

COVID-19 Walking and Cycling Emergency Response Measures: Causewayside and Buccleuch St

Response from Spokes, the Lothian Cycle Campaign, August 2020

We support the objective of these proposals to make cycling safer and, therefore, more attractive to those who are currently deterred by traffic conditions on the Causewayside/Buccleuch Street corridor. This corridor is an incredibly important route for cyclists heading to/from the city centre, as well as to both the central and King's Buildings campuses of the University of Edinburgh. It also, of course, contains several local shopping centres. With the right infrastructure, cycling could play a significant role in commuting, shopping, leisure and other journeys along Causewayside and Buccleuch Street.

Causewayside and Buccleuch Street are part of the "Quality Bike Corridor" which, whilst an improvement on what came before it, is severely lacking in some respects and the Spaces for People project should aim to remedy these flaws. Whilst some are addressed in the proposals, we have suggestions for further improvements which we hope can be incorporated.

Corridor-wide points

- The entire corridor is generally too busy for advisory cycle lanes to be a safe solution. It would be made much safer for cyclists and pedestrians by removing through traffic, which could be accomplished by installing a bus gate somewhere along the route. Access for deliveries would therefore be maintained, whilst removing through traffic (except for pedestrians, cyclists and buses).
- In both sets of plans, there are "SLOW" and "STOP" markings in the cycle lanes before traffic islands and bus stops. These should be removed, as they wrongly suggest that cyclists using the cycle lanes do not have priority at these points.
- In several places, pedestrian guardrail which is proposed for removal is currently well used as bike parking. Examples include outside Summerhall and opposite Buccleuch Place. Replacement bike racks should therefore be provided near these locations.
- The southbound cycle lane is mostly to be left as it is at present - some stretches of advisory cycle lane, interspersed with stretches of no cycling infrastructure at all. This continues the mistake made when the Quality Bike Corridor was introduced. We fear that without more ambitious proposals for the southbound lane, the scheme as a whole will fail in its key objective to promote cycling since cyclists generally wish to travel in both directions from their home or wherever their journey starts. We therefore recommend that the proposals for the southbound lane should be reviewed with the aim of introducing protected and separate cycle lanes on both sides of the road. Whilst this may require a reduction in the number of parking spaces on the east side of the road, the customers for the large majority of the shops in this area serve the nearby locality and should be easily accessible on foot or by bike. If a more

continuous cycle southbound lane is not considered feasible, we believe this only strengthens the need for removing motorised through traffic from the route by installing a bus gate.

Causewayside proposals

- The northbound advisory cycle lane on Ratcliffe Terrace has been a continual source of difficulty for cyclists since it was built, but the current proposals will not address the existing problems here. The cycle lane is frequently blocked by parked vehicles, which forces cyclists to move out into the flow of the traffic. Consideration should be given to replacing it with a parking-protected cycleway which would then run into the proposed, protected cycle lane just south of Grange Loan.
- The northbound cycle lane on Causewayside is frequently blocked by parked vehicles outside the Aviator pub. Advisory lanes do not work here, and stronger measures should be incorporated.
- The existing central feeder lanes at the Melville Drive and West Preston Street junctions feel dangerous to many cyclists. Banning left turns onto Melville Drive and West Preston Street would solve this (turning the filter lanes into segregated cycling lanes). The alternative route for motor traffic (via Nicolson Street) is a very short detour.

Buccleuch Street proposals

- The existing southbound advisory cycle lane between Gifford Park and Buccleuch Terrace is not marked on the plans. Since the protected cycleway is awkward to use if cycling north to south along Buccleuch St, the advisory lane should be retained.
- Protection of the southbound cycle lane on Potterrow/Chapel Street should be extended to join up with the small proposed section just north of the pedestrian crossing. The section outside the mosque is often parked in, even where there are double yellow no loading markings, and measures to prevent this are therefore necessary. Gaps should, of course, be left for private access points and side streets.
- The plans show the southbound advisory cycle lane being moved to the inside of the parking spaces on Potterrow, but the plans do not seem to include any measures to prevent drivers parking in the cycle lane. Such measures should obviously be included.
- We believe that there is space to replace the proposed bus boarder on Potterrow with a floating bus stop, as is being done in the Comiston Road project. This would be safer for pedestrians, if it can be done.
- Double parking blocking the existing cycle lane on Lothian Street is often a problem, and consideration should be given to using a parking-protected cycle lane here as well.
- The proposed protected cycle lane on Teviot Place should be extended to meet Middle Meadow Walk. This would make it easier for cyclists approaching from Potterrow to proceed to Forrest Road by using the toucan crossing at the top of Middle Meadow Walk, and design of the layout should make it as clear as possible

that such a manoeuvre is possible. At present, the southernmost temporary kerbs on Forrest Road make the normal route tricky. Relocation of the taxi rank may be necessary to accomplish this.

Connections to other routes

- Gifford Park: An important connection from this project will obviously be along Gifford Park towards the Nicolson Street corridor and the Innocent Railway path. Whilst we think that the layout on Gifford Park operates satisfactorily at present, there is potential for increased conflict between cyclists and pedestrians at the Nicolson Street crossing if increasing numbers of cyclists use it. We hope that this is being taken into consideration, and that any necessary improvements will be included in the forthcoming Nicolson Street corridor Spaces for People proposals. Such improvements could include increasing the length of the pedestrian/cyclist phase at the crossing.
- Mayfield Road: We also suggest that the scheme be extended to include the remainder of the former Quality Bike corridor up to King's Buildings. This should be possible simply by converting the existing advisory cycle lanes into mandatory cycle lanes with orca wand protection. This would also provide the opportunity to redesign the northbound cycle lane which currently takes cyclists on the outside of the car parking provided from Relugas Rd to Fountainhall Rd on the south to north lane of the road and is potentially dangerous. Consideration should be given to changing this to a parking-protected arrangement, which could feed into a similar arrangement on Ratcliffe Terrace, as we have suggested above. The southbound advisory cycle lane between Mentone Terrace and Savile Terrace is another location which may benefit from becoming parking-protected.
- Bristo Place: Bristo Place is not covered by the existing Forrest Road/George IV Bridge project, and the current proposals unfortunately do not include it either. This is unfortunate as the existing layout leaves much to be desired, particularly for cyclists turning right onto Teviot Place, and it would remain a weak point in the route from Princes Street to the Meadows. Consideration should therefore be given to including proposals for Bristo Place in the Buccleuch Street project.