

# SPOKES *The Lothian Cycle Campaign*

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## **SPOKES submission to the Roseburn to Leith Walk Cycle Route Consultation January 2016**

### **Introduction:**

1. SPOKES compliments the Council on its ambition in producing these proposals, which we warmly welcome.
2. This Route addresses the urgent need to give cyclists a way to and through the city centre and offers substantial benefits to the city as a whole in terms of improved environmental quality and health benefits from increased active travel. It makes cycle commuting and other everyday cycle journeys much more viable by providing inter-connections between earlier cycle projects, which have been mainly located away from the city centre. Spokes welcomes that this Route will form a vital missing city centre link between a large number of existing and proposed cycle routes, including:
  - NCN1 to north and west Edinburgh and the Forth Road Bridge
  - west Edinburgh via the Water of Leith path
  - the Union Canal (NCN75) for Wester Hailes and the Colinton/Balerno path, via the Russell Road proposed new path, via Dalry and via Rutland Square
  - the proposed route along the West Approach Road
  - south Edinburgh, the Meadows and Innocent paths (NCN1) via the Hope Street crossing
  - north and east Edinburgh via the Leith Walk cycle lanes
  - north Edinburgh via Dublin Street and the Rodney Street tunnel.

thereby enabling a range of cross-town journeys which are currently very unattractive by bicycle.

3. The number of comments reflects the importance which SPOKES attaches to making sure that this scheme achieves its full potential to encourage and increase active travel, whether for commuting, shopping or leisure.
4. We welcome that there has been early and effective stakeholder consultation on these proposals. However, the route as a whole is linked to, and dependent on, a number of “public realm” improvements, for example, on Melville Street and Charlotte Square. In addition, the route will use whatever is eventually taken forward as the agreed cycling provision in George Street. We look forward to being fully consulted on all these linked developments which are integral to the overall success of the project.

## 5. Some General Considerations:

1. One-way, segregated/protected cycle lanes are preferable to two-way combined lanes on one side of the road and we recommend that this be adopted as best practise and the default choice. These go with the flow of the traffic, facilitate access and exit and avoid the problem of motorists moving out from side roads having to look for cyclists in both directions and perhaps failing to do so. They also avoid possible problems with dazzle from car headlights for cyclists travelling against the flow of traffic and, indeed, possible problems of dazzle for cars from bike lights. The proposed layout for Melville Street is a good example of where one-way lanes work well, whereas using two-way lane along the section from Roseburn Terrace to Haymarket Yards, for instance, throws up several difficult conflicts at junctions. Furthermore, there can be problems at transitions between one-way and two-way, and swapping frequently between them seems unwise. However, whilst two-way lanes are in general sub-optimal, we appreciate that they may be necessary in some cases – for example, where fixed position tram lines inhibit re-allocation of road space, such as in Haymarket Terrace and York Place. Our comments below, therefore, assume that most sections proposed as two-way remain so.
2. The junctions of the proposed cycle lane with side roads and other necessary crossings are clearly central to the success of the scheme as a whole. We welcome that the plans make extensive use of “Copenhagen style junctions”, which are beneficial for the safety of both cyclists and pedestrians and importantly offer both user groups continuity of travel without having to give-way to turning traffic at side streets. We recommend that these junctions follow the design of “Box” junctions (ie with criss-cross yellow lines painted on the road), to discourage traffic from queueing across them. The design must be as self-explanatory as possible, but steps should also be taken when these junctions are installed to have a programme of education for cyclists, pedestrians and motorists, with enforcement measures put in place.
3. The phasing and timing of traffic lights at junctions will need to ensure that cyclists can make all the necessary turns along the route without interference from traffic or excessive delay. Where possible, use should be made of induction loop detectors rather than hand operated buttons.
4. Cyclists will want to get on and off the Route at the beginning and end of the proposed cycle lane and at intermediate points. It is not always clear from the plans how the design of the junctions allows for this or whether the optimum solution has been identified. In particular, it is important to note that the Route links with roads which are already used by many cyclists, for example, Dalry Road (including for the Union Canal and the proposed new cycle route alongside the West Approach Road), Lothian Road, North Bridge, Leith Street, Leith Walk and Waterloo Place. It is not clear in all cases how this will work in a satisfactory way.
5. We note the proposed use of “tactile tramline paving”. Some cyclists find it unsettling and there

have been reports of it causing accidents. It can cause wheels to deflect, thereby distracting the rider's attention at junctions. Short lengths are much less of a problem than longer lengths - some installations in North Meadow Walk are 2.4m long! We think that the proposals for "tactile tramline paving" should be reviewed and eliminated if they are not absolutely necessary. Where they are deemed to be an essential requirement they should be kept to the minimum width and height. There are also related concerns about so called "dropped kerbs", which are often installed much higher than required by the specification with similar wheel deflection/rider distraction problems. Indeed, a major cycle-route like this one should be level throughout, without the need for kerbs.

6. We note the innovative use of "Informal Raised Pedestrian Cycleway Crossings", which we understand are to have the appearance of "zebra" crossings. These appear to be a good way of marking crossing points. However, from a cycling safety viewpoint we recommend that these not be raised and that the surface treatment be non-slip.
7. We recommend that the segregated cycle route sections be designed such that these can be machine laid to avoid the problems of undulating surfaces, as found on the cycle lanes on Buccleuch Street and St Leonards Street included in the the recently installed route from the Meadows to the Innocent scheme.
8. Importantly, we understand that the two-way cycle lanes are to be 2.5 meters wide, which is narrow for a busy route and should be widened.
9. We recommend that comprehensive cycle parking facilities be installed along the full length of the Route as an integral part of the plan. Cycle parking will be particularly important in retail streets, such as Roseburn Terrace, Haymarket Terrace, George Street and Princes Street. It is always much easier for a passing cyclist to stop for *ad hoc* purchases than motorists. Cycle parking will also be required other for major attractions en route, for example, at the National Portrait Gallery where there is no formal cycle parking at present close to the entrance.

## **Specific points linked to particular sections of the route:**

### **Roseburn Terrace area**

1. We strongly support the Council's proposal that the cycle-route follows the main A8 through the Roseburn Terrace shopping area. This route is direct, it helps create a better pedestrian and shopping environment by narrowing the motor carriageway and it encourages cyclists (who form a significant and growing proportion of road users) to use the local shops. Evidence of such schemes from other cities suggests that local shops gain as much or more from new cyclist and pedestrian traffic as they may lose from passing cars. Furthermore, the alternative NCN1 route is indirect and is dangerous at Haymarket Yards, with a series of crashes and injuries due to the narrow space between kerb and tramline [see annex for details of some of these crashes]. The current NCN1 also fails to connect to the route to Saughton through Roseburn Park whereas this is achieved by the Council's proposed route.
2. The current proposals envisage that eastbound cyclists from Corstorphine Road must leave the roadway and cross a pedestrian area to join the start of the Route, as it starts in the middle of pavement space in Roseburn Terrace. We recommend that this be adjusted to enable cyclists to be able to directly join the segregated cycle-route. Whilst we appreciate that there may be separate public realm improvements achieved by narrowing the entrance into Murrayfield Avenue and around the Old Colt Bridge, from a cycling point of view, it would be preferable to extend the on-road cycle lane further west along Roseburn Terrace.
3. Cyclists travelling westwards towards Corstorphine Road, or intending to travel south-westwards through Roseburn Park and associated paths, will need to use the planned toucan crossing facilities linking into Roseburn Gardens and the southern side of Roseburn Terrace. We think that the crossing may need to be slightly diagonal to avoid cyclists having to move into the “wrong” lane in Roseburn Gardens, with possible conflict with cars.
4. The plans appear to envisage access to and from the cycle lane to Roseburn Street linked to the normal operation of the traffic lights. However a new pedestrian crossing is proposed and we recommend that this should be a toucan crossing to provide more protection for cyclists.
5. There is a danger that the road closure on Roseburn Place could encourage 3-point turns in Roseburn Crescent. It might be possible to avoid the need for a road blockage by making Roseburn Gardens one-way southwards (except for cycles) with no access from the A8 eastbound.
6. There is currently a problem with flooding and winter icing, on the north side of Wester Coates between Roseburn Terrace and the junction with Wester Coates Terrace, related to water seepage from the former railway embankment, that should be addressed as part of the design and construction.

## **7. Wester Coates area**

1. At Wester Coates Terrace we recommend that the angle of the west-side of the “offset” linked to the Copenhagen style junction should be “smoothed out” to improve sight lines for cyclists. There would appear to be adequate space for this.
2. At Wester Coates Road, we recommend closure of this road at the junction with Wester Coates as this junction will be the main access route to the busy Roseburn Path (NCN1) and it would avoid the need for another specially designed junction. Local residents should also benefit from this and there is ample space for cars to turn.
3. There is a Copenhagen style junction proposed for Balbirnie Place and a gap to allow cyclists to get access to or exit from the protected cycle lane and a similar design solution has been adopted for the junction with Stanhope Street. However, in both cases, there is no protection for cyclists having to cross the main road and the Council should consider whether a toucan crossing would be justified for at least one of these crossings. In addition, at Stanhope Street the clear straight-across route is partially obstructed by parking opposite and this should be remedied.

## **Haymarket Terrace area**

1. We welcome that the chosen route is along Haymarket Terrace, as this provides a valuable direct route to Haymarket Station and the Haymarket area. In the longer term, as cycling levels grow further, an extension westward to the west-end of Princes Street should also be considered.
2. At the junction with Coates Gardens, we are concerned that vehicles will block the two-way cycle lane when exiting, especially as this street is used as a rat-run by traffic seeking to by-pass the main Haymarket junction. We recommend that a waiting space be created beyond the cycle-route by widening the pavements on Haymarket Terrace by one lane width at both sides of this junction and repositioning the give-way line forward. This build-out would occupy what will otherwise be unutilised lane space between the delivery bays to the west and the additional taxi rank to the east. This will create a waiting space for traffic waiting to join Haymarket Terrace, thereby reducing the likelihood that vehicles will queue across the cycle-lane and improve sight-lines. We also recommend the use of speed control measures in Coates Gardens, as already proposed for Rosebery Crescent.
3. It would greatly help cyclists approaching from Dalry Road (including the link to the Union Canal and the proposed West Approach Road cycle path) to reach the Route safely if motor traffic was blocked from entering Grosvenor Street from Haymarket Terrace. This would also solve the current serious safety problem where cyclists travelling from Dalry Road towards West Maitland Street are cut across by traffic entering Grosvenor Street and would also remove the heavily used Dalry Road to Palmerston Place rat-run. A solution is also required to allow cyclists to get from

the Route to Dalry Road, via Grosvenor Street.

4. The relatively new curved red cycle lane, that leaves from outside the Haymarket Station drop-off point, suffers from a sudden change of width near to where it meets the pedestrian crossing. This should be widened. The crossing itself is to be widened to provide access to Haymarket station and we recommend that this should be designed to allow a safe crossing for cyclists, particularly the major cycle flow from Morrison Street to the A8, to cross the road safely and travel westwards.

### **Palmerston Place area**

1. We consider that traffic turning into and out of the Crescents from and to Palmerston Place should have to “Give Way” to cyclists at a Copenhagen style junction. This would be the best option from the safety point of view and it would also maintain continuity. If this is not intended, then we recommend that the proposals should be changed to achieve this.
2. At the Manor Place/ Melville Street junction for cyclists travelling west, there is a danger that cars coming along Melville Street in the same direction will turn onto the cycle crossing “facility” without cyclists seeing them because of the blind corner. We recommend that the one-way protected cycle lanes continue into Manor Place, with the crossing point moved to be opposite Bishops Walk, where the sight lines are better. The existing proposal also envisages turning across “tactile tramline” paving which could be dangerous.

### **Melville Street area**

1. We understand that the public realm improvements intended for the junction with Walker Street will include provision for the cycle lane and that this is being designed separately. It is essential that whatever is eventually proposed for this junction maintains the integrity of the protected cycle lanes. We would welcome the opportunity to comment on this aspect of the plans when they become available.
2. The proposed contra-flow cycle lane on Coates Crescent looks potentially dangerous for cyclists, given the narrowness of the road and that the car parking is on the south side. We suggest that consideration be given to relocating the parking to the north side to avoid parking manoeuvres across the line of contra-flowing cyclists. We also recommend that a protected crossing is provided to allow cyclists to get safely across Shandwick Place to and from Canning Street, which recognises that a certain proportion of Coates Crescent traffic turns into Atholl Crescent. Note that there is also a cycling desire-line from Canning Street via Stafford Street to join the Route in Melville Street that should be considered as part of this design process.

## **Melville Street to Charlotte Square**

1. The design and timing of the “advanced cycle crossing facilities” proposed for the east end of Melville Street should protect cyclists crossing over this junction from cars turning into Drumsheugh Place. This is best achieved by giving cyclists a separate phase in the crossing rather than just a few seconds advance priority over the phasing for motor traffic.
2. It is essential that the public realm improvements on Randolph Place include relaying with flat-top setts or paving to produce a smooth surface as the current setts are badly worn, uneven and round-topped. A solution used in Bristol is to slice existing setts in half and re-lay them flat side up. This virtual cul-de-sac has the potential to be a “café culture” area, with relatively few motor vehicles and if parking has to be retained, it should be limited to parallel parking for residents rather than end-on parking, which is dangerous for cyclists.
3. We understand that the cycle lane around the western, northern and southern edge of Charlotte Square is being designed separately linked to public realm improvements. It is important that the needs of cyclists using the proposed route are fully taken into account and we would welcome the opportunity to be consulted in due course.
4. The proposed cycle crossing facilities on the eastern side of Charlotte Square should provide safe access to and from both George Street and Rose Street. . We welcome that a link to Rose Street is included.
5. We emphasise the importance of the proposed West-End Crossing from Hope Street to Lothian Road/Rutland Street and see it as vital to the eventual success of the Route as a whole. We hope that this can be taken forward as soon as possible and look forward to be consulted on the detailed proposals.

## **St Andrews Square to York Place**

1. We recommend that this opportunity should be used to make the existing toucan crossing of Queen Street into Dublin Street into a single stage crossing given that this is an important link to the NCN 75 Warriston – Leith cycle path.
2. We are concerned about the safety aspects of the proposed extensive use of “Informal Raised Pedestrian Cycleway Crossing” on the corner of North St David Street and Queen Street as this will be on both a corner and an incline.
3. The proposed junction between York Place and Elder Street will be very difficult for cyclists and would undermine the value of this part of the route – see our separate objection to the recent planning application. We recommend that a “Copenhagen style “junction be used here or at least an arrangement to allow cyclists to cross in a single manoeuvre, separate from pedestrians, at the same time as the general traffic on York Place.

4. Our understanding is that the intention is that the proposed cycle lane will link in with parallel proposals for the Picardy Place roundabout and Leith Walk in general. We strongly support this intention but the timing of the two projects must be harmonised to avoid an abrupt end to the route with no clear departure route for cyclists.

### **St Andrew Square to Princes Street**

We are strongly supportive of the intention to extend the route into the eastern end of Princes Street but we consider that further design work is required to this part of the route to ensure that:

- There is safe access for cyclists crossing Leith Street in either direction
- There is safe access for cyclists crossing South St. Andrew Street
- There is a clear and safe route into Waverley Bridge to provide integrated access to the railway station and to allow cyclists to access the westbound carriageway on Princes Street
- Provision is made for access to and from the cycle lane for cyclists travelling to and from the North Bridge and that the recommended turns for these manoeuvres are synchronised with the traffic light phasing for motor cars and pedestrians.
- The route is made compatible with existing plans to allow cycling along James Craig Walk to the St James Quarter development, to Elder Street, and if possible via a future connection to St Andrew Square.

### **Other**

Our understanding is that a segregated cycle lane has been promised as part of the the Leith Walk plans, continuing up Leith Street as far as Calton Road. Notwithstanding the current position of the Council, SPOKES continues to press for a segregated cycle lane to be continued from Calton Road to Princes Street, either bi-directional, or at least a one-way uphill lane, to link with the proposed cycle lane.

### **Conclusion**

We hope that these comments are both clear and constructive and we would be happy to discuss any specific points in more detail if this would be helpful. Implementation of this project would be a major step forward in provision for cyclists in Edinburgh and we look forward to working closely with the Council as the plans are developed further and taken forward.

**SPOKES The Lothian Cycle Campaign**

January 2016

**RAG/JEJ**



**RECENT CRASHES KNOWN OF BY SPOKES AT HAYMARKET YARDS - quotes from victims**

**August 2015**

I am reporting a crash caused by the tram tracks that my daughter Beth had this afternoon. She was travelling eastwards along Haymarket yards and had started the short uphill stretch to Haymarket Terrace. About 1/2 way up, going quite slowly, her front wheel slipped on the most westerly tram track and she fell to the ground. Fortunately she was unhurt though a small baggage carrier was bent out of shape and may need to be replaced. Her tyres are wide and could not have become jammed in the tracks.

**Jan 2015**

I am reporting my cycle accident which happened having turned left at the lights at Clifton/Haymarket terrace into Haymarket Yards. While crossing over to the (ridiculously narrow) marked cycle path, my front wheel slipped along the wet steel of the tram track, getting stuck in the actual track groove. I was thrown from my bike, bruising my elbow and hands. I also hurt my back, resulting in pain across my ribs and stomach for the next 2 days. I have the details of 2 witnesses as well as pictures of the bruising. Luckily, the 2 people who checked I was ok managed to help me up before the next airport-bound tram came around the corner.

**June 2014**

I was cycling home from work and was crossing over the tracks at Haymarket Yards (coming down the hill from Haymarket station) and hit them at the wrong angle and crashed. Two passerbys helped me off the road and I got a taxi home with my bike (which had a buckled front wheel from the crash). I sprained an ankle and a wrist, and seem to have caused more serious damage to my knee as it still hasn't recovered now - i can't put pressure on the top of my knee without pain.

I was a week into cycling from home to work and trying to replace my daily commute with a bike when I crashed. I haven't cycled to work since, as the crash shook me up quite a bit and I need to find an alternate route that doesn't involve tram tracks, as I won't go near those things again. Even taken at the right angle, they are dangerous and slippery, especially when there are cars and trams all around you.