

QUALITY BIKE CORRIDOR, MOUND TO KINGS BUILDINGS – COMMENTS FROM SPOKES, 8 December 2010

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Council's proposals for a Quality Bike Corridor (QBC) between the Mound and Kings Buildings.

This is the collective response from SPOKES. We are aware that many members have taken the time and trouble to reply to you on an individual basis and we would also ask you to consider their comments carefully and sympathetically.

SPOKES supports the principle of QBCs and the intention to create one along the suggested route which is used by many cyclists at the present time. However, we consider that considerable changes are required to the plans to give the proposed QBC more continuity across the whole of its length and to ensure that it is genuinely a "quality" facility which cyclists will welcome and which will attract non cyclists to cycling on a regular basis.

The improvements that we recommend are both general and apply to the route as a whole or to specific locations. These are shown separately below:

General Improvements

- 1. All advisory cycle lanes should be provided with red surfacing throughout the entirety of the route and not just at selected locations.** Narrow strips of white paint are not sufficiently clear to motorists and erode relatively quickly.
- 2. There should be a cycle lane or a bus lane throughout the entirety of the route.** We do not accept that there are stretches of road where it is not possible to have cycle lanes on both sides as cyclists have to cycle along the route and need space for this irrespective of whether there is a marked cycle lane. If necessary, additional parking controls should be introduced to facilitate cycle lanes on both sides of the road.
- 3. The route should be included in the 20 mph proposals.** Since the council has selected this route as a QBC, we consider that motor traffic should be restricted to 20 mph for its full extent as part of the parallel scheme to introduce 20 mph limits in south Edinburgh.
- 4. Care should be taken in the design of the cycle lanes which are planned for the outside of parking bays.** Although SPOKES does not object, in principle, to this aspect of the proposals since we recognise that time limited parking can be of benefit to local shops, this can leave cyclists vulnerable to careless opening of car and van doors. The design of the cycle lanes should seek to minimise this risk.

Specific Improvements

5. **Access to King's Buildings.** There are 3 particular problems here:

- Cyclists entering from and exiting to the north find it difficult to use the main entrance to KB at the corner with West Mains Road without using the pedestrian crossing phase at the lights as traffic in the opposite direction is frequently too busy to allow for a right turn. This is a major design fault and needs to be rectified. Please note that the plans for the redesign of the KB site emphasise that this will continue to be the main entrance for cyclists.
- The proposed protection for bikes turning right into KB to the south of the junction (2 bollards in the centre of the road) seem designed to facilitate right turns by cars as the proposed space on the map is clearly car width. If cyclists are given proper protection at the traffic lights, then this facility may not be required, but if it is retained then it should be improved, for example, by a clearly marked designated cycle lane for right turning cyclists. Plans for improvements within the KB site by Edinburgh University are also showing a pedestrian/ cycle crossing from Ross Gardens at this location and we would support this proposal.
- When approaching this junction from the south, cyclists frequently find it difficult to get safe access to the advanced stop area as the cars turning west left with the left filter light prevent access to the area. This is a problem that needs to be resolved.

6. **The Duncan St Junction**

Protective bollards should be installed for cyclists travelling uphill northwards who wish to turn into Duncan St to get access, for example, to the Pollok hall of residence, St Leonards and the access to the Innocent cycle path.

7. **The Melville Drive/ Summerhall Crescent/ Hope Park Crescent Junction**

We welcome the proposals for reconfiguring the line of the cycle lane on the west side of Summerhall Crescent and the proposed bollards to give cyclists some protection when turning right to gain access to the North Meadows cycle path. However, we recommend the following additional improvements:

- A double yellow line is needed on the west side of Hope Park Crescent to protect the access, in both directions, to the cycle path. At present, this space is regularly obstructed by taxis and other vehicles.

- Sustrans national route 1 turns from HP Crescent into Gifford Park but this is a difficult right turn. Protective bollards need to be installed along with a redesign of the road markings at Gifford Park entrance.
- There is no obvious reason for time limiting the bus lane on the north side of Melville Drive and this should operate throughout the day between and including the early morning and evening rush hour periods. If, on reflection, it is decided that a bus lane is not required here, a cycle lane should be provided.
- A cycle lane should be provided along the full length of the west side of Melville Drive.
- The south bound cycle lane to the West Preston St advance stop are should be straightened.

8. Potterrow

This is a very poorly designed area for cyclists as well as being an unsympathetically designed scar on Edinburgh's urban fabric. The plans do not include any additional protection for cyclists on the west side although this is badly needed and consistent with recommendation 2 above. Particular care is needed at the bend in the road where cyclists can easily get squashed between concrete and fast moving cars. In addition, we recommend consideration of the following points:

- Redesigning the north bound route of the QBC so that it turns left at Marshall St and goes through Charlesfield to return to the road at the existing pedestrian crossing which would need to be redesigned to allow cyclists to regain access.
- The bike lane to the south of Marshall St could be turned into a bus lane as there is clearly space for this.

9. The Teviot PI/Forrest Rd/ Bristo PI gyratory

This is a particularly problematic part of the QBC. The gyratory creates problems for cyclists as cars move between lanes and the 1 way system on Teviot PI also creates difficulties.

- A particular problem is the difficulty for cyclists of getting into the correct lane on Bristo Place if they wish to turn west. The cycle lane should be taken back to close to the pedestrian crossing to give cyclists additional protection.
- Improvements are also required at the Middle Meadow Walk junction as there is no satisfactory exit for cyclists wishing to turn onto the walk from Teviot Place.

However, we think that consideration should be given to a more radical set of proposals. This could include the following:

- Making Teviot Place 2 way with Forrest Rd and Bristo Place remaining one way at present but avoiding the need for a right turn from Forrest Rd to Teviot Place.
- The creation of 2 way segregated cycle lanes linking Middle Meadow Walk to the proposed new route from Marshall St (see para 8 above) utilising the space which was previously a taxi rank but is no longer used for this purpose.
- A second 2 way segregated cycle lane should be provided on the eastern side of Forrest Rd. This could link into the existing traffic crossing to Middle Meadow Walk at the south end and a new cycle crossing would be required at the north end to get cyclists back on to the left hand side of the road.

10. The Cycle Lane in front of the Missoni Hotel

This is not fit for purpose as cars regularly drive over the lane and there is a particularly dangerous pinch point which must be removed. The cycle lane needs to be redesigned, possibly by reducing the pavement space or redesigning the newly created drop off space for the hotel. Another option would be reducing motor traffic lanes from 2 to 1 and installing a cycle lane of at least 2m width – bearing in mind that this is already a heavily used cycle route.

11. The Foot of the Mound

Cyclists travelling north should be allowed to turn left at the foot of the Mound with a cycle lane imposed on the large pavement area using the existing dropped curbs.

Although just outside the QBC, we point out that the crossing of Princes St immediately before/after the QBC is unpleasant and hazardous. Yet this crossing leads into the QBC, and is also part of the ATAP family friendly network, which should be suitable for an 8-year-old. We appreciate, as advised at the tram/cycle liaison meetings, that the junction is under consideration, but we emphasise that this is an urgent matter. We already know of 3 crashes here to experienced cyclists travelling north to south. A radical solution is required, which should be in place no later than the opening of the QBC – though it is needed immediately.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these points with you before a report is prepared for the relevant Council Committee.

Richard Grant (on behalf of SPOKES) - 8 December 2010