

# COVID-19 Walking and Cycling Emergency Response Measures: proposed temporary cycle segregation on Comiston Road

Response from Spokes South Edinburgh, July 2020

*This response considers the proposals shared by the Spaces for People Team on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020*

## Context

Spokes South Edinburgh is a local group of Spokes, covering the South Edinburgh area. We are supporting Spokes' other submissions on segregation on arterial routes, and this submission covers the A702 Comiston Road proposals.

We strongly support this proposal for temporary segregation on A702. Protected cycleways on this road have been a long-desired addition to an area with virtually no safe cycling options. We believe giving this protected space for cycling in both directions will enable far more people to cycle within the broader Fairmilehead area. We also believe that the proposals will benefit pedestrians, as the cycleways will act as a buffer between the pavement and the carriageway.

We also hope that the proposals for Comiston Road will serve as a template for other 4 lane roads in South Edinburgh. Colinton Road would definitely benefit from the same treatment, and to a lesser extent Lanark Road too.

To be effective this must be a route to somewhere and able to be promoted as such. The proposed segregation as far North as Greenbank Crossroads and the changes already in place at Braidburn Terrace provide links to other places:

- Existing quiet routes to Bruntsfield will offer a cycle route from Buckstone to Boroughmuir HS.
- Existing quiet routes to the Meadows which connect onwards to Princes St. and other places accessible from the Meadows.

We are therefore hopeful that the proposals will form the beginnings of a safe cycle network in South Edinburgh, and hope that they can be implemented with minimal delay. Such a network must include a safe route connecting Greenbank Crossroads to Morningside.

## Detailed comments

### East Comiston to Pentland View

The entire section from East Comiston to Pentland View on one side and the junction with Braid Road on the other side should be considered as a whole. Bad driving decisions are often seen in order to get into or out of the parking lay-by and drivers often park on double yellow lines to reach the shops if the lay-by is full. The lay-by can be double parked or badly parked, putting cyclists in the marked cycle lane in the “door zone”. There is restricted vision for drivers leaving parking who cannot properly see the fast approaching vehicles or cyclists before pulling further out into the cycle lane.

While we await longer term changes to this section speed should be reduced significantly from before East Comiston to after Pentland View to make this whole area safer. The current solar powered speed sign isn't clear enough or early enough to be a deterrent. The red coloured area (cycle lane) already in existence on both sides of the road should be refreshed. We propose a high friction surface -colour red- to be applied from the north side of Pentland View in a continuous strip to the south side of East Comiston Greenbank Crossroads.

### Comiston Springs Avenue to Greenbank Junction

The provision of cycle lanes on either side of the stretch nearest Greenbank Crossroads is especially welcome as it is a narrow area which is difficult to navigate safely for novice cyclists.

The plans include a “Copenhagen-style” right turn. We are aware that this method may be very useful for this junction but wonder how well it has worked in Leith Walk. This will be the first use of this method in South Edinburgh, and it may be difficult for some cyclists to adopt it. We are pleased to see it being trialled, however, and hope that monitoring and evaluation of its use takes place, in order to inform future designs in permanent schemes

We believe that the northbound cycleway should be extended to also include the section between Comiston Springs Avenue and the petrol station. Without this, it is likely that some risk-averse cyclists will not be able to use the infrastructure. We realise that this would, regrettably, mean removing the bus lane, but we believe that measures such as this are worth trying on a “Try-then-modify” basis in temporary projects such as these.

### Fairmilehead crossroads

At the Southern end of the route the safety of segregation stops abruptly at the Fairmilehead Junction which is a junction which many cyclists have trouble navigating. We believe the proposals are broadly neutral for cyclists at this junction, except that they may make it slightly easier to turn from Oxfords Road into A702. We hope that Frogston Road, Oxfords Road and

Biggar Road are all made safer in future Spaces for People proposals, with Frogston Road and Oxgangs Road being an important East/West route to RIE.

## General comments

### Bus stops and cycle lanes

We are supportive of “floating” bus stops in principle, and welcome their inclusion in this temporary scheme. However, pedestrians crossing the cycleway at floating bus stops must have clear and explicit priority. Ideally, this would be achieved with controlled crossings, to aid vulnerable pedestrians, but zebra crossings, similar to those at the floating bus stops on Leith Walk, should be included at minimum. We understand that this is possible using the proposed Rediweld and Vectorial materials. The ramps at the floating bus stops should not be too steep or narrow, as this will cause problems for people using non-standard cycles such as recumbent bikes or handcycles.

### Wand spacing

The wand spacing should be sufficient to allow cyclists to time their decision to move into the vehicle lane for turning right throughout the whole road. This is an issue which is difficult for cyclists at present and the proposals are neutral in that respect. Should the segregation become more permanent or solid consideration would have to be given to how this would work.

### Cycle lane colouring

All stretches of unsegregated cycle lane should be red-screeded, particularly where the cycle lane crosses a side road, in order to give them clear priority over turning traffic. This has been included in the plans in a couple of places, but should be done at every side road, as well as at entrance and exit to the petrol station. If any resurfacing is done prior to the temporary infrastructure being installed, the cycle lanes should be red-chipped, even in segregated sections, as long as this would not result in the project being delayed.

At junctions, consideration should be setting the stop line on the side road back slightly before the cycle lane, to stop motorists encroaching on the cycle lane. Consideration should also be given to making the cycle lanes wider where they pass side roads.

### Parking-protected cycle lanes

We are pleased to see these being trialled in these temporary schemes. Again, we hope that monitoring and evaluation will take place in order to inform the design of future permanent schemes.

There are a few places where the temporary kerb layout could be adjusted in order to tighten the radius of the junction. This is needed to ensure that drivers turning into and out of the side street do so at a safe speed. This is especially important since parking-protected cycle lanes will be a new addition to Edinburgh, and so many drivers will not have encountered them before. Such locations include the junctions with Riselaw Place and Riselaw Crescent.

## Electric bikes and hills: a wonderful match!

Electric bikes are becoming more popular, and make cycling in South Edinburgh's hills a feasible option for more people. Many of these people are quite risk-averse, however, and the protection offered by protected cycleways is therefore particularly helpful to encourage them. We would be keen to see the Just Eat Cycles system expanded into south Edinburgh, by adding docking stations at:

- Braidburn Valley Park (serving Hermitage of Braid too),
- the large pavement at 2 Riselaw Crescent as a halfway point up the hill,
- Buckstone shops / large pavement at Buckstone Terrace where it meets Comiston Rd,
- Fairmilehead crossroads.

This would enable people to use them for local journeys and also provide a way for people to try e-bikes before buying them. It would also encourage further expansion of the scheme in south Edinburgh and into Midlothian.

## Speed limit reduction

Finally, we believe the speed limit on these roads should be reduced to 30mph. We understand that there are existing proposals to accomplish this on a permanent basis, and hope that these can be included in the temporary scheme as well.