

SPOKES COMPETITION ENTRIES 2009

Entrant 1

£1 million is a modest sum and won't go very far. So, the scheme has to be simple in concept, easily achievable, and focused on a relatively compact, well-defined area for maximum impact in relation to cost. The approach should be broad-brush rather than piecemeal in order to benefit the maximum number of cyclists. Edinburgh seems an appropriate area to concentrate on. Within Edinburgh the scheme needs to break down existing disincentives to cycling and encourage the maximum number of new and existing cyclists to get on their bikes.

There are numerous potential reasons why people don't cycle. I suggest one of the biggest problems is safety, and the dangers - perceived or actual - of cycling on city streets.

My proposal is to create or extend existing red cycle lanes, plus advanced stop lines at junctions, on every A and B road in Edinburgh. They should also be created within existing greenways and on roundabouts. The lanes should be demarcated by rumble strips to discourage vehicle encroachment. Cycles should have priority in them at all times. Parking in cycle lanes should be banned and properly enforced. In conjunction with this, the speed limit on all other roads in the city should be reduced to 20mph, and again, that must be properly enforced.

In this way, the scheme will create a continuous network of cycle routes on every street throughout the city. It will send out the message that cyclists have a legitimate place on Edinburgh's roads and that they are officially welcomed rather than just grudgingly tolerated. As a result cycling levels will rise, with cyclists of all ages and abilities feeling encouraged to use any street and take any route in relative safety.

Entrant 2

My idea is to increase awareness of the fun and benefits of cycling; to make cycling more possible and popular for children. If we are to achieve a step change in cycling we need to attract school children into cycling now. That is cycling further than the occasional round the block in the holidays – cycling to school (now only 1% cycle to school); cycling with their parents, e.g. to the shops, to football, to friends and relatives; cycling at weekends for leisure in Scotland's outdoors. Currently cycling seems to be only introduced and supported in schools from P5 onwards, by the cycling organisations. I recommend cycling be given more emphasis earlier and cycling be integrated into school sports, as well as included in travel, health and environment projects. It takes people outdoors, encourages them to explore and could teach cycle and road safety. I propose:

1. **Cycling with young children and babies be promoted amongst pregnant women; or in post natal support.** Once children are old enough to sit up they can easily be transported by bike in bike seats. This gives the mum plenty of freedom and chance for exercise, even in green spaces.

For this to happen there needs to be considerable support for women; as I assume currently many women are nervous of cycling with their young child. However, there are numerous mother and baby clubs over Edinburgh which the cycling agencies could start working with, and it is likely they could find mothers who could be champions. It might some financial support: some women may be deterred because of the cost of a bike seat (about £80): but most likely it will be about training & education: taking people on rides along safe routes, maybe with bikes supplied for the day by the bike agencies. This might necessitate partnership working with health visitors and public health practitioners.

2. **Cycling to school and at school be promoted.** I think the idea of having “crocodiles” where several children cycle with a couple of guiding adults is a good one. Are schools already awarded for this – perhaps in the cycle friendly scheme. However, I feel that the crocodiles could start from P2, once children have got to know each other and teachers/parents and children know who is lives reasonably close to each other. If

there are not sufficient confident cyclists amongst parents then it maybe at first the cycling agencies need to support the parents, e.g. they may need to lead the crocodile for the first week.

Britain's success in cycling recent e.g with Mark and Chris Hoy, might help promote cycling as a popular leisure activity. Can the cycling agencies build on that in schools – e.g. with gimmicks like Cycling Top Trump cards, which also top tips on where to buy a cheap bike, how to maintain it, cycle safety etc. Can schools be encourage to have children read cycle maps and make treasure hunts on cycle paths...just generally use the paths and increase awareness of them.

3. **Bike to school scheme for children.** We have bike to work: can we organise bike to school: a way of subsidising bikes for school children, provided they are used for / at school. Maybe schools could buy bikes at reduced cost and then lend them to children on an eg monthly rota, to enable them to take part in cycling to and in school. Kids tend to like cycling – if they improve in that month and gain confidence they are likely to want to continue.
4. **Giving cyclists who are parents** time off to support schools develop cycling activities. This would be a kind of “back fill” for employers where necessary. Some employers may give staff time for free because of reasons of corporate social responsibility. My experience at the school my child attends is that none of the teachers have the time to organise cycling events, or to take cycling into the curriculum e.g. putting it on instead of gym in the gym hall in summer. I can't do it either as working fulltime, but if allowed out from work would happily do it. The school (like others in Edinburgh) doesn't have green playing fields but does have a large enough concrete area where you could teach 20ish pupils to ride a bike, do obstacle course, have fun and improve. Again you may need school bikes for this. Older children could be encouraged and support to maintain the bikes (integrate into physics/life skills/engineering classes?) if they belong to the school: maybe the cycling agencies could pay a cycling shop to teach the older children.
5. **Older children:** cycling for transport; & cycling together, promoting team building, and the development of other skills geared towards employability. Community development workers to work with S3-S6 around designing, funding and implementing local (infrastructural) projects that support cycling in their area.

Cycling is good for children's confidence and self esteem. It gives them some freedom and can teach about “controlled risk taking”; altogether good for their development. However we don't invest enough in schools at the moment. I think there are opportunities under Curriculum for Excellence, but I think a barrier will be teacher time (and even confidence or skills?). Therefore I propose that we pay for people to generate more buy-in to, and activity around, cycling in schools.

If £40,000 per education, training and support worker, then I estimate would need 1 per every 5 schools & one for each for each Community Health Partnership to support pre-school work. Posts would be required to build the capacity of people they worked with to ensure sustainability and growth.

Also need bikes in schools – could be 40 per school @ approx £200 per bike. Approx £40,000 for 5 schools. Need to make sure the school, or pupils or parents feel ownership of them and there is a sustainable plan for maintenance.

I am interested in cycling as it's a great way to travel. The exercise is SO good for your health – mind and body – you go a good enough speed to get around the city but yet are out inn the open and can see what's going on. I commute to work and to meetings on my bike. I have a special interest in promoting good mental health – bikes can do it!

Entrant 3



My proposal is to equip around 200 Scottish bus routes with American-style "Rack-n-Roll" bike racks. Each of these racks allows a bus to carry two bikes safely and securely, with no inconvenience to passengers or driver. The system is used in over 150 American and Canadian cities, where it is credited with bringing about a steady year-on-year increase in bike use. According to one estimate, it was directly responsible for generating 12 million *additional* bike journeys in 2008¹.

In Scotland, the benefits of carrying bikes on trains are well known and accepted. Carrying bikes on buses would bring the same benefits, but would be available to a much larger population. In particular:

1. It would open up new opportunities for cycle commuting. Riders would be able to use their bikes for part of a journey that would be too long to cycle the whole way. It would also provide a reassuring backup: commuters could cycle to work, safe in the knowledge that they can use the bus if, for any reason, they're unable to cycle home.
2. It would encourage leisure cycling, especially among less experienced riders who might be nervous of riding in town centres and suburban roads. The bus would let them leapfrog the urban traffic and reach open country quickly and safely.
3. Most importantly, it would provide a highly visible reminder of the existence of bikes in the wider transport system and of the important role they play.

There would also be benefits to bus operators in terms of the extra ridership that would be generated.

The Rack-n-Roll carrier is a foldable rack that is permanently fixed to the front of the bus. Bikes can be loaded or unloaded in about 20 seconds, and one bike can be removed without disturbing the other. American experience shows that there is no increase in bus loading times, as the bikes can be loaded while other passengers are boarding.

The system is completely safe and does not interfere with normal bus operation. The bike is fully protected, even in the event of an emergency stop or minor collision. No part of the bike comes into contact with the other bike or the bus. The rack doesn't have to be removed for vehicle servicing or the bus wash.

I would concentrate the system on routes leading from cities and large towns into surrounding commuter towns and countryside. It's more important to equip every bus on a given route than a few buses on more routes. A good example of a suitable route is the First Scottish 62, from Edinburgh to Melrose via Peebles and Galashiels. This serves around a dozen towns and villages, and reaches good cycling country that's not accessible by rail.

Based on figures published by Sportworks², the largest US manufacturer of the bike-on-bus racks, I estimate that it would cost £400 to equip one bus, including labour costs. The above-mentioned Melrose route requires 11 vehicles to maintain its half-hourly service (including maintenance cover), which indicates a total cost of £4,400 for that route. For £1 million, it would therefore be possible to equip around 200 similar routes throughout Scotland, with money left over for ancillary costs such as publicity. It's hard to think of any other initiative that would do so much to encourage cycling for such a small investment.



Sources and references:

^{1,2} Sportworks (www.bicycleracks.com)

Federal Transit Administration: Bicycles and Transit, A Partnership that Works (http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/FTA_Bicycles_and_Transit_Booklet_1999.pdf)

Victoria Transport Policy Institute (<http://www.vtpi.org/tdm/tdm2.htm>)

Top photo: Sportworks. *Bottom photo:* Valley Transit, Appleton WI

Entrant 4

My idea to get more people cycling more often in Scotland starts with a campaign towards the regulation makers and designers of roads to see how we can change their attitude away from making cars of primary importance in our towns, cities and countryside and put more emphasis on cycling.

My suggestion would be to offer a week of intense cycling input to at least 5No. Roads Officers of each of Scotland's 32 unitary authorities, i.e. 160No. Officers.

Provide 1No. Brompton folding bike to each Officer	£95,200.00
Provide 1No. waterproof and cycle clip to each Officer	£6,400.00
Take all 160No. Officers on a week-long trip to see successful cycling initiatives in Europe. Travel:	£80,000.00
1No. week of relatively good accommodation (we can stay in youth hostels, or camp)	£120,000.00
Accumulative Cost	£301,600.00

After the visit, we would hold a debriefing meeting with all Officers at a luxury hotel in Scotland, where we would review how we could not only implement, but improve on the cycle friendly initiatives we have just seen in Europe. We would seek to create an understanding that the benefits achieved through the promotion of cycling in Scotland.

Hotel in Scotland, 160No. officers for 2 nights £48,000.00

At the end of the conference, I would request each officer to cross his/her heart and hope to die if they did not implement the measures they had experienced on their study trip.

Just so that memories would not fade of the wonderful opportunities available to the Roads Officers, I would suggest an annual X-Factor Scotland's Roads Officer's Got Talent television show, where Local Authorities compete to show how they are promoting the best interests of cycling in Scotland.

Initial TV set up costs (approx) £650,400.00

Total Anticipated Cost £1,000,000.00

Advertising revenues towards the end of the series may be hit slightly as more people would be out cycling and not watching TV, however, a deal with the NHS could be made with the subsequent reduction in healthcare costs would balance this out.

Whilst the entire initiative cannot be promoted as an opportunity to make a financial gain, early estimates would suggest a 100% return on the £1,000,000.00 investment within 15 years, to be ploughed back into future competitions.

My interest in cycling is carried over to my job, where I am involved primarily in residential design, in which I continually seek, however frequently thwarted, to the introduction of cycle-friendly initiatives in my designs. I find that whilst there is a huge interest in such matters, any idea that deviates from standard road design guidance, originally formulated in the 1970's is vehemently objected to and subsequently eliminated. The resulting designs are then manifested in the many soulless residential estates that blight Scotland's suburban landscape.

My entry is a tongue in cheek pop at local authorities who have such uncontested power and ignore empirical evidence from Europe that there is a better way in road design that is safer, looks better and encourages social well-being and good public health.

Entrant 5

Here's how to encourage more cycling (and walking) throughout this country, train and bus use too! Spend one million pounds by offering a £5 voucher (one per household but could be extended to more than one per household if demand allowed).

The household would have to fill in a simple questionnaire eg on travel patterns/bike use/knowledge of local cycle/pedestrian/bus/train routes/how they'd use the voucher etc - any question or info stakeholders such as

Spokes/ramblers/living streets etc wanted to know or wanted the voucher applicant to know).

The vouchers could be redeemed at local bike shops for free puncture or other repair (to value of £5) or local transport map.

When vouchers were given to those taking part they would also be given local train/bus timetables and email links to bustracker/cycling, walking etc organisations etc. If there are no bike shops in the area, schools or council offices/libraries or similar could be used to distribute maps, inner tubes and info on walking/cycling/public transport. Participating bike shops must undertake to recycle tubes (another Spokes comp?! Old tubes are good for tying up plants, siphoning ponds, making the hinge on bird-boxes etc etc).

Entrant 6

Given that rush hour traffic presumably makes up a significant proportion of urban traffic (and certainly contributes to periods of maximum demand) then trying to combat this would seem to be a very visible way of making a difference.

So, how to target commuters? Anything spread too wide risks being lost in the noise, so how about picking an edge of town location such as The Gyle in Edinburgh, and combining suitable infrastructure changes with education, training, publicity etc to make a real difference in one key location to prove it can be done. I believe there have been various schemes in the past focussing on specific areas, but I'm not clear what level of funding they've had – my guess would be rather less than this, and so they will have had rather less impact (but I may of course be wrong!).

Entrant 7

Provide training for all Local Authority and Scottish executive staff who might have any involvement in road/transport planning or in housing/commercial development. Training could be extended to councillors and MSPs also.

This might run to two days.

First day basic training for those who need it, and visit some housing areas, office, commercial and leisure developments to see how good or bad provision for cyclists is

Second day a ride of 25 miles or so to experience life on the road. To include urban and rural routes

The main cost is likely to be in the time given to staff to undertake training.

Direct costs will be incurred in trainers' time and in Council and Executive staff time involved in promoting and arranging for staff to be freed up for the training.

Clearly this will have to be given priority by the Executive. The benefit will be that staff who are not cyclists, or not regular cyclists, will be encouraged to think about the impact on cyclists when developing plans, or examining plans put forward by developers – in provision of attractive and useful cycle routes, and in cycle parking/storage. With expanded facilities for cyclists, and more particularly, with thought being given to cycles and cycling at all stages of planning, Scotland could move towards being a cycling nation, with consequent benefits for health, happiness and the environment

Entrant 8

I have written the diary extract below as an incentive to entice more cyclists to travel in Scotland and put their bikes on the train. It is relatively easy to do at the moment, with some foresight in planning and booking. However, there are a limited number of spaces on trains and staff on Scotrail become quite anxious, and insist you will not be able to put your bike on board unless booked. Any time I have travelled to Oban or Mallaig the carriage has been full and bikes have been turned away. **Money would therefore be well spent on extra space for bikes on trains.** Many of my friends are also under the (wrong assumption) that local trains do not carry bikes so you have to eg. make a return journey to Falkirk Wheel, whereas you can travel one way on the bike path and return by train. **More advertising by Scotrail for carrying bikes** would encourage the leisurely fair-weather cyclist. I think this is important for cyclists in the city who are looking to spend their free time in the beautiful Nature of Scotland.

Colonsay, Mull and Iona 2009 10 day visit Total mileage 200 miles.

When I lived on Mull, I often ventured off to exotic parts on my bike and was amazed that I could journey there on two wheels. When my brother asked me where I was travelling to this summer, I replied "Exotic Mull". It was time to go home. My yoga pals had always expressed an interest in cycling in Scotland and when I wrote my list of unexplored Isles, it was Islay and Aaran at the top of mine, but theirs were both Colonsay and Iona, with Mull in between! So we set off with my insightful knowledge, from Edinburgh to Glasgow by train and then on to Oban, where it is possible to make the same connection to Colonsay on the same day.

The heatwave of July 2009 did indeed reach the west coast of Scotland and after our first day exploring the Isle, I ventured no further than the shady tree of the Colonsay Hotel. Contrary to many stories you may have heard, the hotel is not just for the London brigade and the staff are really down to earth and cheerful. I loved their fruit scones and the evening meals are worth the few extra pounds in weight and sterling. Colonsay has a strange feel of not being lived in but I would not let that put you off a visit. The Estate own 26 holiday cottages and have put very little thought or imagination into the upkeep of their hostel but it lies within easy access to Kiloran Bay, that great stretch of white sand which looks out onto the Ross of Mull. When I taught on Mull, there was a family on Ulva whose daughter was named Kiloran; the beach is as endearing as the name sounds. The Island also boasts its own publishing company and the owner of the bookshop stocks just the kind of books you might wish to browse through on a Hebridean Island or in fact buy. However, my choice was a novella by Guy de Maupassant, *Afloat*, which tells of his sailing adventures on the Mediterranean. As the weather was similar to that part of the world, I realised that the book I had chosen to travel with, was not fitting for my mood, so traded "Loving Frank" for a beautiful descriptive journey by sea. As we sailed back to Oban, the Paps of Jura hugged our journey and we waved goodbye to the three breasted woman. Had it not been so hot, we may have ventured to Oronsay to the chapel and to the northern beaches but in fact this Island had been a welcome "warm up" to our cycle on Mull.

On leaving the "Isle of Mull" ferry we were all struck by this sight of a family with heavily laden panniers and backpacks too. I often wonder how that must weigh you down and decided that travelling light and staying in hostels and B/B was preferable to carrying all that gear. Yet by evening, it became apparent that the Norwegian family were staying in the same hostel in Tobermory and were not camping, so why all the gear? Tobermory is a thriving tourist town, with its colourful houses selling soap, chocolate, bread, pottery and jewellery, all made on the Island. Make sure you visit Cafe Fish on the old pier for the best seafood ever and if you are in Tob mid week there is often a concert on at An Tobar, the local art centre. We were lucky to meet up with "old pals" and share the delights of the island's capital with my townie friends. Life is indeed a rich tapestry.

Our first big cycle was out the hairpin bends towards Dervaig and a two hour lunch break at Calgary beach, not in fact to swim in the sea but to visit the enterprise of Matthew Reade at the Farmhouse/Gallery/ Sculpture Walk. A most beguiling, tranquil place to be and again it offered us some respite from the midday sun. Cycling along Loch Tuath in the evening sun, the clear outline of Benmore beckons you onwards and up to a great view of Inch Kenneth, Ulva and the Gribun rocks. All so velvety green in the evening light. We stayed at Glenaros Lodge, just outside Salen, which made the circuit 32 miles in distance but with the luxury of no bags as a pal had offered to drive down from Tob with them. Peter Butterworth runs the lodge as hostel and B/B with the option of dinner too. We did not eat until 10pm due to his late arrival with a cycling group but the wait was worthwhile. If you are travelling in a group of three, and you are not a great communal sleeper, the bed and breakfast family room makes for a welcomed break from the sweaty, smelly hostel dorm with six! The next day we did some morning yoga in the garden overlooking Aros Castle. After stretching, we headed down to Iona along the aforementioned Gribun rocks, with a few stops for golden eagle delights and the snarling of sea eagle and ravens. Did the 4x4 Wildlife vehicle tour spot this too or was it a lucky find for the eco travellers on their bikes? By this stage one of our group was beginning to realise that her saddle and bike were more appropriate for racing, not touring and was beginning to suffer from saddle sore of the more delicate kind. There is a well stocked wee shop at the Kinloch, after 18 miles for a rest and a coal fire in the hotel with great pub food. Refuelling for the head wind to Fionnphort is crucial as it is also a gradual incline for the next 18 miles. Stop at Leobh croft for some home made jams and its honesty box before pedalling onto the ferry for Iona. If you are travelling to Iona in summer then everything is open; shop for wine and Martyr Bay restaurant for good food. The Argyll Hotel serves coffee and fab shortbread in their garden, with a majestic view overlooking the pink rocks of Kintra. If you are coming to the Island you must stay at the hostel. A fairly new venture to the north of the Isle with views overlooking the Treshnish Isles, you will not want to venture much further than their sandy beaches. I had always wanted to stay on Iona, when all the day trippers had gone home. Whatever

your reason for visiting this beauty spot, whether it be spiritual, historical or for sport, it has a magical feel which we all agreed we would definitely return to in the wild of the winter to watch the sea crashing against the rocks and light a fire in the cosy hostel. Our ride had been 42 miles to Iona so the next day was for exploring on foot to view the fairies, flora and fauna or to buy jewellery and bags..or indeed just to lie on the beach and snooze. The Heritage Centre is fascinating for all social historians and geologists. I found myself intrigued by the school roll of 1901 – 80 in the winter and 40 in the summer!

Leaving Iona behind for a while our group member with the very sore saddle decided to take the bus and it is worth noting that in bad weather that is also a possibility from Iona to the ferry at Craignure but the bus can only take three bikes.(just be sure not to time it with the last bus bringing the day trippers off the Isle). The fairy glen between Pennyghael and Craignure was a new route for me as I had only previously cycled in the other direction. It was a velvety green delight scattered with waterfalls after the heavy rainfall during the night. Luckily the daytime was again dry and sunny with a light wind across the bikes. There is one long stretch of downhill into Lochdon, with a turning off to Duart Castle and tearooms. A little too late in the day for us, as we were heading for the hostel bed accommodation at the Sheiling campsite in Craignure; great facilities including hot showers and a bath. With the new pool at the Isle of Mull hotel and sauna room, our saddle sore friend had taken advantage of a massage and greeted us radiantly after our 38mile ride. The Craignure Inn offers great pub food and if you are lucky like me and know the locals, then you text them to join you for a drink on your last night off the magical Island tour.

Entrant 9

How would you get more people cycling more often in Scotland, now and into the future?

By following a constructional project. Make the roads of Scotland SAFE to cycling!!

You will not have any problem to convince people to use their cycles for ordinary journeys once going out on the road is safe. Parents will even allow their children to cycle to school. Students, businessmen, etc, nobody will have any pretext not to cycle to the Unis or their works. With a bit of publicity it could be considered a new fashion, your grain of help to save the world. Britain has a big problem of obesity. Make the roads safe and with a bit of publicity together with the intervention of bicycle shops make business and help to fight obesity.

Construct cycling lanes and impose a very rigid law to the car/buses/trucks drivers to respect the lanes. Or even better (it would increase the safety and the confidence of people), construct the cycling lanes on the pavement! And pedestrians and bicycle drivers will learn to respect each other by not invading their respective lanes.

Once you have safe cycling paths, you can add whatever new ideas you might have, carried away by whatever organisation you may want, for example, converting trains to take more bikes in order to improve tourism in Scotland. The Tourist Office could offer "Visit our Scottish cities in bicycle for families" or any kind of people.

The bicycle industry (not only) could develop intensely offering all kind of parts and improvements for your bicycle. Propose a bicycle and safety paths within a city to all our senior population and there will be less invoices for the NHS. There are lots of people everywhere who are ready to use their bicycles for many things but are too frightened of the frequent accidents on the roads. Nobody wants to die or be seriously injured just by riding a bicycle. Just give them SAFETY and you will not stop them. I do not know the exact cost of this SAFETY but the inversion of each pound will be definitely worth.

Entrant 10

It strikes me that 'big statements' go a long way in terms of demonstrating commitment to, and acceptability of, cycling as a form of mass transit. Much is made, quite rightly, of the key importance of off-road paths in urban areas or, where not possible, major on-road facilities. Ultimately, what makes cycling appealing is the ability to get quickly, safely and pleasantly from A to B – that means having good routes down which we can cycle. The following, may be ridiculous, or impractical (or indeed fictional), but nice to dream I guess.

Reading Alexander McCall Smith a while back (44 Scotland Street, I think) there would appear to be a tunnel that runs under the New Town from Canonmills to the city centre. When I lived in Canonmills, I made the journey up to town, and beyond, on a daily basis. It was often a difficult experience, featuring busy roads, cobbles, poor surfacing in general, steep sections, wind and rain and much weaving around parked cars, buses and pedestrians. It is a key route to/from the city centre, for which I don't see a pleasant option.

So, inspired by AMS, is there any possibility of opening up the Canonmills-city tunnel to walkers and cyclists? As a quick, safe way to get to and from the town, it would be difficult to beat. As a statement of intent, it would be priceless.

I note the substantial cost of opening the Rodney St tunnel (which I would still be inclined to support) and it may be that a tunnel all the way to town is either impractical or prohibitively expensive. Nevertheless, well worth asking the question to see if there is any mileage in it at all.

Entrant 11 Having lockable bike racks and bike workshop with cycle hire at each main railway station would be an excellent way to increase bike use.

In the Netherlands, they have this. If you commute to town, it is possible to have your cycle at the railway station for when you arrive, and it is dry and safe, and then you just cycle to work. On your return, you lock your bike away, or if needed leave it with the workshop to have any repairs done. The workshop and rack area is manned, and so safe for people by themselves - and also creates employment. That means they can also provide a bike rental service. When I was on a business trip to a town I would rent a bike from them - it was not too pricey, and much better than taking taxis everywhere.

In Scotland you would need to start with main stations and some popular others e.g. Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Leuchars etc. If the train people say they have no space, then in the NL they were made from sort of modular metal racks, or underground - and could be retrofitted. It also arguably reduces the need to take cycles on trains, as you can always rent at the far end. I know they have small ones in Leuchars, although you do need enough to make it comfortable for the non hard core cyclists.

Entrant 12 Three Bridges Roseburn Cycle Path to Union Canal Link

This is an ambitious and potentially costly plan that will provide a strategic link between the cycle networks of north Edinburgh to the Union Canal and South Edinburgh



Technical Details

This route follows the route of the old Caledonian railway line from Roseburn to what is now the Western Approach Road.

Bridge 1. This would run from the end of the Roseburn Cycle path and rise over the main Edinburgh-Glasgow railway line to the Sauchiebank Industrial Units. This would also have to cross the Edinburgh Tram Line where the Route 1b spur is to be sited. From Sauchiebank the old railway alignment to the West Approach Road would be resurfaced requiring clearance of trees and scrub.

Bridge 2. This crosses the Haymarket to Carstairs railway line using the original stone abutments. From there the route would curve round to the Western Approach Road Bridge across Dalry road.

Bridge 3. This simple bridge structure would be “clipped” alongside the road bridge to join the cycle route to the

Telfer Subway. The route would follow the existing one to Dundee Street, which would be crossed by a Toucan crossing. Finally, a new route up Gibson Terrace and through the wall to reach the canal towpath. Further upgrading and marking of on street cycle lanes along Gilmore place would complete the link to the Meadows cycle network.

Linkages

This would complete what is a missing link across Edinburgh. Cyclists and pedestrians would make an easy and seamless journey across busy rail, tram and road routes linking Route One from Roseburn to Route 75 at the canal. This would greatly encourage cycle journeys from North to South and West Edinburgh and via the Meadows to the East.

Public Transport Integration. Signage from the integrated Haymarket Station and Tram stops would direct cyclists towards this route. Cycle storage facilities provided here would encourage the very environmentally friendly bike /train/tram combination.

This Google Image shows the proposed route in red.

ENTRANT 13 Establish a network of paid professional cycle trainers in Scotland.

Existing cycle training programs for children and adults in Scotland are failing both to teach enough people to cycle and to encourage and promote cycling. Schemes rely too heavily on volunteers and funding from road safety organisations dominated by motorist groups who have a vested interest in portraying cycling as dangerous. My proposal is for £1 million to be invested in creating a not-for-profit social enterprise cycling training network employing and assessing qualified Bikeability cycle trainers. Children and adults in Scotland would be offered the three levels of Bikeability training; this would build on the Scottish Cycle Training Scheme which although good in parts, lacks the high levels of investment and marketing that has been made Bikeability such a strong argument for promoting cycling as a safe everyday mode of transport in the rest of the UK.

The 3 levels of Bikeability training

1. Off road or playground based training, primary, secondary and adults
2. On road cycling on quiet roads primary, secondary and adults
3. On road cycling on busier roads secondary and adults

The Scottish Cycle Training Scheme will register with Bikeability and be recognised as delivering the Bikeability scheme, it will then benefit from the higher levels of investment and marketing that has been made Bikeability a much more visible and progressive national standard for cycle training in the rest of the UK.

Employing professionally qualified trainers trained to a national standard instead of relying on volunteers will deliver more consistent cycle training to children and adults and will create employment opportunities that will have a national economic benefit. Trainers and courses will be assessed regularly to ensure that they are delivering excellent training that will replace a fear of cycling with a commitment from trainees to cycle more often.

Assuming that employing each trainer will cost £40,000 per year, 20 trainers would cost £800,000. The remaining £200,000 would cover administration, travelling expenses and equipment. An application to the EU for match funding under the grants in the field of transport program could bring in an extra £1 million which would ensure the continuation of the program in subsequent years and would subsidise the charges levied on adult trainees and provide bursaries for training trainers. Additional funding may be allocated from transport and education budgets.

The scheme would be evaluated on the basis of the number of children and adults achieving awards, the number of courses, accident statistics and the number of journeys being completed by bicycle.

The benefits would be a massive increase in the number of trained, confident assertive cyclists on our roads. Each trainer would train 400 people in a year resulting in 8000 trained cyclists enjoying safe cycling for everyday journeys in Scotland each year.

ENTRANT 14

I was recently on holiday in Tokyo and was interested to see how they managed their cycling in the city. It was a simple and effective idea. They simply split the pavement into two, one side, nearest the buildings for pedestrian and the outer side of the pavement for cyclists. A cycle lane on the pavement. Their pavements weren't any wider than our pavements, and the cycle lanes were only one cyclist wide. When cyclists met they slowed and passed using the pedestrian part of the pavement. Likewise sometimes pedestrians would pass each other using the cycle lane. The system worked because the cyclists used the pavement cycle lane responsibly at low speeds.

I believe the only way to encourage cycling in the UK is to make it as safe as possible and keeping cyclists away from motorised traffic is the best way to improve safety. Low speed pavement cycling makes sense. The cost would be low, because all you need is some paint to mark out the pavement cycle lane and to warn pedestrians that the pavement is shared with cyclists.

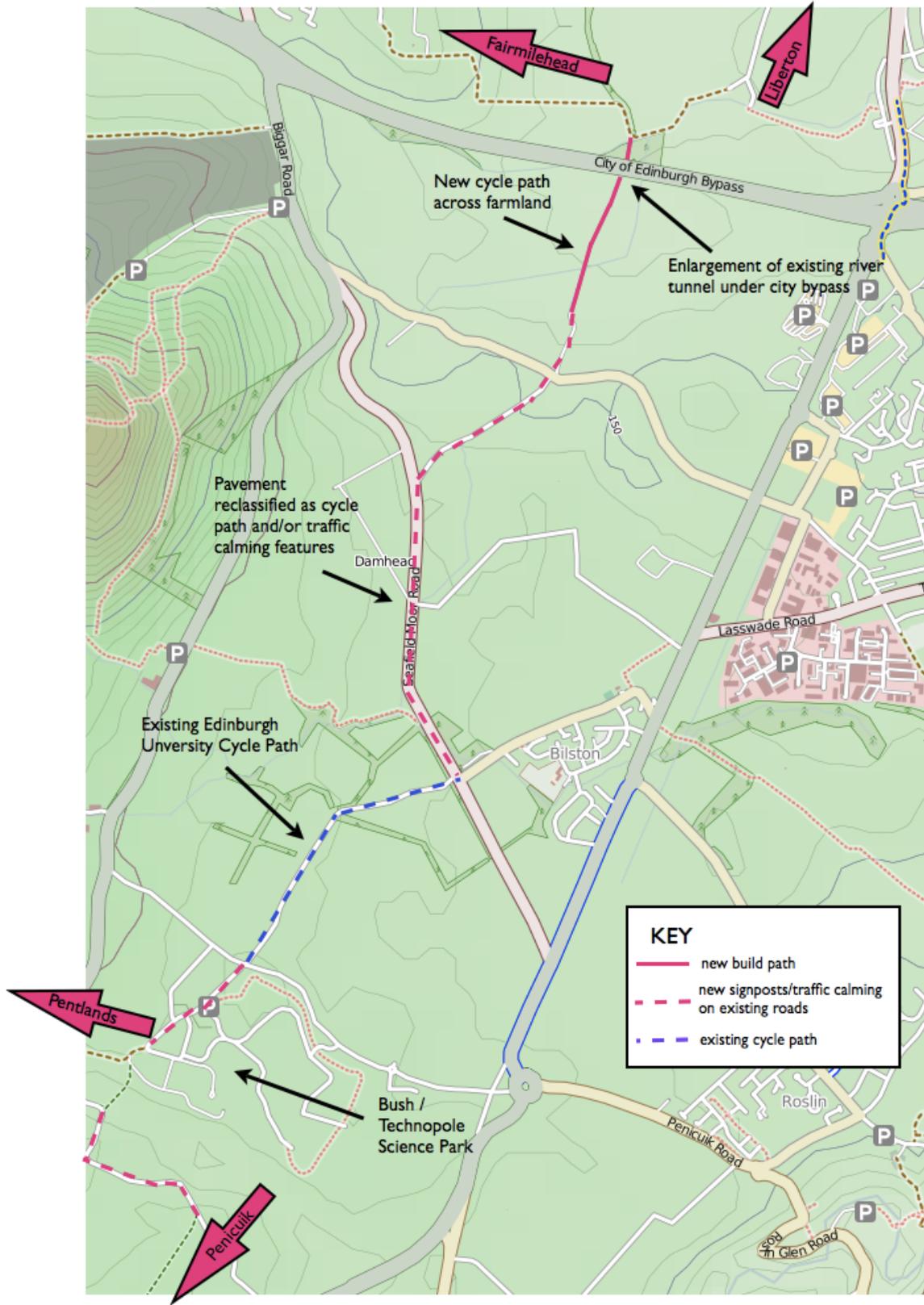
ENTRANT 15

There are already numerous businesses located on the Bush Estate / Technopole Science Park, together with educational institutes such as the Scottish Agricultural College and the Dick Vet School. Edinburgh University estimates that approximately 4000 people daily will travel to the site daily by 2011.

Presently there is no low traffic route that cyclists can use to reach the the Bush Estate from South Edinburgh. Although there are several existing cycle commuters, they are experienced cyclists who can cope confidently with the busy traffic on the A701, A702 and the city bypass traverses. A new cycle path has recently been constructed by Edinburgh University (in blue) but does not link to any existing population centres. A 2008 survey* found that lack of bike provision on existing roads was the biggest deterrent to would-be cyclists. The proposed route will avoid identified traffic 'hotspots' and will encourage new and less confident cyclists to give cycle commuting a try. For leisure cyclists it would also provide a low traffic access route to Castlelaw in the Pentland hills and to National Cycle Route 73. Midlothian Council would be encouraged to extend the network the short distance to Penicuik.

The enlargement and preparation of the bypass river tunnel might cost £700k, which would leave £300k for preparing the new section of cycle path. Organisations on the Bush Estate would take responsibility for raising awareness of the new facility through existing bike cyclist networks, 'cycle to work' days and information displays.

* http://sites.google.com/site/bushbikegroup/Home/bike_survey



ENTRANT 16

(edited for anonymity) I work for Garvald Edinburgh so ride my bike across town from Leith to Bruntsfield every day. Cycling regularly in Edinburgh over the last ten years and I've noticed how much things have declined over the last few years. I can't help feeling that so many practical and positive improvements could be made with just a relatively small investment.

I've really lost faith in the trams and see a missed opportunity for cycling and walking for a fraction of the price so hope that Spokes competition inspires some lasting cycling infrastructure!

My idea is to construct a traffic free cycle route through the heart of Edinburgh which will allow cyclists of all ages and abilities to cross the city without any of the current obstacles or hindrances.

The cycle route will be physically separated from the road space and pavement by a raised edge, kerb stones, flower beds, bike racks etc. to prevent any motorised traffic from using it, and discourage pedestrians from walking into the path of a bicycle. (Dutch/Danish style)

It will run up Leith walk, across the Leith Walk roundabout, past Calton Road and onto Princess Street with clever and forward thinking road design utilising currently dead spaces (railings in centre of Leith Street) Picardy Place, hugely wide pavements next to Omni.

I envisage traffic lights allowing cyclists and pedestrians to cross alternating with traffic on a timer system similar to Spain - e.g. 40 seconds being counted down alternately so that nobody has to press a button wait and gallop.

Importantly, cyclists leaving Waverley station by the back entrance onto Calton Road will find easy access without having to take their bikes onto the pavement to turn right onto Leith Street.

From the Waverley Hotel, the route will go down the centre of Princess Street (in between tram lines?) then turn left onto Lothian Road with two safe connections onto the Meadows and onto the Canal side.

Although weak on technicalities, my proposal is simple and straightforward. There are no end of good schemes in Edinburgh for people to get hold of bikes cheaply, learn how to cycle, possibilities of cheap rental of bikes etc. but what is currently lacking are good off-road cycle facilities. I have five female colleagues who could all cycle to work but would absolutely not go on Edinburgh's roads. Likewise, all the children that ride bikes in my street have to stay on the pavements because the roads are just too busy and dangerous.

The cross-city cycle route will cost at least £1m but would have huge positive effects in getting far more people onto bikes making short journeys for both work and leisure. It would be better for health, fitness, community, and would cost a tiny amount compared with the trams, for long term maintenance it would also be considerably cheaper.

ENTRANT 17

What an intriguing competition. Not really as easy as it would appear at first sight. Cycling around Edinburgh, I'm constantly struck by the many simple, ad hoc improvements which could be made.

£1 million could be handed to a dedicated cycling officer to make all these necessary small and diverse improvements that would make cycling in the city safer, easier and more enjoyable. Or why not simply paint a white line down the centre of every pavement to allowed shared use between pedestrians and cyclists: it works in Germany.

My considered response however, is that the best way to promote cycling as a preferred transport option is something high profile with visual impact.

The money should be spent in Edinburgh as capital city and as a way of promoting the Scottish government's commitment to reducing our CO2 emissions, reducing road congestion and pollution, promoting healthy exercise and sustainable travel.

A designated zone in the centre of the city to include the Royal Mile, Princes St, George St, Lothian Rd and all streets in between (and further if money allows) should be provided with cohesive, fully connected, clearly designated coloured cycle routes. This would obviously mean advanced stop facilities at each junction, mid road cycle lanes (such as on Morrison St) as appropriate to facilitate right turns and cycle traffic -lights where necessary. Most important there should be clear sign-posting of cycle routes and destinations eg to Scottish Parliament, Waverley Station, City Chambers, National Library, National Galleries, City Art Centre, Bus Station, Farmer's Market. The aim being to make cycling safe, easy and, most importantly, an efficient, popular and accepted mode of travel around the city.

ENTRANT 18

I would like to enter your competition. My suggestion is very simple. Spend whatever you have on building a dedicated bike path somewhere. Bikes and cars don't mix well and Bikes and pedestrians don't mix well. In The Netherlands where they have a much higher bike usage they have dedicated bike lanes that are physically separate from cars and pedestrians. Not just 100m strip of red tarmac which cars and buses drive over and park on. This makes cycling much safer and more enjoyable and therefore popular which is the aim of this competition. Hopefully when it is seen to be a success it will free up more money for more of the same. I would like to suggest Princes St as the perfect place to start.

ENTRANT 19

Cycling Interface with Park-and-Ride

At the moment, Park-and-Ride users have a limited set of drop-off points when arriving in Edinburgh. The core idea is to extend the Park-and-Ride facilities to allow bicycles to be brought into Edinburgh, so as to extend the range of the commuter once they disembark from the Park-and-Ride transport. The key points are:

- There is a secure bicycle parking facility at the out-of-town Park-and-Ride depots. This is sufficiently secure that bikes can be left overnight and sheltered from rain. There may be bike lockers or sheltered racks with a night watchman or security cameras.
- There are shuttle buses (eg. 16 person) with a bike trailer, that travel to several fixed park-and-ride destinations in Edinburgh (or perhaps follow the normal bus line routes). Users will drive to the park-and-ride car park, collect their bicycle from the secure facility, place it on the bike trailer, and then travel into town. The return journey will involve the reverse process.
- The secure bicycle lockups would have a rental fee that can contribute towards their upkeep and replacement.
- The shuttles could run every 10 minutes 7:30-9:30 am, and then 3:30 - 6:00 pm.

I do not have a clear idea about costing, but this suggestion is scalable to multiple sites, shuttles and lockups. A rough estimate is 100K per lockup, 50K per shuttle (plus 15K per year per part-time driver), plus 10K annual administration costs. Each site would require 5 shuttles plus a lockup, for a cost of about 500K. Thus, 1000K would allow two sites. An estimated number of users is 10 per shuttle for a total of 120 per site per day. The estimated income would be 600 pounds bus fare per day (5 pounds each), times 200 working days, or 120K pounds. The annual lockup fee might be 100 pounds, for a subtotal of 12K pounds, leading to about 132K pounds recurrent income per year per site. Annual maintenance and amortisation on the shuttles is estimated at 10K each. Annual maintenance on the lockups is estimated at 5K each. This leaves a surplus of about 77K per site, but does not take account of the 85K shuttle driver and administration labour costs. Perhaps the 8K deficit might be viewed by the council as a social cost, to be compensated for by the extra 3 fulltime equivalent employments generated by the

scheme. An alternative to buying new shuttles would be to add a trailer to the current vehicles, which would reduce the capital costs per site significantly.

If selected as an award idea, please donate my prize to charity and list the suggestion as anonymous

ENTRANT 20 Strictly Come Cycling

This is a brilliant TV series full of prejudice, mis-information and culture shock and will be the biggest boost for cycling since drop handlebars. We meet the Tunnocks team, a cross section of workers from the home of the chocolate wafer and the Scottish tea cake and give them one to one counselling, bespoke cycling tuition, cognitive therapy, carbon fibre Cinelli commute bikes, cycling buddies, ride to work schemes, folding Bromptons, risk awareness weekend courses, yoga, circuit training, stress management lessons, self confidence training, cash incentives and Rapha jackets, 10 mile time trials, mountain bike holidays and a new life.

The idea is to focus really very closely on people's issues with cycling. All our million will be used to work on analysing and solving their problems. The resulting report will create a model for action and policy across the country, what we learn from an exhaustive experiment on a carefully selected group on a micro level can be rolled out across the nation by councils and national campaign bodies and central government. It will form a concrete proven basis for policy. It will also form the basis for a seriously engaging reality TV hit that takes cycling into every Tunnocks tea cake eating household in Scotland, and the world.

The Tunnocks team will have a seventeen year old car-fixated school failure with power issues, a foot on the throttle and F-you attitude. He hates cyclists and their feeble machines, hates their self righteousness and their 'save the world' dullness, he doesn't have a girl friend but he's got a radically lowered Corsa with metallic paint and a four inch diameter chrome exhaust.

It will have a shy and timid type from finance who never got to go-a-bike because their Dad was too stupid to realise every kid needs a bike like they need to eat crisps and go to the seaside.

There will be a big boss Merc driver who has a grand notion of how dangerous the roads are, she will be unfit with an issue about wearing a suit, and looking like she's in charge and what about dropping the kids off at school safely when all other road users are a liability.

There'll be someone who lives too far away for cycling and takes a bus to work and once got diverted into the union canal by a doberman pincher, Trek hybrid, bike clips and all.

There'll be the Jeremy Clarkson boys in their fifties, with a fuming resentment at growing old and being made to wait in traffic queues, pay road tax (when bikes don't) and buy parking permits just to park outside their own house. They make jokes about their lycra kill and don't believe global warming is anything to do with them.

Old and young, thin and chubby, from all social groups, mouthy, likable, arrogant and cute the group of eight will cover all cycling issues and be brilliant fun to watch.

Week by week attitudes will shift, revelations will be made and new bikes will get trashed, there will be mistakes and failures, brilliant success stories, romance and resignations, the converted Nation will be in its thrall and cycling TV reality will be bigger than Strictly Come Dancing.

ENTRANT 21 Bike parking facilities in cities

A couple of years ago, the City of Edinburgh Council invested in supplying new cycle parking (racks on pavements) in several locations in the city, and these are now well used, often full. This suggests that the visible provision of facilities will encourage more people to cycle in the city. My proposal therefore is to invite cities in Scotland to identify the next tranche of street locations for bike parking and to bid for a share of the £1M to fund their installation. The fund could be administered by an existing body or agency, one possible choice being Cycling Scotland.

ENTRANT 22 Grants for the Provision of Facilities Supporting Cycle Commuting

A fund of £1 million would be made available to small employers in Scotland (defined as organisations with less than 100 employees), to enable them to provide facilities (secure parking, lockers changing facilities and showers) and promote cycling to employees to achieve a growth in cycle commuting.

Private, public and third sector employers would be eligible for grants. This category of employer is worth targeting because overall, they will account for a fairly large number of employees and because they will find it more difficult to identify funding for cycle provision.

The funds would be administered by the regional transport partnerships who already have an infrastructure and experience to allow them to do the job with no additional resourcing.

The maximum grant for any organisation would be £ 15k and for private sector organisations recording trading profits exceeding £ 50k, whatever was awarded would need to be match funded by the employer. The only other conditions for all recipients of the grant would be that

- information on current and anticipated future cycling levels would need to be submitted. Current statistics on cycle use and a projection of how the position will have changed by one year following completion of works would be submitted as part of the application. For successful applicants there would be subsequent submissions recoding actual cycling levels at both 6 months and a year following completion of the works.
- applicants would actively promote cycling to their employees

It is very possible that the funds would be oversubscribed requiring a means of deciding who would get funding and who would not. It would be tempting to make this based either on the % cycle commuting growth or the absolute numbers projected to take up cycling. However this could work against workplaces that already have good cycling figures. I would base awards on projected number of cyclists as a % of the total workforce: awards being made to those with the highest %.

If necessary, Cycling Scotland would assist in the administration by collating top scoring applications from the various regional partnerships and determining the scoring threshold above which awards would be successful. This process would ensure the £1m budget was contained.

The success of the scheme in attracting applicants would demonstrate the need for additional funding which hopefully would be provided in subsequent years.

ENTRANT 23

Simple suggestion of getting school pupils trained in mend punctures so that they have greater confidence in going biking and being self sufficient on a bicycle. Could be proposed as part of cycling proficiency or other vocational training in School.

SPOKES £1million competition (summer 2009)

The idea

Introduce cycling as an element of the driving test. Ways of doing this could be:-

- * On-road cycling (under supervision from qualified instructor) during training, with questions in the exam paper relating to cycling, eg. distances to allow, awareness of cycling problems such as adverse weather, poor road surfaces etc which may require greater room from the motorist.
- * Simulation - either or both of simulated cycling (using stationary bicycles and virtual reality effects), or simulated driving where cyclists feature in the scenarios. Presumably test centres could then include a pilot-type simulation facility for training and examination purposes. This would also get round the problems of physically unable motorists being required to actually cycle.

Benefits - raise awareness of cycling and cyclists' needs on road amongst the car driving population, and possibly give learner drivers a positive cycling experience.

- 'legitimise' cycling in people's perceptions
- safety benefits (where people feel safe to cycle, they will be more encouraged to try)

Scotland - pilot project (using Scottish Government devolved powers). Could be scaled up in phases to cover whole UK

Costs - variable depending on scope