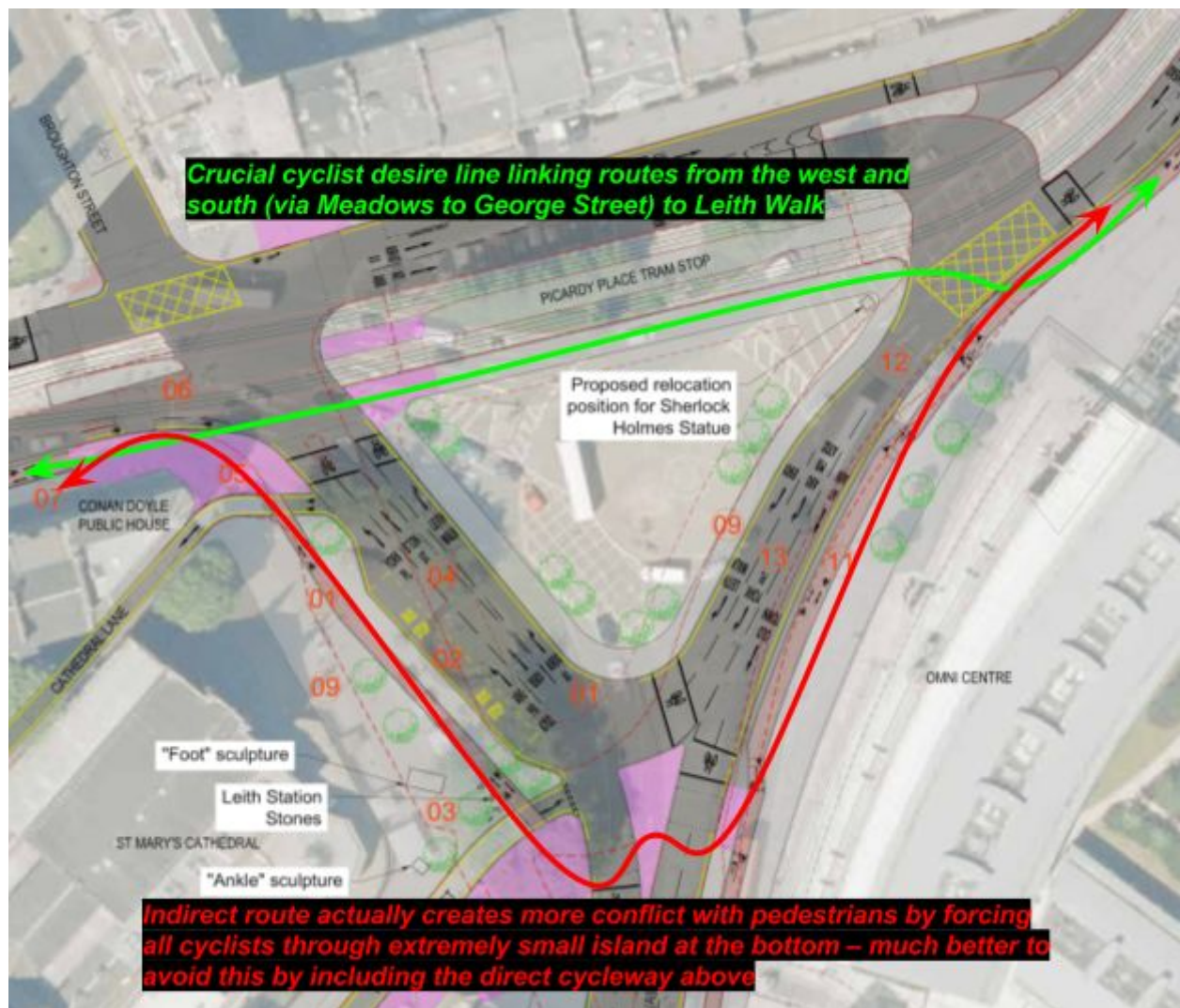


# Improving cycling in the proposals for Picardy Place

The discussion about the pros and cons of the gyratory has been covered extensively elsewhere. It seems clear that the gyratory design is going ahead and so this response focuses on how to make the best of this from a cycling perspective, while still accommodating the needs of other users.

## West to East cycleway

A cycleway across the north side of the island was included in previous plans but has disappeared from the current proposals. It is *crucial* that this cycleway is re-instated as this route – from the CCWEL on York Place to the new segregated cycleway on Leith Walk – is the single biggest desire line for cyclists across the entire junction!



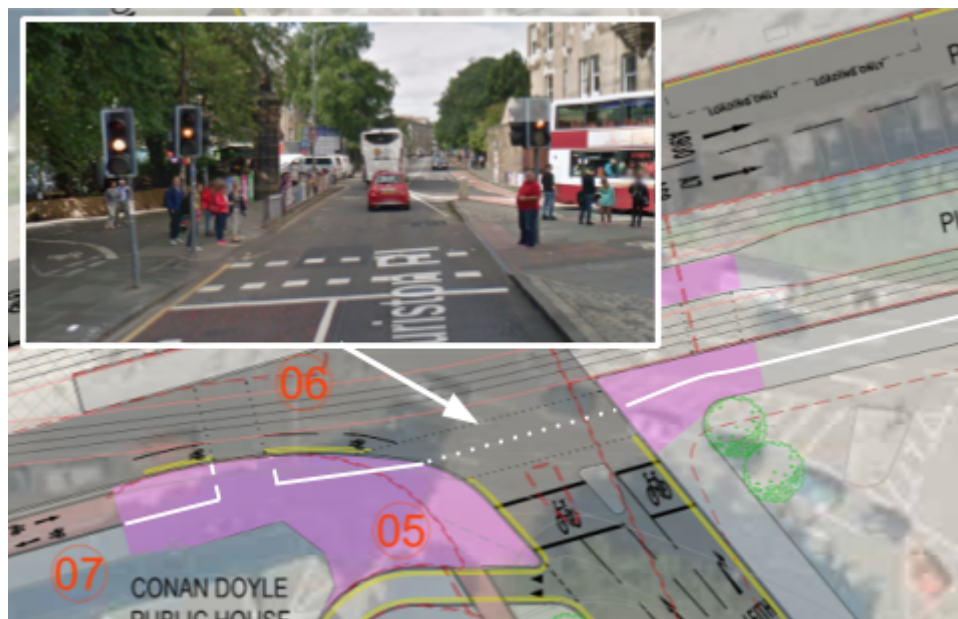
From discussion with officers, I understand that the cycleway was removed from the plans due to concerns about conflict with pedestrians. Rather than remove the cycleway, I ask that you consider options to provide it in a manner that reduces conflict. Additionally, it should be recognised that the current proposal to route west/east cyclists via the island at the south will only create worse conflict due to the small size of the island and awkward angles that are hard to handle on a bicycle (worse still with cargo bikes).

An important observation is that pedestrian conflict only exists at the crossings at each end of the island, as the tram stop is elevated and so the vast majority of pedestrians will only cross at the crossings. Therefore, the challenge is to reduce conflict at these crossings.

Rather than have shared space I suggest you consider using crossings where pedestrians wait back from the cycleway, and cyclists have to stop to let pedestrians across when the green man is active (either via give way markings or mini cycle traffic signals on the cycleway). You can see an example of this using cycle traffic signals on the recent Meadows to Innocent project ([Street View](#)) as depicted below. This approach avoids cyclists trying to plough through pedestrians waiting to cross, but still ensures pedestrians have priority when the green man is active.



Additionally, it's important to reduce conflict on the crossings over to the island and avoid cyclists and pedestrians queueing behind each other while waiting for the green man/bike. Again, rather than shared space I suggest using some form of parallel crossing. The best candidate is probably a split crossing since the cycleway continues straight at each side of the crossing. An example of this can be seen at Forest Road ([Street View](#)). In any case, the cycleway should continue right up to the crossing, reducing uncertainty about where cyclists and pedestrians should position themselves, reducing conflict.





# Broughton Street to Leith Street and Calton Road

This route hasn't been well addressed by any of the plans put forward so far. While there is no segregated provision on Broughton Street this is still a key link for many cyclists between Canonmills and the north of Edinburgh through to the Bridges and routes south.

The latest plans show shared space on the north of Picardy Place so that cyclists can cross via toucans to the central island, and from there to the cycleway outside the Cathedral, and from there across the island at the south. This involves 5 crossings, which is so convoluted that no cyclist would do this. If the west-east cycleway along the north of the island is provided then this drops to 3 crossings which is more reasonable.



However, it seems downright dangerous to encourage cyclists to use the pedestrian crossings to the tram island – imagine cyclists trying to negotiate the tight angles when it's a busy day and many pedestrians are trying to get to the tram stop after a show at the Playhouse. I suggest you remove this in favour of another solution.

The key question is whether there is a way to get cyclists directly from Broughton Street to the island. Early release signals for cyclists on Broughton Street may help, as would on road markings guiding them to the island and making other road users aware this is a path a cyclist will take.



I think it is important that effort should be made to find a solution to this route. However, it may be the case that cyclists will have to remain on the carriageway and enter the gyratory. If this is the only option then a cycle lane guiding cyclists to a dropped kerb where they can access the cycleway will be important. This will also benefit cyclists that choose to remain on the carriageway even if a segregated route is available.



## Calton Road to Broughton Street

Cyclists coming from Waverley Station, Caltongate, or the proposed QuietRoute on Calton Road will reasonably want to stay off the carriageway when cycling to Broughton Street. Indeed, TRO/17/81 bans right turns from Calton Road into Leith Street and so the only way a cyclist will be able to complete this key route is via the cycleway northbound along Leith Street.

The simplest approach would be a dropped kerb and give way line allowing cyclists to directly re-join the carriageway from the southern island. This might be risky as a cyclist needs to be aware that traffic can come from both sides, however vehicles emerging from Little King Street are in the same position so it might be workable.

Another option is to provide a dropped kerb into the advance stop box from the cycleway past the Cathedral. Unfortunately the cyclist needs to move across to the middle lane but this should be possible when the signals are red or there is a gap in traffic. Alternatively an mini two-stage turn could be used by letting cyclists use the crossing to the island and then wait half way across for the signals to Broughton Street to turn green, though width might be an issue.



# Leith Street to Leith Walk

Even confident cyclists coming from the East End will reasonably want to get onto the cycleways down Leith Walk. This is another path that isn't clearly catered for in any of the proposals.

Since cyclists will be on the carriageway the best solution seems to be using dropped kerbs to allow cyclists to use the southern island to cross to the cycleway. Arguably dropped kerbs on both sides of the advance stop box would be useful – the right-hand one provides a direct route and the left-hand one provides a fall-back that aren't able to cross the traffic, as well as providing access to Little King Street and the cycleway past the cathedral towards the CCWEL.



## Contraflow cycling on Little King Street

Little King Street will take on new importance as the link between the Picardy Place area and the new St. James Centre. As such, cycle routes along it are crucial so that cyclists can use this link, particularly to access the bike friendly lifts provided in the new St. James Centre.

The current plan shows a very wide shared use pavement that cyclists can use. While this does provide a cycle link, the pavement is so wide that a contraflow cycle lane up Little King Street could be provided instead. Given the low traffic volumes, this could be on carriageway and only require 1-1.5m of pavement, but doing so would avoid pedestrian/cyclist conflict on the pavement. Moreover, keeping the pavement as pedestrians only would avoid cyclists cycling down the pavement from the new St. James Centre – this is a steep hill and cyclists will rapidly pick-up speed and so it's much safer for pedestrians that they stay on the carriageway.

## Pedestrian crossing to/from Antigua Street

Finally, most cyclists also walk a lot too and so I'd like to raise one issue that affects pedestrians: there seems to be a missing crossing from outside the Playhouse that would make it much easier for pedestrians to cross from to/from Antigua Street and all the restaurants there. It looks like this could easily be provided for within the existing light timings while vehicles are turning right, and doing so would avoid a substantial diversion via multiple crossings via the island and tram stop. It's worth saying that some pedestrians will spot that traffic and trams from Leith Walk have a red light and therefore attempt this crossing anyway even if a pedestrian crossing isn't provided, so I encourage you to recognise this and provide one to make it safe!



## Summary

The current roundabout at Picardy Place is downright scary to use as a cyclist today, and a huge barrier to cycling in this area of the city. It is crucial that the re-imagined Picardy Place provides high quality, thoughtful cycle facilities to remove this barrier and join up the many cycle routes that are planned to go through this key area of the city. I believe that considering the ideas above can enable this to be achieved.

As a reminder:

- The west-east cycle route along the north side of the island must be provided to fulfil the key west-east and avoid pedestrian/cyclist conflict caused by routing all cyclists via the island to the south. Careful design of pedestrian and cycle crossings can allow this cycleway to be provided without causing conflict with pedestrians.
- The current proposal for cyclists heading from Broughton Street to the Leith Street cycleway involves serious conflict with pedestrians at the tram stop and should be replaced with another solution, ideally involving cyclists going straight from Broughton Street to the west-east cycleway along the north of the island.
- There needs to be some mechanism for cyclists from the Calton Road to access Broughton Street.
- A contraflow cycle lane should be provided on Little King Street so that a steep pavement doesn't have to be shared space.
- A pedestrian crossing from the Playhouse to Antigua Street fills a key pedestrian desire line and should be deliverable without changes to light timings.