

Cycling and Trams



Throughout the development of the Edinburgh Tram Project, The City of Edinburgh Council and tie Ltd have been liaising with SPOKES and other cycle lobby groups to ensure that the resulting infrastructure considers the needs of all users.

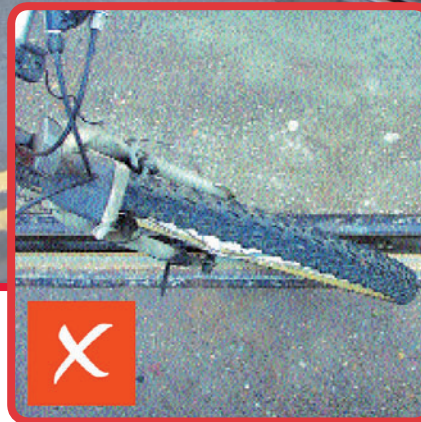
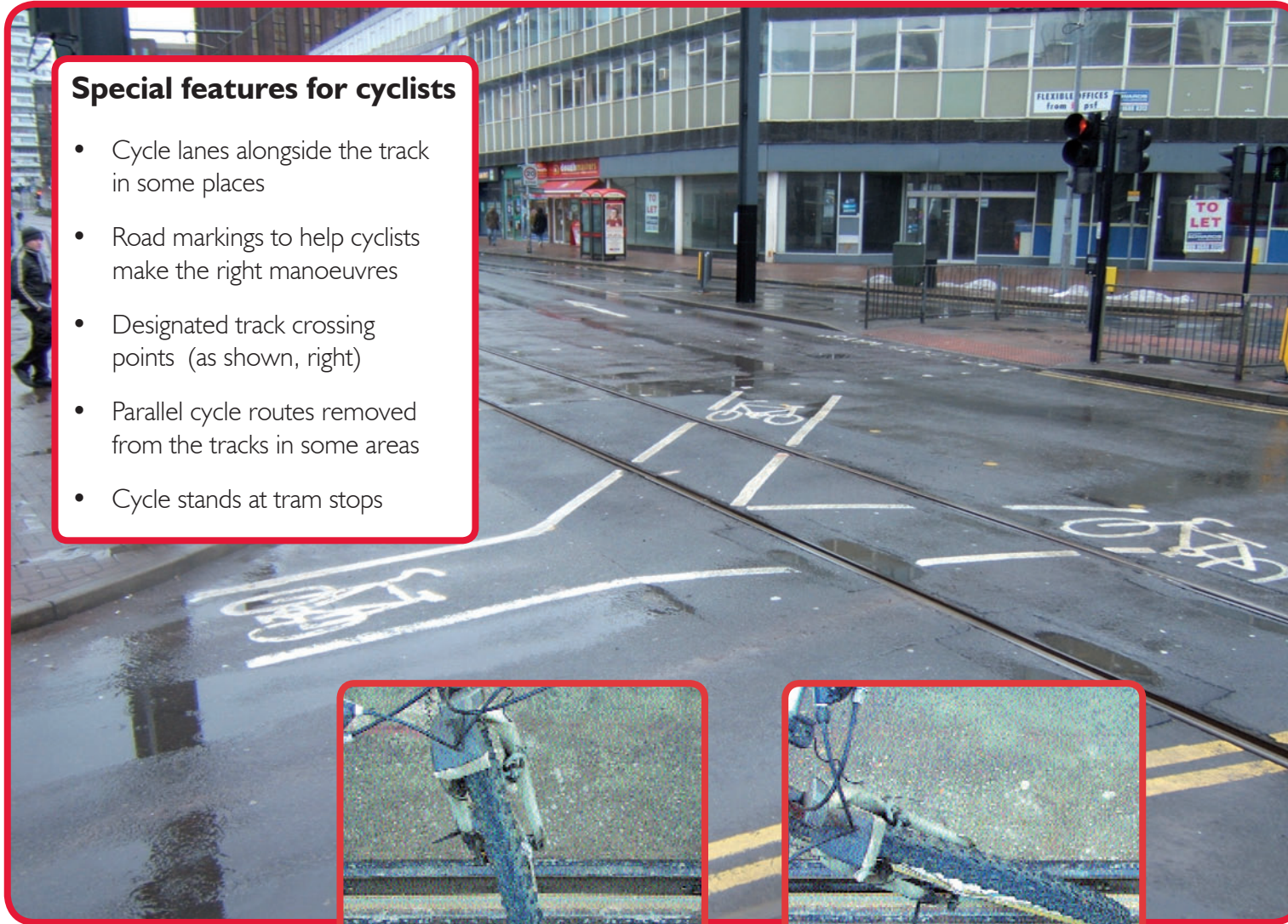
Within the detailed design of the route itself the designers have considered a wide range of cycle options in developing their proposals. Many of these have not been practicable given the many conflicting constraints. There are, however, ongoing efforts to ensure that Tram and cycle integration is achieved in an appropriate manner.

To this end tie has just commissioned a specific study into this aspect of the tram delivery.

Cyclist features and considerations

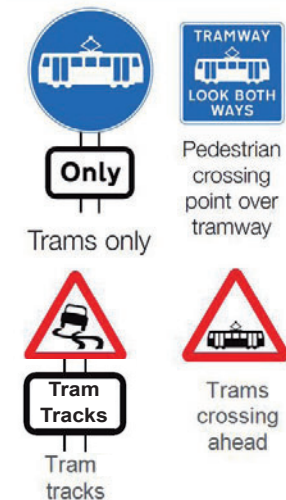
Special features for cyclists

- Cycle lanes alongside the track in some places
- Road markings to help cyclists make the right manoeuvres
- Designated track crossing points (as shown, right)
- Parallel cycle routes removed from the tracks in some areas
- Cycle stands at tram stops



Cyclist considerations in relation to tram

- Tram Vehicles are large and quiet - be alert when cycling near the tram route
- Unlike buses, the tram path is fixed by the track – keep out of its way
- The track groove is similar in width to that of a cycle wheel – ensure you cross at an angle which is as close to 90 degrees as possible as shown, below left.
- The track can be slippery when wet - take care to approach it at an appropriate angle
- There will be a number of traffic signs which you may not recognise, although not yet finalised these may include signs similar to those shown below:



Cycle / Tram Interface

The tram route design has been undertaken with extensive consultation from all stakeholder groups, including those representing cycle interests. Over the past two years, public design exhibitions have been held at every stage in the design process to allow the public and impacted stakeholders to view, and comment on, the emerging tram design.

To further assist in that process, the City of Edinburgh Council and tie Limited agreed with SPOKES to jointly fund external expert advice to look at how the road space could be optimised. A European consultant was appointed to review the competing interests for the available road space.

The design process identified a need to review the use of road space in two specific locations; Princes Street and Leith

Walk. Both streets have similar, but slightly different, spatial constraints. These needed to be addressed to allow the tram to be implemented.

For both locations, it was necessary to review how right-turning traffic would interface with the tram. To allow the tram to operate safely, right-turning traffic can only be permitted under traffic signal control.

Where the turn is not permitted a physical barrier, such as a central reservation must be introduced. This issue was covered in the original drawings and information which was submitted to Parliament as part of the promotion of the Tram Bills.

The following text provides further detailed information on each location.

Princes Street

The Tram Acts restrict the implementation of the tram and the associated works to the area between the existing buildings on the north side of Princes Street and the gardens fence line on the south side.

To allow a cycle lane that complies with UK standards, a significant area of footway space would need to be removed, particularly from the north side. Pavements have been widened over the years in response to increased pedestrian demand. Approximately 70,000 pedestrians use Princes Street on an average Saturday, and there is insufficient space to allow a permanent reduction in footway space. In simple terms, the benefits to cyclists are outweighed by the detriment to pedestrians, particularly given the number of users involved.

There may be a longer term solution should the number of buses on Princes Street be reduced.

Conclusion

At any location in the city centre there simply isn't enough road space to meet everyone's wishes. Difficult decisions have to be taken and priorities must be set.

On Leith Walk it is important that we support the business community, hence the need to maintain parking and loading facilities, and on Princes Street the biggest issue is the high pedestrian numbers, hence the need to maximise footway space.

In setting those priorities, the City of Edinburgh Council and tie Ltd look to take as balanced a view as possible and every effort is being made to compensate other users; in the case of cyclists this means introducing lanes where space permits and providing advanced stop lines and lead-ins where space and traffic constraints allow.

Leith Walk

The issue for Leith Walk is similar to Princes Street, but the width constraints are imposed by the requirements to retain parking and loading. Unlike Princes Street however, to accommodate the tram it has been necessary to reduce some of the footway widths on Leith Walk. The implementation of a cycleway on Leith Walk would require the removal of parking and loading, and such a significant alteration would be to the detriment of the local shops and residents.

To maximise right-turning opportunities and retain as much access as possible, new traffic signals will be introduced at six junctions on Leith Walk. These are located at London Road, McDonald Road [tramstop], Dalmeny Street, Balfour Street [tramstop], Springfield Street and Manderston Street. These traffic signals also provide essential and regular safe crossing points for pedestrians.

The width of the central reservation on both Princes Street and Leith Walk was also considered in great detail. The introduction of a traffic signal controlled junction requires that traffic signal heads are located in the middle of the road (to comply with UK standards). Clearance requirements demand that the width of an island must be 1.5 metres. The frequency of traffic signals and the restrictions of track geometry make it impractical to regain space along the street by restricting islands to junction approaches only.

tie Limited has commissioned Transport Planning International (TPI) to undertake a review of wider-area cycling measures around Leith Walk to determine if additional measures can be implemented to provide alternative routes.

Questions?

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