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30 June 2015

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Leith Walk: McDonald Road to Pilrig Street, June 26 version

This is a brief comment on the updated (June 26) proposals¹ for Leith Walk, Pilrig Street to McDonald road. We welcome some valuable changes since the previous draft, including the fact that left turning traffic from Leith Walk into Pilrig Street no longer has a separate filter lane which crosses the northbound cycle lane, there is contraflow access to Iona street for cyclists and a continuation of the cycle path across Middlefield.

Our other previous comments² stand however, and our opinion remains that, while the proposed scheme will be an improvement on the previous version, and on the current layout of Leith walk, more needs to be done to create something really excellent.

Since we understand that the council wishes to begin the formal TRO process imminently, we have highlighted below only our most important remaining suggestions, most of which we believe can be implemented relatively easily and which would not only improve the route for cyclists, but would bring greater clarity for drivers.

1. The southbound segregation should begin before Pilrig Street junction so as to allow a separate signal for cyclists which allows them to proceed on green while traffic is emerging from Pilrig Street. This would halve the time that southbound cyclists will spend waiting at the junction and give more protection for cyclists while costing little more and requiring no more road space.

1 http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/5772/pilrig_street_to_mcdonald_road_-_updated_plans_26_june_2015.pdf

2 <http://www.spokes.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/LW-McD-Pilrig-response-FINAL.pdf>

2. Very little provision is made for right turning cyclists at any of the junctions. This reduces the attractiveness of the scheme for many potential users and should be remedied. This blog article³ makes some suggestions for how the Pilrig street junction could be improved.

3. The priority of the cycle lane over side roads is not clear at the moment. This is of fundamental importance to the utility of the cycle lanes as continually giving way is likely to discourage people from using the lanes. There are many examples from the UK as to how side-road priority can be safely given to cycle lanes. We note two blog articles^{4,5} which discuss side road priority methods, and a further local blog⁶ which applies these ideas to Leith Walk. The articles give examples from other locations in the UK, and so are applicable within UK regulations. In particular, *give-way lines on the cycle lane should be removed*, there should be *no kerb across the cycle lane*, and the *colouring of the cycle lane should be bright and continuous* – all so as to reinforce the priority of the cycle lane over side roads. Brunswick Street is perhaps the most important case (though ideally it would be closed at Leith Walk) but all side road treatments should adopt these methods.

4. Northbound, segregation should begin before McDonald Road, so as to link up with future segregation plans for the top of the walk.

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3 <http://unclekempez.blogspot.co.uk/2015/06/the-leith-walk-pilrig-street-junction.html>

4 <http://www.cycling-embassy.org.uk/blog/2013/07/26/a-view-from-the-drawing-board-cycle-track-priority-across-side-roads>

5 <https://departmentfortransport.wordpress.com/2015/05/12/visual-priority/>

6 <http://unclekempez.blogspot.co.uk/2015/06/side-road-priority-on-leith-walk.html>