

West Edinburgh Link

Response from Spokes, May 2019

Spokes welcomes the concept of a dedicated cycle route between Bughtlin and Wester Hailes. The main route goes reasonably direct, doesn't take devious ways "round-the-houses", and connects many popular destinations, though not the schools and large shopping centres. We are particularly impressed with the proposal for a new bridge over the Fife railway at Gogarloch Syke. There are a few details that we don't like, but nothing that can't be improved with some tweaks.

What we don't like

The segregated cycle path on Bankhead Avenue is only 2.5m wide, below standard. It should be the standard 3.0m wide.

The shared path on South Gyle Access is to be only 4m wide instead of the standard 5m. This is a pinch point as it goes under the railway and the tram line near a main junction of cycle routes, so it should be wider. The design will create a tight space at the NW corner of the junction, under the tram bridge, where cyclists heading eastwards along Quiet Route 8 will be waiting to cross the constricted 2-stage crossing of South Gyle Access (which looks unchanged from its present awful state) so causing conflict with cyclists heading north-south along the new link, not to mention pedestrians as well. One of the five traffic lanes should be removed to give more space for active travel.

At Wester Hailes Plaza the cycle way crosses a high-speed slip road leading from Wester Hailes Road to the shopping centre car park, with cars coming fast on the blind side of southbound cyclists; this will have to be re-drawn so that vehicles going into the car park have to slow down before reaching the crossing. At the exit from the car park it looks as though southbound cyclists are expected to cross Harvester's Way twice; we would prefer the cycle route kept to the east side of Harvester's Way, omitting the cycle link into Wester Hailes Road (I can't see why a cyclist would want to use it, uphill with fast heavy traffic and no destinations, when there is a perfectly good quiet street running parallel).

There is a similar awkwardly-angled slip road at the entrance to Sighthill Industrial Estate; we would like it removed with vehicles entering the Estate further along Calder Road, where the exit is.

Links outside the area

The route should be designed to make it easy to add future connections with places outside the immediate area:

- Across Queensferry Road to Cramond and National Cycle Route 1 at Braepark
- Across Maybury Road to the proposed developments in West Craigs and Cammo (particularly important for school children going from there to Craigmount High School)
- Across Drum Brae to Clermiston and north Corstorphine
- To the schools at Craigmount, St Augustine's and Forrester
- To the Gyle Centre and Hermiston Gait
- To the canal at Cultins Road
- To the Water of Leith path.

Shopping centres

The route does not make it any easier to reach the shopping centres at Gyle and Hermiston Gait, both of which are hard to reach by bicycle.

At Gyle there are links to the edge of the centre, at least from the east and north-west, but then cyclists have to go through the car park to reach the shops and the cycle parking. A proper cycle route past Gyle Centre would also help to make a through route from Edinburgh Park to the path beside the A8; a route may be possible by the service road round the north side of the Gyle Centre, although that would not help to reach the Centre's main entrance. If a route through the Centre is difficult, the proposed railway bridge at Gogarloch Syke would allow another option to reach the A8 path, by using the south footway of Glasgow Road to reach the underpass at Edinburgh Gateway Station, making a route from South Gyle to Gogarburn without crossing a main road.

Hermiston Gait is fairly easy to reach going north, but difficult going south because of the one-way restriction on Cultins Road. There should be a two-way cycle route along the west side of Cultins Road, which would also make it easier to reach the canal from the north.

Other points

Crossings of main roads should be single-stage rather than two-stage. If a crossing must be two-stage, the central island should be large enough to accommodate several cyclists using the crossing at once (for example, at school leaving times). If the crossing of the A8 at Dechmont Road has to remain two-stage, the layout should be re-jigged so that cyclists do not have to dismount to reach the push buttons on the central island.

Where side roads cross segregated cycle paths, there should be priority for cyclists at the junctions and adequate signs to make motorists aware that the cycle path has priority. Corner radii should be reduced to slow down traffic entering and leaving the side roads. This is particularly relevant in South Gyle Crescent and Bankhead Avenue.

The Maybury Drive segregated path should be extended further south to allow cyclists to avoid Maybury Drive when heading to or from Mearenside and Hayfield.

The route along Bughtlin Market mixes cyclists with parking and turning traffic and passes uncomfortably close to the front doors of East Craigs Church and the Medical Practice. We would prefer it to go along the more direct, wider, and traffic-free path past East Craigs Nursery School.

Craigs Road is used by a lot of traffic to avoid queues at the Maybury junction, particularly in the morning peak, which is also the time children are heading to Craigmount High School. We would like traffic reduction measures in Craigs Road, by closing it to motor traffic (or making it one-way westwards) at the Maybury Road end, with an exemption for cycles and buses. Other suburban streets on the Link route should also have measures put in to discourage their use by through motor traffic.

At the eastern end of South Gyle Crescent the Link route is shown heading north to the South Gyle Access roundabout and then south again. We would like to see it going through the Clocktower Business Park, cutting that corner.

Good signage is essential as it will be easy for someone not familiar with the area to find themselves lost, particularly in the suburban areas without segregated cycle routes.