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cc: Paul.lawrence@edinburgh.gov.uk
date: 3 Aug 2020, 16:14
subject: Wester Hailes Road slip road

Cllrs Macinnes and Doran,

[cc: Paul Lawrence, bcc: Spokes planning group]

Attached is a letter from Spokes regarding the slip road from Wester Hailes Road into the car park at Westside Plaza Shopping Centre. The letter outlines our serious concerns about the safety of this junction for cyclists, and we hope that the recent decision to keep it open during the Spaces for People project can be reconsidered.

As ever, we would be happy to help organise a site visit if that would be helpful.

We look forward to hearing from you on this matter.

Thanks,
David French
Spokes Planning Group

Cllrs Macinnes and Doran,

Spokes wishes to raise with you our serious concerns about the recent decision taken by the Spaces for People team to not close the slip road from Wester Hailes Road into the cinema car park. Whilst we obviously welcome the project as a whole, we feel it is worth highlighting this particular decision, which we believe will make cycling at this junction *more* dangerous.

A Google Streetview image of the junction is below (click image for link to Streetview):



The existing advisory lane is incredibly unsafe and is therefore not used by many cyclists. Drivers do not need to slow down to turn into the slip road, and cyclists using the advisory lane have to turn their head a long way to see if it is safe to cross the slip road. Most cyclists therefore avoid using the cycle lane, instead choosing the route shown in blue below (the red line shows the existing advisory cycle lane):



The Spaces for People proposals will install barriers along the edge of the advisory cycle lane, preventing cyclists from taking this safer route. The proposals will therefore make this particular junction *more* dangerous for cyclists.

This could easily be avoided by closing the slip road (to motorised traffic - access to/from the cycleway should of course still be allowed), and we suggested during the initial consultation that this be done. The response to our suggestion stated that such a closure was considered, but was rejected because "it was felt that displacing more traffic through the smaller residential roads around Westside Plaza was more detrimental to road safety and the local community than keeping the slip road open." We very strongly disagree with this reasoning – the slip road is not particularly heavily used and so closing it would have a relatively modest effect on the alternative route via Murrayburn Road. We would, of course, support additional measures to improve safety on the alternative route as well, such as tightening the junction radii. Whilst the introduction of a 20mph speed limit will help, it is nevertheless likely that a significant fraction of drivers using the slip road will be travelling at more than 20mph, with some even likely to accelerate once on the slip road. The only truly safe option is to close the slip road.

We note that Edinburgh Street Design Guidance ([Factsheet C4](#)) states that full closure of side roads where they meet a segregated cycleway is "Best for: any situation where road closure is a realistic option and doesn't cause significant knock-on problems". As outlined above, we believe this applies to the present situation.

We also understand that closure of the slip road is currently being considered as part of the West Edinburgh Link scheme. Given the temporary materials being used in the Spaces for People programme, we believe it makes sense to at least try such an intervention, as it could quickly and easily be reverted in the event that significant knock-on problems developed. The Spaces for People project should therefore be used to trial a closure of the slip road.

If closure of the slip road is still not considered an option, then measures to force drivers to slow down whilst turning into it must be installed. These could include installation of a speed bump and the introduction of a definite left turn into the slip road using planters or similar (with care being taken to ensure that the visibility of cyclists using the cycleway are not obscured).

We hope that this matter can be reconsidered, and look forward to hearing from you about it.

Yours sincerely,
David French
Spokes Planning Group