

<https://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/sfc/design-cycle-walk-meadows-castle-terrace/>

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QR6, MEADOWS – CASTLE TERRACE

Comments from Spokes, 11.12.16

We very much welcome these proposals, which add another useful link in the city's cycle network. It is particularly pleasing to see improvements being made to the cycle network in the centre of the city, where substantial gaps remain, and we look forward to people being able to cycle from the Meadows to Festival Square and beyond while staying almost entirely on segregated cycle paths.

We have a number of points about how we think the route could be improved, and hope that these will be incorporated into the final design.

1. We would like to see the small section of cycle lane on Chalmers Street segregated by a kerb. Chalmers Street is quite busy at rush hour with cars turning both left and right at the top, and we want to avoid the cycle lane becoming blocked if these cars form two separate queues (This happens a lot at Hope Park Terrace heading towards the meadows).
2. The entrance to the top of Lady Lawson Street is currently very flared. For the benefit of pedestrians crossing and eastbound cyclists on Lauriston Place it would be better if the corner radius is as narrow as possible. We appreciate that this is a bus route, but would like to see a swept path analysis done in order to find the tightest possible corner that continues to allow access to buses. At the turn into Lady Lawson Street from Lauriston Place the cycle lane is extremely narrow, this will be a real pinch point on the route and we would like to see it widened. We hope that markings on the cycle path make clear that cyclists heading westbound on the segregated cycle lane on Lauriston Place cannot continue straight on across Lady Lawson Street when the segregated cycle lane ends.
3. The top section of the Lady Lawson Street cycle lane is narrower than the recommended 3m for a bi-directional cycle lane. We appreciate that compromises have had to be made here, but would like to stress that if the cycle lane were narrowed any further in subsequent redesigns arising from this consultation this would significantly compromise the usability of the whole route. Width of cycle lanes is particularly important on hilly sections such as this. We are particularly concerned about the narrowness of the cycle lane at the bend in the top half of Lady Lawson Street.
4. Currently the plans do not allow northbound cyclists on Lady Lawson Street to turn right into Grassmarket, We believe this is in error (since southbound cyclists are allowed to make the turn) and would like to see an 'except cyclists' appended to the no right turn sign.

5. The bottom half of Lady Lawson Street is much wider than the top and very wide for a one way street. We would like to see the cycle lanes widened to the recommended 3m here. We think the decision to make this stretch of Lady Lawson Street one-way is very sensible and are very pleased that the council are proposing this.
6. We're unsure of the reasons for changing the priorities at the junction between Grindlay Street and Spittal Street. This is an unusual layout at a T-junction which we think introduces extra confusion, and unless the designers have a compelling reason for the redesign we think it should remain as it is presently. If it is intended to make it easier for cyclists to turn in to Grindlay Street a wide island in the middle of Spittal Street might better achieve this, and would be of benefit to pedestrians too. We would also like to see a protective island for cyclists turning right from Castle Terrace into Lady Lawson Street.
7. The cycle lane is narrow with a number of tight turns near the Castle Terrace roundabout. It should be widened with the turns softened if possible. We would like the crossing for pedestrians and cyclists to have clear visual priority and to be on a serious raised table, of the sort found Waverley Bridge, rather than the gentle and somewhat ineffective raised tables found elsewhere in the city.
8. We would like to see a very clear prohibition of parking on and loading from the cycle lane during the farmers' market. Of course it will be necessary for stallholders to carry goods across the cycle lane from vehicles, we don't see this as a problem for cyclists or stallholders. We don't believe that any of the stalls at the farmers' market currently draw power by running cables from their vehicles, but it might be worth notifying the organisers of the market that this will not be allowed in the future. We would like to see some more cycle parking at this location if possible.
9. We would like to see very clear 'visual priority' of the cycle lane over the entrance to the car park on Castle Terrace.
10. We suggest extending the bidirectional cycle lane on Lauriston Place, to run all the way from the top of Middle Meadow Walk at Forrest Road to Tollcross. This would be very useful already, and would provide additional value in the future when Forrest Road is redesigned and a cyclist route from there to Princes Street is constructed. Spokes has long campaigned for this and we understand it is on the Council's project list. At the least, however, the design of the current project should be 'future proofed' so that such an extension to the Lauriston Place cycle lane is not more expensive than it needs to be.
11. We would like to see Nightingale Way and Simpson Loan allow two way cycling, to provide better access to the Quarter mile development.
12. The intended final destinations of QR6 at its west end are not stated. Obviously they are multiple, but we can see two main strategic purposes. One would be to access the City Centre at the West End (and/or continuing to the north of the city). The other would be to access the Festival Square area, and the routes from there to the Canal (leading to south West Edinburgh) and also to the west of the city along the East-West route, accessing it via its proposed Rutland Square connection..

We also note from the council's online atlas that QR5 joins QR6 at Castle Terrace and appears then to follow Cornwall Street and Grindlay Street to Festival Square. QR5 presumably has similar strategic purposes to the above (though with a greater emphasis on the canal/south-west direction). Given that these two routes are so intricately connected in this area, they should be considered together here.

For the City Centre/ West End destination we hope that eventually the end of the Castle Terrace route will continue as a segregated route northwards along Lothian Road (possibly on the west side) but we appreciate that is unlikely to happen in this phase of work. Finally, we note that under the current plan the cyclist route narrows to just 2m at its western end. This should be widened.

For the Canal/south-west and the Rutland Square/West Edinburgh destinations there are likely to be significant numbers of cyclists needing to cross Lothian Road to Festival Square. Furthermore, this should be one of the City's top public realm areas, linking the Usher Hall complex with Festival Square. As such the crossing must also cater for large numbers of pedestrians and must be visually attractive. The proposed 2-stage fenced-in crossing is wholly inappropriate, and a wide single-stage crossing is essential. We note that such a crossing was envisaged by the City's former Design Champion, Sir Terry Farrell, some 10 years ago, and it is very disappointing to see the current plans downgrading it to a bog-standard 2-stage guardrail-enclosed crossing. [We cannot locate the original document, but it is discussed in [this article](http://www.rudi.net/news/11204) - <http://www.rudi.net/news/11204>].

Finally, given the strategic importance of the crossing of Lothian Road, the connection from Lady Lawson Street to this crossing must be incorporated in this phase of the project. There are several alternative options which can be considered...

- The outline consultation map shows this connection via Grindlay Street, but the connection is not shown in the detailed plans. This option would need a smooth paved strip replacing the cobbles in Grindlay Street and would need significant car-parking changes.
- As mentioned above, the City Atlas shows the connection following Castle Terrace then Cornwall Street, thus entering Grindlay Street at a point where most of the cobbles and parking issues are avoided. However a means of crossing Castle Terrace would be needed.
- A third alternative is to follow Castle Terrace and then Cambridge Street – again Castle Terrace would need to be crossed.