

Edinburgh Council consultation - Roseburn to Union Canal

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Spokes submission

5 January 2016

[Our response ID: ANON-DB3X-BVEJ-R]

Our response takes the form of answers to the questions in the Council's online questionnaire...

1 What is your email address?

spokes@spokes.org.uk

2 To what extent do you agree or disagree that there is a need to invest in walking and cycling improvements between the Roseburn Path and the Union Canal?

Strongly agree

3 Overall, to what extent do you support or oppose the proposed Roseburn to Union Canal path link and the associated landscaping and park proposals?

We strongly support the proposals which will make a valuable contribution to the connectedness of the city's off-road cycling network.

Proposals feedback

4 Do you have any comments on the proposed Sauchiebank Ramp and associated greenspace proposal?

We accept that gradients need to be kept within limits, but we wonder if it is really necessary to start the path up Sauchiebank. Could it not start on Russell road and still be a reasonable gradient? If the Sauchiebank option is progressed however, we wonder if there is a way in which strong cyclists may be able to take a direct route from the start of the path at Sauchiebank to the Mid Calder railway crossing, without making the long detour.

5 Do you have any comments on the Mid Calder Bridge proposals?

The proposals appear to be good.

6 Do you have any comments regarding the elevated path from Mid Calder to Dalry Road including the greenspace proposals?

In general we support the proposals. However, it is unfortunate that a lack of space between the tenements and the Western Approach Road, on the north side of Dalry Road appears to constrain the path to 3 metres for a short stretch. We would like to see the narrow width restriction applying for the minimum distance and are not convinced it need apply across the entire Dalry road bridge (can the bridge be wider than 3 meters and the narrow part apply to a short stretch of the bridge and the elevated path where they meet?).

In relation to the proposed barriers between the WAR and new path, we see advantages of having the path visible so are not supportive of general screening. However we recognise that headlight glare could be a real problem and so wish to see screening used at particular spots to prevent this as necessary.

We wonder if improved access to the "Duff St Woodland" for local residents might encourage use of the green spaces adjacent to the path as extended gardens for shrubs or food growing.

7 Do you have any comments regarding the proposed Dalry Community Park improvements?

Dalry is heavily residential with a lot of families and it is excellent that the scanty green space will be improved and made more welcoming than it is at present. The entry to the park is currently a little forbidding and hidden so we hope it can be made more visible and welcoming with the planned work.

Regarding cycling matters, the existing path from Dalry Road is undermined by tree roots and becomes covered with leaves in the autumn. Hopefully this stretch of path will be resurfaced as part of the scheme, in a way which is more resistant to the tree-root problem. In addition new maintenance arrangements here and for the whole path need to include leaf removal as required.

For the benefit of cyclists accessing the new route to or from Dalry Road, there should be a link to the existing path as close to Dalry Road as levels and gradients allow. This point would seem to be between the 5-a-side football pitch and the sand pit.

For the benefit of pedestrians using the new path to or from Dalry Road we think stair access should be provided on the south side of Dalry Road.

8 Do you have any comments regarding the proposed West Approach Road improvements including the toucan crossing towards the Telfer ramp and the proposed shared path link towards Morrison Circus?

In broad terms we support the proposals though there are a lot of details that are not yet planned regarding the crossing, arrangements for waiting on each side, through traffic on the north side, the area of constrained width on the south side and the ramp improvements up to Dundee St. We understand a further consultation will cover these points. For the time being our comments are

- we do not favour a bridge crossing – see (10) below for reasons
- we expect the speed limit on the West Approach Road to be reduced to 30 MPH approaching the crossing
- we expect a toucan crossing to have minimum waiting times and be as wide as possible to enable maximum flows as we anticipate the route being popular at peak commuting times.
- we have no issue with the subway being closed, but there must be a convenient connection to the paths south and north from the existing Orwell Terrace entrance.
- we want to see the drainage ditch removed where the existing cycle path crosses into the subway passageway on the north side of WAR. We know of at least one crash which has been caused by this.

Regarding the proposed shared path towards Morrison Circus...

This will follow an already existing desire line, and with simple asphaltting could be useful immediately, linking as it does the path through Dalry Park and Morrison Circus. A hedge barrier (about 1 metre high) between path and road would help reduce noise and enhance the sense of separation.

Near Morrison Circus a fence narrows the available width and needs to be removed.

Lamp posts along the length of WAR about 2 metres from the road should be relocated so as not to interfere with the path.

Consideration should be given to creating a new toucan crossing to Drysdale Road. This would enable a straightforward shallow gradient link up with Fountainbridge and the eastern end of the canal. This could be the crossing of choice for many (though not all) people using the new path heading north and east.

Even if installing the toucan is not possible now, lowering the kerbs on the north side of WAR and in the central island would allow the crossing to be made when traffic is stopped at the crossings to the east and west.

9 We are currently considering an option of removing of the existing Telfer Subway. This would allow the scheme to deliver improved public space and an enhanced connection between Dundee Street and the proposed West Approach Road toucan crossing and bus stops. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Telfer Subway should be removed as a facility for crossing the West Approach Road?

We understand that there is to be further consultation about 1) arrangements for the Telfer subway, the proposed Toucan crossing of WAR and the ramp up to Dundee St. and 2) the proposals for the path on Dundee St, its crossing and the arrangements for the canal link. Because of this our comments here are brief – we are concerned that creating unintimidating facilities to travel on and cross Dundee St will be very difficult to achieve. We hope proposals will involve considerably more than paint on the road.

Assuming satisfactory arrangements for waiting, crossing and links to/from the new path and Orwell Terrace can be put in place, we would not object to the closure of the subway given that this would allow for better flows of pedestrians and cyclists to and from the crossing on its southern side. However we recognise that should local residents have a strong preference, that should be an important factor in determining this matter.

10 There is a possibility of providing a bridge over the West Approach Road as an alternative to the toucan crossing. The bridge would cost considerably more and have an effect on the Community Park but would remove the need to wait for traffic when crossing the road. Do you have any preference between a bridge and a light-controlled 'toucan' crossing?

We can see some advantages of a bridge but recognise its additional cost, and its negative visual impact on the surrounding area. In addition the toucan crossing will help change the character of WAR from urban motorway to ordinary road. On balance we favour the level toucan crossing

It does not look possible to have a gradient from WAR road level up to Dundee St that is within normal limits (5 or 6%). This means some cyclists, pedestrians, pushchair and wheelchair users will find the route less than ideal. The crossing at Drysdale Road, suggested above, might provide a better alternative for people travelling south and east.

11 Do you have any comments regarding the proposals for a bridge across the Edinburgh-Glasgow railway line at Roseburn?

Such a bridge would be great and would eliminate a winding descent and ascent. It would also look spectacular and be a strong tangible indicator of Edinburgh's commitment to cycling. However, we understand the cost is in the order of £7 million and we can think of better ways that such investment could be spent at this time to make cycling more attractive to residents and visitors to the city. On the other hand, if funds were available from some outside source that could not be used for other cycling purposes, it would be a great scheme.

12 Do you have any other or overall comments regarding the proposals?

In the main we are strongly supportive of the proposals. The route is already used by many cyclists and the improvements in safety and convenience are very welcome and will make cycling more attractive as a travel choice. It will also be an excellent leisure path for walkers from the Water of Leith path to the Union Canal. A walk through green space and over bridges with views will be a great improvement over walking along Russell Road. The new path should also link up easily to the proposed East/West city route also being consulted on currently.

The new path needs to be included in a maintenance regime from the outset to include cutting back of any encroaching plant material, removal of leaves and any infrastructure damage or deterioration.

Good signage showing the way to other routes such as the canal, Fountainbridge, East/West Link, west and the Roseburn path will be essential.

Also, regarding the link from the new path to the Roseburn path under the railway and tram bridges, we would like to see the following improvements -

1. Lighting and the width of the path need to be improved. The present path is dingy and is prone to pedestrian/cycle conflict mainly due to its narrowness.
2. There is a significant drainage problem. Providing a consistent footway camber sloping gently towards the roadway would solve the problem of large puddles. It would also enable the removal of the sometimes hazardous central drainage facility [the drain covers have several times broken, resulting in a dangerous cycling surface].
3. There are some inappropriately located signs on the pavement that need to be moved and some of the "headroom" signage attached to the bridges may need to be re-positioned.