COVID-19 Walking and Cycling Emergency Response Measures: Dundee Street and Fountainbridge

Response from Spokes – the Lothian Cycle Campaign, July 2020

This response considers the proposals shared by the Spaces for People Team on 7th July 2020

General comments

Spokes is supportive of the Council's initiatives to support walking and cycling at this time of national emergency. We agree that it's vital to provide quality space for walking and cycling so that people can feel safe and confident in choosing sustainable modes of travel as lockdown measures are relaxed. In doing so, this reduces the load on public transport so that its limited capacity can be used by those that most need it, while avoiding people turning to cars and choking the city as they do so.

We know that the Active Travel team have had plans for segregated cycleways along this stretch for some time, so we very much welcome the proposals brought forward by the Spaces for People programme. This stretch is well used by cyclists as an alternative to the narrow, and often congested canal towpath. Moreover, it provides direct access to Fountainpark, Napier student accommodation, and the large offices on and around Lochrin Basin – all key places that people should be able to cycle to/from.

We're generally pleased by the proposals put forward, but <u>some of the changes risk making conditions worse if not implemented carefully and we urge the council to review these safety concerns carefully</u>:

1. Reconsider West Approach Road junction

2. Carefully consider stud spacing and gaps to facilitate safe right turns

Additionally, we have several further suggestions:

3. Ensure continuity of Gilmore Park / Melvin Walk through route

4. Widen cycle lane outside Boroughmuir High School

5. Ensure that guardrail removal does not reduce cycle parking

Suggestion 1: Reconsider West Approach Road junction

The junction with the West Approach Road strikes fear into even confident cyclists, with the high risk of being "left hooked" by a vehicle heading down the slip road onto the West Approach Road. Several of our members noted that they navigate the existing junction by pulling out into the middle of the road to prevent vehicles from overtaking them – clearly a maneuver only possible by a confident cyclist.

We assume that the intent of the splitter island is to define a clearer turn into the West Approach Road and reduce vehicle speeds. While this seems like a reasonable intent, <u>we're extremely concerned that the proposed planter compromises sightlines and risks vehicles failing to see cyclists in the segregated cycle lane. It is absolutely vital that this element is not progressed as proposed.</u>

Measures like speed bumps and give way lines would help to reduce vehicle speeds to a minimum and to maximise the chance that vehicles give way to cyclists. But there will always be a risk that a vehicle fails to do so, and with potentially disastrous consequences. The only way to make the junction truly safe is to close the slip road altogether, and we urge the Council to consider this carefully.

Suggestion 2: Carefully consider stud spacing and gaps to facilitate safe right turns

We're very concerned that the temporary kerbs as shown in the drawings don't always leave sufficient gaps to enable a cyclist to safely pull out into the middle of the road to execute a right turn. Insufficient gaps risk a cyclist trying to cut between the studs, with the risk that they hit one and fall off.

We appreciate that there's a trade off between affording cyclists protection using the kerbs and leaving gaps to facilitate right turns (into as well as out of the cycleway). But overall we feel the proposals don't get the balance right and we note the following right turns where the proposed spacing looks inadequate (major ones in bold):

- **Henderson Terrace**
- Dundee Terrace
- Fowler Terrace
- Yeaman Place
- Murdoch Terrace
- **Gibson Terrace (for canal access)**
- **Viewforth**
- Drysdale Road
- **Gilmore Park (see below)**
- **Melvin Walk (see below)**
- Lochrin Basin

During gaps in the studs a solid white lane (mandatory cycle lane) and red screen should still be used to delineate the cycle lane and maintain continuity of the cycleway.

Suggestion 3: Ensure continuity of Gilmore Park / Melvin Walk through route

The crossing of Fountainbridge at Gilmore Park / Melvin Walk is a key one in the wider route from Bruntsfield (and Marchmont / Morningside) to Haymarket (and eastwards from there). Indeed, this route was previously marked as QuietRoute 7 in previous versions of the Active Travel Action Plan.

It's therefore important that these proposals maintain and improve conditions on this through route. In particular there is a non-standard ramp that many cyclists use to access Melvin Walk from Gilmore Park – the temporary kerbs must have space between them to maintain access to this, and ideally draw more attention to it.

Suggestion 4: Widen cycle lane outside Boroughmuir High School

The plans note that the existing 1.25m advisory lane will be retained outside Boroughmuir High School. The existing lane is in fact a mandatory one, but in any case 1.25m is significantly below the "absolute minimum width" of 1.5m defined by Cycling by Design §5.1.3, which further notes that "sub-standard width or poorly located cycle lanes can provide a false sense of security...". Edinburgh's own Street Design Guidance concurs in Design Manual C2 that 1.5m is the minimum, and that 1.75 is recommended.

This cycle lane was introduced as part of road changes when Boroughmuir High School was built and has always been non-standard. We suggest that this opportunity is used to install a properly sized cycle lane.

Suggestion 5: Ensure that guardrail removal does not reduce cycle parking

We note that guardrail will be removed in a few locations. While this is something that we welcome in general, we urge care that guardrail removal does not reduce cycle parking capacity. If guard rail is to be anywhere that it is used as cycle parking then alternative cycle parking must be installed at the same time.