# London’s transport crisis deepens as strikes and unregulated micro-mobility expose systemic failures



Londoners have been pushed to the brink by yet another disruptive strike, exposing the fragile and outdated nature of the city’s transport infrastructure. As commuters abandon hope in the failing Tube system, a surge in cycling accidents has emerged—not as a sign of progress, but as a cautionary tale of government neglect and mismanagement. The Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) union’s walkout, which crippled London Underground services from Sunday evening through Friday morning, has forced desperate commuters into alternative means of travel, with a startling 44% spike in bike collisions reported by the London Ambulance Service. This uptick isn’t just a matter of inconvenience — it’s a reflection of a system rotten at its core, incapable of serving the needs of its people.

In the chaos, the reliance on rental bikes and e-bikes has skyrocketed—reporting a 72% increase in usage—highlighting a dangerous dependence on unregulated, poorly managed micro-mobility schemes. Companies like Transport for London’s Santander Cycles, Lime, Forest, and Voi have seen demand surge, with Lime trips during rush hour soaring by over 50%. These figures reveal how the failure of traditional public transport is forcing many into unsafe riding conditions, with many opting for longer, riskier journeys—an unplanned attempt at urban resilience that only underscores the government’s failure to deliver reliable, modern infrastructure.

Other transport modes aren’t faring any better. Buses and river services such as Uber Boat by Thames Clippers have seen increased ridership, but these aren’t solutions—they’re patches on a sinking ship. The City of London’s recent crackdown on abandoned bikes, seizing over 100 left blocking pavements, underscores the chaos wrought by uncoordinated, over-reliant dockless schemes. This scenario has deepened calls for urgent infrastructure overhaul, but instead, transport policy remains mired in failed political agendas.

Meanwhile, the debate intensifies over driverless trains—a tempting, yet ultimately insufficient distraction from the real issues. Proponents tout automation as the answer to strikes and service disruptions, harking back to the Docklands Light Railway’s driverless operation since 1987. However, this misplaced reliance on costly, unproven technology ignores the pressing need for properly funded, well-maintained infrastructure. Boris Johnson’s and Grant Shapps’ flirtation with driverless trains was always a political distraction, and now London faces a £20 billion price tag for just a few lines—money that would be better spent on fixing the core system. Mayor Sadiq Khan’s recent retreat from driverless projects exposes a city that refuses to face its core transportation crisis, leaving commuters to suffer in increasingly unsafe conditions.

The economic damage from this latest industrial action is staggering—an estimated £230 million hit to London’s economy, with countless more in lost productivity and disruption. Critics rightly see the union’s stubborn stance as a throwback to union dinosaurs clinging to obsolete power, risking not only jobs but the very public services Londoners depend on. The refusal to modernize, to invest in real solutions, threatens to deepen the crisis rather than resolve it.

As private rental schemes scramble to keep up—Lime and others recharging bikes and expanding fleets—the real question is: how much longer can London’s transport system mask its failures with temporary fixes? The reliance on unregulated bikes, the neglect of proper transport funding, and the political dithering over automation all point to a government more interested in short-term political gains than long-term security. A city’s strength lies in its infrastructure, but London’s is crumbling, and the current strike is a sobering wake-up call—a catastrophe waiting to happen unless urgent, decisive action is taken to restore reliable, safe, and accountable public transport.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15093973/Striking-tube-drivers-bike-accident-travel-cycling.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/sustainable-finance-reporting/london-commuters-turn-bikes-boats-tube-strike-enters-second-day-2025-09-09/> - As a London Tube strike entered its second day, commuters sought alternative transportation methods, turning to bikes, buses, and boats due to the near-total shutdown of the underground network, which was expected to persist until Friday. The increased demand significantly strained other transport modes: electric bike-sharing services such as Lime and Forest reported large spikes in usage—Lime saw a 58% increase in Monday morning trips, while Forest recorded a 300% rise on Tuesday morning. River transport services, like Uber Boat by Thames Clippers, also experienced heightened demand, adding extra routes to accommodate passengers. ([reuters.com](https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/sustainable-finance-reporting/london-commuters-turn-bikes-boats-tube-strike-enters-second-day-2025-09-09/?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/ffa16e07-b83f-40a6-af1d-b9b2902a67db> - During a major London Underground strike, dockless bicycles emerged as a key alternative transport solution, significantly mitigating the disruption. Unlike previous strikes, this one coincided with the widespread availability of app-based rental bikes, notably from Lime and Forest, which saw massive surges in demand—Forest experienced a tenfold increase in app downloads, while Lime reported nearly 50% more trips. Transport for London also saw notable increases in bus usage and Elizabeth Line ridership. However, chaotic scenes of scattered dockless bikes in central London raised logistical challenges for providers. ([ft.com](https://www.ft.com/content/ffa16e07-b83f-40a6-af1d-b9b2902a67db?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/lime-bikes-tube-strike-london-b1247258.html> - E-bike company Lime has put up tongue-in-cheek adverts around the city on the final day of the Tube strikes, joking that “there is a good service on all Limes”. Signs taking inspiration from the Tube map have appeared across the city as commuters who would normally take the Tube cycled into the city centre. Billboards in areas such as Waterloo, Brick Lane, Highbury, and Deptford displayed the signs which joked about the “Bakerloo Lime” or “Central Lime” being easy options to move around the capital. ([standard.co.uk](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/lime-bikes-tube-strike-london-b1247258.html?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.moveelectric.com/e-bikes/rail-strikes-rental-e-scooter-and-e-bike-usage-set-surge> - Lime, the winner of this year’s Move Electric Innovation Award, experienced a sharp rise in demand for both its e-scooter and e-bike services in London during the strike that affected the London Underground on Monday June 6. Lime says that trips using its e-scooters and e-bikes were up a combined 44 per cent compared to the previous Monday, with the number of new accounts created up 144 per cent and the number of first trips taken rising 150 per cent. ([moveelectric.com](https://www.moveelectric.com/e-bikes/rail-strikes-rental-e-scooter-and-e-bike-usage-set-surge?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.standard.co.uk/business/business-news/lime-londoners-tube-london-city-of-london-corporation-b1247024.html> - E-bike usage has spiked in London as commuters sought alternative ways to get around the city while strikes shut down Tube services. Lime revealed a more than 50% jump in trips during rush hour traffic on Monday and Tuesday, rising to three-quarters by Wednesday. It coincided with a strike by London Underground workers with thousands of members of the Rail, Maritime and Transport union (RMT) walking out during the week. ([standard.co.uk](https://www.standard.co.uk/business/business-news/lime-londoners-tube-london-city-of-london-corporation-b1247024.html?utm_source=openai))