of escalators and lifts to booking hall. A solution at places like Oxford Circus would be to link the station to the surrounding shops, which would give train to shop access without the need to go outside in winter months!
Canary Wharf shows how to do it but their needs to be integration of stations with new developments for it to work more widely.
As to stations and cafes well Turnpike Lane Station has had a wonderful greasy spoon cafe for decades just hope the trendies don't turn it into a horse meat delicatessen !
[Reply](#)
- Anonymous** 3 days ago



Kate Moss: sheer decadence down the decades



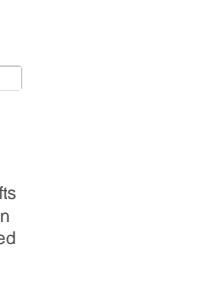
Rats, foxes, moles and mice looking cuter than cute




And then for the serious business of Oscars night - the partying



From ugliest building to most depressing new, the Shit London Awards winners



 Why not smarten up the platforms by taking a lead from the Paris metro, where for instance some of the stations near the major museums pick up on the themes of the museums?

I agree about Oxford Circus. Hordes of people left standing outside with no explanation of what the problem is. There should be a speaker system that can deliver announcements about delays, cancellations and overcrowding.

[Reply](#)

+2

 **roving robin** 3 days ago

Oxford Circus - is that the Oxford Circus which closes every day during rush hour because too many people are trying to use it? And you want to put a supermarket in there? It's bad enough fighting your way through all the dithering tourists to get to the trains, now we're going to get caught up in the queue for horsemeat burgers and bogroll? Just sort the bloomin' trains out and forget the retail experience!

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 **Anonymous** 3 days ago

I do not want to shop or buy anything in a tube station. I just want a train that arrives in time and gets me to my destination quickly, cheaply and in one piece. Not that difficult surely?

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 **Anonymous** 3 days ago

You won't be the only one. The difference for airports and big mainline stations is that they have lots of passengers who have arrived early for long journeys. I'd take a lot of convincing that is true on the tube. Order in one place, and collect from another might be a different, new market.

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 **Valeria** 18 hours ago

Absolutely. These people need to realise that we are passengers not customers.

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 **Anonymous** 3 days ago

Are tfl talking about increasing the below ground fire loading along passages which may be in effect the fire exit route?
I can see why this might not be right and proper in all underground locations. A self contained booking office is a sealed compartment and much safer than a shop filled with flammable goods.

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 **Anonymous** 3 days ago

TfL could be onto a goldmine as commuters wait and wait for cancelled trains. A few B&B's down there would help, for those forced to stay overnight.
dhanraj

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 **Anonymous** 3 days ago

Just convert coaches into caravan style couches!

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RENT

Price range

Min price

to

Max price

Bedrooms

Min beds