

Spaces for People – A1 Bus/Cycle Scheme Proposals

Response from Spokes, the Lothian Cycle Campaign, and Spokes Party

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Spaces for People proposal for the A1 Bus/Cycle scheme (from close to Leith Walk to the junction with Mountcastle Drive South). We strongly support the provision of the route, and it should help many people switch from car to bike/adapted bike for regular journeys. It should also help those who do not have access to cars to cycle or use public transport in a more comfortable and efficient way. However, there are significant problems and dangers in the current proposals, notably at bus stops and junctions.

Given the size of the scheme and the limited time for responses, we have not been able to provide a detailed analysis of the whole route in the time available. However, we hope, as the scheme progresses, that we can propose modifications should they be required, to improve the experience and safety of people walking and cycling.

General Principles

Protected cycle lane width

The width of a protected cycle lane must not be less than 1.5 metres, and must not include the space taken up by kerbs or wands. Some of the proposed cycle lanes appear to be 1.5 metres including kerbs, so they are too narrow. However, where there is adequate road width, cycle lanes should be wider, to allow ordinary bikes, trailers, cargo bikes, adapted bikes, trikes etc, to more easily pass each other. It is also important to avoid over-wide motor traffic lanes which encourage speeding. Any spare width should be allocated to wider cycle lanes and/or footways.

Bus Stops

We are very unhappy with the proposals for bus stops. For example, on the south side of London Road opposite Hillside Crescent, cyclists have to move out of the cycle lane, cross the bus/taxi lane, and enter the main traffic flow - and then return to the cycle lane across the path of the bus which may start to move at any moment. Some novice or nervous cyclists will wait till the bus has gone - but even then they have to enter the bus lane and possibly contend with approaching taxis. This design must be changed such that the cycle lane passes behind where the bus stops, with a pedestrian area between the cycle lane and the bus lane.

If road width results in traffic having to wait behind a stopped bus, this surely is what the transport hierarchy demands - and indeed the Council has constructed bus build-outs on some Edinburgh roads in the full knowledge that they will occasionally hold up traffic. Placing cyclists in conflict with buses and other vehicles contradicts the aim of the scheme outlined on the covering letter - *“principal aims of encouraging and supporting cyclists to travel safely”*

Where the Council decides not to adopt the above proposals, and to use a bus boarder, it must be very carefully designed to ensure that cyclists slow right down and if necessary stop when a bus is at the bus stop. Measures should include the cycleway being raised, appropriate slow/stop signage, and prominent zebra markings on the cycleway.

Cycleways Outside Parking Lanes

Placing cyclists in an unprotected lane between a parking lane and a running lane is highly undesirable. The cycle lane should be inside the parking lane - as proposed, for example, in the Buccleuch Street Spaces for People scheme. If any of the parking spaces are to be accessible spaces, then special provision can be made to ensure that cyclists travel slowly at that point, for example using non-permanent materials to raise the cycleway to footway level at that location, along with suitable road markings or signage.

SHEETS 1-3

London Road (Leith Walk Roundabout to Easter Road)

See our general comment on bus stops above.

The cycleway needs to link up with the Picardy Place cycleway, across Blenheim Place and round the roundabout to the left. Trams to Newhaven are delivering a cycleway at this point to go with the new signal controlled non-roundabout crossing. A temporary solution should be implemented along similar designs as far as practical and able to blend with intermediate works etc.

Why is there no eastbound segregated cycleway? There is clearly enough space.

Use advance stop lines at the pedestrian controlled crossing on sheet 2 and continue the cycleway to these ASLs.

Double yellow lines should be outside the cycleway to reinforce the edge of carriageway.

The cycleway should be extended to the Easter Road junction (see our general comment on bus stops above).

At the pedestrian crossing opposite 15 Hillside Crescent, the bus and cycle lanes merge into a bus-lane with, squeezing unwary cyclists. We propose that the bus lane and general traffic lane merge here into a single lane so that motor vehicles are squeezed rather than cyclists. We doubt there is often queuing traffic this far back from the Leith Walk roundabout so shouldn't hold up buses significantly.

Entry into the west end of Hillside Crescent. We are pleased that this is blocked off to motor traffic, but cyclists should be able to move through the barriers without having to slow down to make an awkward manoeuvre with a bus following behind.

SHEET 4

East Norton Place, Cadzow Place

We note that there is no new provision at this tight and complex road space. A design solution is required to make it easier and safer for cycling

Cyclists **travelling to the city** who want to go from Cadzow Place to East Norton Place need to manoeuvre across the lane of traffic that is flowing to Montrose Terrace and on to Regent Road. Reduce the number of traffic lanes and provide westbound segregated cycling + loading + 1nr traffic lane.

Private vehicles using the bus lanes for parking / loading present a major hazard here that could easily be resolved by bus lane cameras and proper regular enforcement. Lane operation hours should also be extended.

At the controlled junction at Abbey Lane, heading eastbound, vehicles swerving into the inside lane to pass vehicles waiting to turn right are a risk to cyclists. Continue the bus / cycle lane through the junction.

SHEET 5

Dalziel Place: Meadowbank Church to Wishaw Terrace

There are several points on this road section **travelling from the city** which move cyclists into or closer to the flow of fast traffic. One of them is just before Wishaw Terrace. It is positive that a segregation is proposed there, although it looks quite short: the pressure to move out because of parked cars (including a disabled parking bay) starts earlier as shown on the map.

Could you confirm that the disabled parking bay will still be in use or whether an alternative is being provided?

The bus stop next to the Meadowbank Church is another point at which cycles often need to manoeuvre into the flow of traffic because of a stopped bus.

The left turn into Lower London Road when **travelling to the city**, is opposite the right turn into Wishaw Terrace where traffic often has to wait to turn right. This part of the road and the section immediately before it with several entrances from the side on to the main road is challenging and dangerous for cyclists. Traffic waiting to turn right into Wishaw Terrace reduces to a single lane the space for progressing either straight ahead or into Lower London Road. This creates shared flow for cycles and motorised vehicles, with the risk of collision. If vehicles are also seeking to leave the entrances from the side entrances onto the main road just before this point, the number of simultaneous demands on the attention of both drivers and cyclists can be significant. A modal filter on Wishaw Terrace would improve safety for cyclists in both directions. The junction needs to be simplified by restricting certain vehicular movements to make it safer for cycling. We know of at least once incident where a person has been knocked off their bike here.

SHEET 6

London Road: Meadowbank stadium to Meadowbank Terrace

This is a wider section of road which does not feel as constricted, and **travelling away from the city** there are no left turns apart from the entrance to the current Meadowbank stadium building works (is this a permanent entrance?) – so may be seen as presenting a lower level of risk requiring mitigation than other sections.

However, with the wider road, some drivers feel free to accelerate, and the approach to the traffic lights at Meadowbank Terrace can present challenges for cyclists as vehicles move into the left lane to avoid having to wait behind traffic turning right. It is usually impossible to get to the ASL because, with two lanes of traffic, there is no room for a cyclist to move forward to gain access to it. As above with the Abbey Lane junction, you should continue the bus / cycle lane through the junction.

In **the other direction towards the city**, at the traffic lights at Meadowbank Terrace, the access to the forward stop zone (there is only one for going straight ahead) also depends on whether there is a queue of traffic in the left lane turning into Meadowbank Terrace. If there is a queue of left turning traffic and therefore no room to get to this forward stop zone it can then be accessed by swerving right into it as the left lane of traffic moves first with the filter light. Depending on timing, it may be that the right lane, moving straight ahead has started to move and then cyclists going straight ahead need to manage their route between the two traffic flows. This needs to be resolved with a design solution.

SHEET 7

London Road: Past St Margaret's House on to Portobello Road

There are no new provisions proposed on this sheet. This can be a challenging stretch for cyclists and indeed for drivers – **in both directions**.

The traffic **going towards Portobello** is often backed up, partly because of the traffic lights and partly because of the bus stop at Meadowbank house (and the bus lane ending so near the traffic lights and drivers not being able to move into the bus lane during restricted times). Drivers can find it difficult to get into the correct lane – for example to go straight ahead when there is a bus lane preventing them until quite near the lights, or, being stuck behind a bus and finding a way to move out into the right hand lane to progress to Willowbrae Road. Cyclists share the space at this point and they have to survive this jostling for position with cars whose drivers are concentrating on getting into the position they need to be in. The existing advisory cycleway heading eastbound should, therefore, be reinforced with light segregation

In **the other direction towards the city**, cyclists who have come through the lights either from Portobello (see below) or from Willowbrae Road are quickly into a narrow space because of parked cars and they have to finesse the space between parked cars and the flow of traffic. Again, enforcement of the bus lane and extended hours would help this section and improve the experience and safety of cyclists.

This paragraph below is on Sheet 7 though not on the A1. For consideration.

The traffic lights at Willowbrae Parish Church present a serious challenge for cyclists **going into the city from Portobello**. Cyclists share the left lane with motorised vehicles. The right lane includes a right turn and therefore cars and other vehicles going straight ahead choose to be in the left lane. The forward stop zone for cyclists is placed before the pedestrian crossing on a significant slope. So when lights turn green there is a distance for a cyclist to start and then travel on the uphill slope before the road widens out and vehicles are able to pass safely. Some cyclists choose to cross the pedestrian crossing and wait beyond it so that they are able quickly push off quickly and more easily and get out of the way of the vehicles waiting behind them. A design solution is required here to improve the safety of cyclists.

Willowbrae Road: Jock's Lodge to Piershill Lane/Baronscourt Road

This is a tight road with two lanes approaching the traffic lights **going towards the city** and a single lane in the other direction after traffic has turned from London Road.

Cycles travelling along Willowbrae Road **towards London Road** or turning right into Portobello Road are required to share the lane with the flow of traffic.

Cycles turning right **into Willowbrae Road from London Road**, if they have managed to get into the forward stop zone have a distance (50-100 yards?) when the narrowness of the road means that they are in front of traffic who are being 'held up' by them.

Consideration should be given to installing a cycle priority green light at the traffic lights to give more time for cyclists to move forward.

SHEETS 8 - 10

Willowbrae Road: Baronscourt Road to Abercorn Avenue

The narrowness of the road **travelling away from the city** continues until Piershill Terrace. There are no new measures proposed for this section. There is a bus stop just before Northfield Road – so if a bus is stopped, cyclists would need to move into the flow of traffic around it.

One solution could be that the northbound left turn lane and bus lane be turned into a bidirectional cycleway from Paisley Drive to Portobello Road. This bus lane does not reduce journey times by very much. Likewise southbound, from Northfield Farm Avenue to Mountcastle Drive South, the bus lane could be turned into a bi-directional cycleway.

The advisory, then mandatory cycle lane starts at Northfield Road, at which point the incline from Northfield Road means that cyclists tend to slow down and the effort to climb the hill coincides with managing safety and manoeuvring. We would welcome the introduction of safety measures at this point.

Central islands at Willowbrae Road: Signs stating 'do not pass cyclists at islands' should be put in earlier to give motorists more warning. Where signs are not proposed, they should be added to the scheme.

In the other direction, travelling towards the city, the downhill from between Northfield Circus and Northfield Crescent(North entrance) reduces one risk factor for cyclists who, with less physical effort required, are freer to attend to safety. However, we note that there is no

provision for a separate cycle lane at any point, and the two lanes after Ulster Drive tend to tempt drivers to accelerate (as suggested by the SLOW signs just before Abercorn Crescent). Consideration could be given to a segregated cycle lane between Ulster Drive and Abercorn Crescent.

The uphill stretch **travelling towards the city**, between Paisley Drive / Northfield Farm Avenue (wrongly labelled 'Northfield Broadway' on Sheet 10) is not as steep as the hill in the other direction (and it is straight rather than on a bend), but we would welcome a protected cycle lane here.

Southern exit of Northfield Crescent. Is there any reason for the high-speed exit to be retained? Why not put a kerb in to tighten the radius, as is being done at a lot of other junctions with smaller turnout radii?

SHEET 11

From Northfield Broadway across lights at Duddingston Road

The introduction of a segregated section after Duddingston Road, **travelling away from the city**, is welcome. Traffic is in a single lane going straight ahead at the lights, so cyclists and drivers are sharing that space and drivers do seem to feel pressure to get past cyclists as soon as they are through the lights.

We note that approaching the lights **in both directions, to and from the city**, there is no separate space for cyclists who have to share the lanes with cars, lorries etc. A design solution is required.

From Duddingston Road West and Willowbrae Road there are two lanes - left turn and straight on/right. There are no filtered lights, so giving the left lane to cyclists would make sense.

From Duddingston Road & Milton Road West, there is one lane with plenty of space for segregated bike lanes (the Duddingston Road one is part of another scheme).

SHEET 12

After the Duddingston Road lights to round the bend at Duddingston Row

The segregation **travelling from the city** continues after the lights at Duddingston Road. Over that same stretch **on the other side of the road, travelling towards the city**, cyclists share the bus lane with buses and motorcycles during bus lane hours, but also with all other vehicles outside those times. A solution is required, for example extending the operation times of the bus lane.

We welcome the cycle segregation on both sides of the road at the bend in the road at Duddingston Row.

Sheet 13

Milton Road West - after the Duddingston Row bend to Mountcastle Drive South

This wide and fast section (after the bend at Duddingston Row for which segregation is proposed) has only the existing bus lanes for separating traffic. These only operate at certain times. Cyclists share with buses and motorcycles during those times and with all traffic outside those times. A solution is required, for example extending the operation times of the bus lane.

End.

Spokes Porty is a local group of [Spokes, The Lothian Cycle Campaign](#).
We are working to make walking, wheeling and cycling safe, easy and fun for everyone in and around Edinburgh East.
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