



Meadows to George Street

2017 Community Links PLUS

City of Edinburgh Council

Meadows to George Street: Places for People

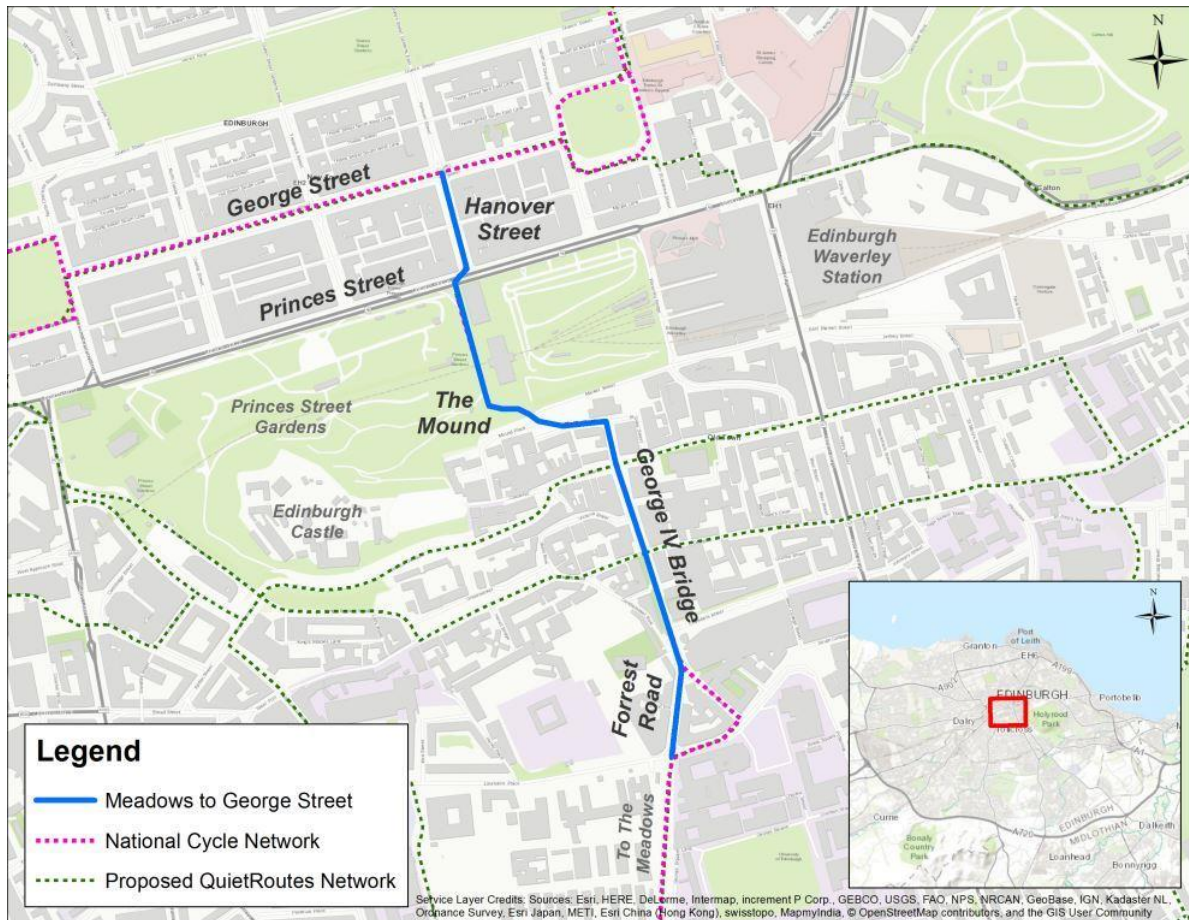


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1. Community Links PLUS competition results

Two innovative City of Edinburgh Council active travel projects have been awarded millions of pounds in funding as part of the Community Links Plus competition, run by Sustrans Scotland and funded by the Scottish Government. Community Links Plus aims to fund inspirational examples of high-quality infrastructure to restore the balance of Scotland's streets in favour of people walking and cycling. Now in its second year, it awards pioneering and innovative proposals for the creation of better places and spaces for people to live, walk and cycle in for everyday journeys.

The Meadows to George Street and West Edinburgh Active Travel Network (WEATN) proposals were among five Scottish schemes named as winners of the competition on Monday 18th September 2017, including schemes in Glasgow, Stirling and Inverness. After an intensive three-stage process, Edinburgh's projects will be awarded a grant of up to 50% of their total outlined project costs.

2. The Meadows to George Street project

The **Meadows to George Street (MGS)** project aims to transform the quality of cycling, walking and public realm along a major multi-modal transport corridor in the heart of Edinburgh.

The project contributes to a wider vision to fill important gaps in the 'QuietRoutes' active travel network within the City, notably connecting multiple routes in the Meadows to the emerging City Centre West-East Link (CCWEL) through the heart of the city. This scheme will be integrated with improved conditions for pedestrians, creating a safe, coherent and attractive route in the city centre along Forrest Road, George IV Bridge, the Mound and Hanover Street.

As the fastest growing city in Scotland - and second fastest in the UK - it's critical that Edinburgh is as easy and enjoyable as possible to get around on foot, by bike and by public transport. Meadows to George Street aims to deliver the wider benefits of cycling and walking, including positive impacts on health and wellbeing, improved quality of the environment and public spaces, strengthened local economies and increased road safety. Measures incorporated in the bid include an integrated approach to place-making, with community engagement, urban design, and promotion of walking and cycling.

3. Project Description

The project has the following key elements:

- A 1.1km active travel route from the Meadows along Forrest Road, George IV Bridge, The Mound and Hanover Street to connect with George Street. This will seek to re-allocate road space to active travel. Improvements will include upgraded cycling provision and crossings, as well as improved footways and crossings points for pedestrians.
- Public space improvements along the whole route.

4. Travel Demand

The project connects into a number of major trip generators including:

- University of Edinburgh's City centre Campus.
- Numerous businesses in Edinburgh's old town.
- The City centre retail core (George Street, Rose Street and Princes Street) - accessed via Hanover St.
- Some of Scotland's and Edinburgh's biggest visitor attractions including The Royal Mile, The National Museum of Scotland, The National and Central Libraries, The Meadows, The National Gallery and The Castle.

Southwards and eastwards it connects, via other routes to St Leonards, Newington, Marchmont, Morningside, Duddingston, Craigmillar, Portobello, Niddrie and Brunstane. It connects directly to National Cycle Network (NCN) Routes 1 and 75 and QuietRoute 6 via Middle Meadow Walk, which is the busiest off-street cycle and walking route in Edinburgh.

5. Community and stakeholder engagement

The scheme is at an early stage of development. Preliminary engagement carried out as part of the bid preparation is only a first step towards establishing a collective vision. The north-south corridor in question is subject to competing demands for road space and considerable further work is required with the public and stakeholders to successfully develop the project.

The Scottish Government's Place Standard Tool has been used in workshops and focus groups to inform the project. This tool will help to ensure that improving the quality of the streets as places for people is central to the design, whilst also considering all other needs and pressures in this complex and dynamic environment.

6. Next Steps

Following the funding award, work will be starting on further development of the project. A report setting out next steps will be brought to the Council's Transport and Environment Committee in December. This website will be kept periodically updated.