

20 March 2018

In 2013, Sustrans Scotland entered into an agreement with City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) to provide £3.6m from Transport Scotland over three years to deliver an exemplary design for Leith Walk which would enhance the public realm and enable a greater number of journeys by foot and by bicycle.

As a consequence Sustrans Scotland was invited to join the CEC design team and attended regular design review meetings. The Agreement expired in 2016 with £1.4m spent and work completed between the Foot of The Walk and the McDonald Road junction.

We understood that future developments of designs for Leith Walk, north of Pilrig St to The Foot of the Walk, and from McDonald Rd south to London Rd, would continue the fully segregated cycle lanes that have been delivered from McDonald Rd to Pilrig St. However, the current tram design proposals do not reflect those set out in the [Leith Programme](#).

Our key issues with the current proposals, as presented, are:

- Greater clarification is required on the presence of a route safety audit and details of the measures which have been included in the design to reduce the likelihood of collisions and incidents involving tram tracks.
- There is apparently limited scope for community engagement to have any significant influence on the design, given the advanced stage of the project. [but see [below](#)]
- The proposed designs do not prioritise people on foot and on bikes above other modes of transport, failing to adhere to the [transport hierarchy](#).

Since the agreement expired, Sustrans Scotland have not renewed our funding arrangements for the Leith Programme. We will not commit any further funding to the project unless major changes are made to the proposal or a significant suite of complementary measures are developed.

We are keen however to work with City of Edinburgh Council, Transport for Edinburgh and the Tram delivery team to find solutions that prioritise walking, cycling and sustainable transport. As such, we have set out what we believe to be the opportunities and the risks associated with the various sections of the route in the new proposals.

We will continue to work in partnership with CEC, with meaningful and constructive engagement to help make it easier for people to walk and cycle in Edinburgh.

For a more detailed overview of the opportunities and the risks associated with the various sections of the route in the new proposals, [please read our commentary here](#).

Conclusion:

While Sustrans fully support City of Edinburgh's aspirations for increased walking and cycling and better public realm, it is of concern to see the potential impact of the Edinburgh tram proposal on Leith Walk. We will continue to work in partnership with CEC, with meaningful and constructive engagement to help make it easier for people to walk and cycle in Edinburgh.

Subsequent update:

An earlier version of this statement said that Sustrans felt that there was '*limited scope for community engagement to have any significant influence on the design, given the advanced stage of the project.*'

Following a positive meeting with the trams team in City of Edinburgh Council we have been greatly reassured that any views expressed in the consultation on the trams will be considered. We are encouraging everyone to [respond to the consultation](#) by the 29th April.

Opportunities and risks arising from the proposed Edinburgh Tram Extension March 2018

Section (south to north)	Risks	Opportunities
Picardy Place to Annandale Street (including Elm Row)	The current layout is too heavily focussed on facilitating the bi-directional cycle lanes linking to the south and, as a result, compromises the pedestrian realm and removes the trees that are currently planted.	This is where the Picardy Place project and Leith Programme improvements meet and there is potential for significant placemaking improvements at Elm Row. The London Road junction is suggested as a more appropriate place for the transition between single direction cycle lanes and bi-directional, with the opportunity to include single direction cycle lane spurs and a fully cycle-friendly junction that facilitates journeys from London Road to Leith Walk (both north and south).
Annandale Street to Pilrig Street (the extent of the new, segregated infrastructure and 2-stage-right turn):	Though tying into the City Centre East West Link cycleway (CCWEL) at the south there will be no connectivity for cyclists heading north, thereby terminating the high-quality cycle provision abruptly at Pilrig Street.	This is the 'Tram proof' section of the existing road layout so the existing segregation will be retained.
Pilrig Street to the foot of the walk (current layout developed with Sustrans involvement)	Extra-wide pavements, cycle lanes placed beyond loading bays and frequent crossing points are all removed from the proposed design. This severely compromises north/south pedestrian and cycle movements as well the overall conviviality of the street. Alarming, loading bays are placed in direct conflict with the proposed advisory cycle lanes.	Given the tram is intended to replace car journeys, and the proposed banning of right turns from side roads is likely to decrease the amount of traffic using Leith Walk itself, a political decision must be made around the need to maintain constant running lanes for traffic either side of the tram. Allowing traffic to use the tram corridor on a full-time basis and restricting use to buses/cycles/taxis would allow space for wide, terraced cycle lanes that could be designed to allow for traffic to pass on the rare occasion that a tram breaks down.
North of Leith Walk to Newhaven	<p>Though some shared-use pavements have been included around Ocean Terminal; opportunities for accommodation of pedestrians and cyclists have not been maximised into the proposed layout.</p> <p>What is proposed looks as narrow and threatening as Haymarket Terrace.</p> <p>Links from the North Edinburgh Network to Ocean Terminal could be improved.</p>	While opportunities for 'on-line' improvements could be limited due to space, the Tram proposal should be complemented by a package of improvements to the cycle network aimed at mitigating this loss of amenity. For example, a potential route exists though Newkirkgate shopping centre to Tolbooth Wynd and linking to Commercial Street, where a segregated route could be accommodated.