

Spokes Public Meeting  
**'Future of the City Centre'**  
Augustine United 26 Mar.2015  
Notes

## Speakers:

**Cllr Lesley Hinds**, Convener, CEC Transport Cttee  
**Richard Darke**, Project Manager, Essential Edinburgh  
**Prof. Tom Rye**, Director, Transport Research Institute, Napier University

## 1 Cllr Lesley Hinds

She reminded the audience that at the Spokes hustings prior to the last Council election she had said cycling should be for people like her, a non-cyclist but keen to become one. She's now made a start - in Gent! and fell off on the tram tracks! Step 2 – a forthcoming visit to Copenhagen! Step 3 – she recently won a Bike Station training voucher in a raffle!!

### Recent progress for Edinburgh:

- Flourishing businesses despite online trends; positive feeling;
- Increases in cycling and walking to work;
- New Design Guidelines published;
- Transport and Active Travel Forums up and running; Active Travel Action Plan in progress;
- Increase in public satisfaction with public transport; decrease in use of cars to work; passenger satisfaction with trams.

### Transport developments:

- Increase in percentage for cycling: from 5% to 8% and proposed rise to 10%; Family-Friendly Network to be developed across city centre; route Roseburn to Leith Walk being consulted on; segregated route on Leith walk proposed to Pilrig St;
- Trial results for George St; feedback has been positive; 1200 interviews with users, including 10% cyclists; to find out what has worked; street to revert in Sept, but June meeting will seek interim options;
- Renewals proposed for Rose St/Hanover St/St Andrews Sq/Charlotte Sq/St James Quarter/Waverley Bridge;
- Lothian Buses - fleet renewal/hybrids/electric vehicles;
- Bikes on trams trial by autumn;
- Extension of tram being considered.

### 20mph pilot

- Speeds fell by 1.9% average, to 20.9mph; speeds on faster roads fell by 3.3mph average; residents' support rose from 68% to 79%.
- She hopes the cycling community will submit supportive comments when the Traffic Regulation Orders come out, since there are opponents.

## **Tram usage:**

- now averaging 90,000/week; 3m passengers June - Dec., ahead of forecast 4.5m/year
- public trans total journeys to work are up by 100K, so trams haven't impacted bus usage, contrary to predictions by many people

## **Challenges:**

- Segregated but joined-up cycling in city centre;
- Princes St - buses, network;
- Bike hire scheme - LH wants one; currently working with Decaux;
- More cyclists less lycra - as in Gent;
- Deliver on new Design Guidelines
- How best to use roads investment (City Centre, and Neighbourhood Partnerships)
- Deliver 20mph network with public support;
- Managing behaviour towards change, eg driving speeds, sustainable modes;
- Gain respect for integration, eg transport hubs.

## **2 Richard Darke (Essential Edinburgh)**

- City Centre BID (Business Improvement District); the area (mainly New Town) has 600 businesses.
- 5-year Plan for: clean/attractive; safe/secure; lighting; promotion; relaunch of City Centre; better accessibility.
- Example: Rose St - traffic management has reinforced status of pedestrians;
- George St. - trading is up by 11% since Aug. 2013;
- Footfall to BID area is up by 29% after 1 year; revenue after 5pm is up 41%;
- 59% support for extended pedestrian areas.
- Plans for better car parking and signage.
- Businesses keen to support cycle access, and secure bike storage. New bike racks in Rose St are well used.

## **3 Professor Tom Rye (Transport Research Institute, Napier University)**

- Theme: "Space, the Final Frontier" - importance of making best use of existing available space through re-distribution. Example of lower Morrison St - footway over-crowded, roadway half-empty.
- Research shows retailers tend to great over-estimate the % of customers arriving by car - eg estimates 58%, reality 32%
- City Centre needs boost of sustainable travel modes [walk, cycle, public transport]
- Example from Oxford - Broad St pedestrianised - huge benefits.
- Onstreet tram lines should not be 'urban railway' but should share their space more, especially with buses, given the shortage of roadspace and the huge numbers of people using bus
- Cars can be diverted rather than banned - eg east-west route in Oxford centre was closed, cars do 6-mile diversion, gives buses/cycles/peds the edge.
- George St - space is wasted; street clutter excessive.

- Jan Gehl's ideas have worked successfully globally - why not more in Edinburgh? - welcomes the idea of experimenting before finalising new arrangements
- Cycling can be increased in variety of ways, not just by segregation.
- Get bus companies to co-operate where there's more than one bus on same route.
- Cut bus boarding times (eg Oyster cards) to keep traffic moving.
- Dropped kerbs for cows (Harlaw Rd) but not for people (Morrison St).
- CEC already has some good policies, eg the Design Guidelines, but these have to be 'adopted' by officials - need for resources, leadership, training, and ownership.

## SPOKES announcements

- Glasgow bus lane consultation showed support for extended bus lane hours, and Councillors have now made the 7-7-7 decision; ie all bus lane times will be rationalised to 7am- 7pm, 7 days/week [subject to Traffic Regulation Orders] unlike the [proposed Edinburgh cutbacks](#).
- Gov't funding for cycling to be maintained at or just above 2014-15 level in 2015-16, despite recent announcement suggesting big rise. However, gov't cycling investment is now at or just below 2% of total transport budget, compared to below 1% until 2014. Article soon on Spokes website.
- New Spokes Edin Map to be available in app form; and on tear-proof paper; and to include an innovative panel on Edinburgh's future cycling development - what might we want to see? Ideas invited from cyclists to show on a 'future hopes' map on the reverse of the main map.

## Questions/comment/discussion

- Welcome for proposed E-W route, but likely to be expensive [LH said £6m-£8m]. It would be cheaper to start with a north-south city centre route by closing The Mound/Hanover St to general traffic. LH response - CEC focussing on E-W route at present, also with a N-S connection from Roseburn to the canal.
- Waverley Bridge changes (wider footways) are popular with public (LH); but she will be keeping up pressure on Network Rail over the bad pedestrian/cycle access to the station itself at the Waverley Bridge ramps.
- Good examples of pedestrianised city centres CAN be found in Scotland - Buchanan St Glasgow; and Dundee (TR)
- Disabled access to pedestrian areas is very important, but can be delivered by ShopMobility (as in Edinburgh) where mobility devices are available at locations around pedestrian areas, rather than allowing cars into the pedestrian areas.
- Transport infrastructure (eg trams) is being delivered much cheaper in Sweden - why?