

Scottish Canals
Union Canal Towpath Study | Edinburgh
Towpath Usability Study | July 2017

Project Team

Client

Scottish Canals



Landscape Architects and Masterplanners

HarrisonStevens



Funding Partner

Sustrans



Partner

Spokes



Partner

City of Edinburgh Council



Architects and Framework Lead

Oliver Chapman Architects



Costing Consultants

ThomsonGray Constructive Consultants



Lighting Consultants

Speirs + Major



Engineers Consultants

Etive Consulting Engineers Ltd.



Content

01 | Introduction

6 Introduction to the Towpath Study

02 | Research and Consultation

10 Research
12 Consultation
15 Key findings from research and consultation

03 | Opportunities and Strategies

18 Introduction
20 Character Areas
22 Place Specific Improvement Strategies
30 Character Areas and Place Specific Improvement
55 Overall Physical Improvements Strategies
69 Social improvement strategies
70 Test Area

05 | Next Steps

74 The Next Steps



01 | Introduction

Introduction to the Towpath Study

The Union Canal Towpath Study aims to improve the usability of the towpath along the Union Canal starting at Lochrin Basin in East to Almond Aqueduct in West of Edinburgh.

The canal corridor has the opportunity to provide a high-quality green and traffic free route linking across Edinburgh for all types of users, but to do so, its infrastructure needs to be upgraded to meet its users.

The towpath surface has generally been upgraded over the years. There is a need for further enhancements such as towpath widening, access improvements, alternative route opportunities, and behaviour strategies, to improve the usability of the towpath and to meet the increased number of users.

The study of the canal towpath has developed varied approaches to the improvements into three overall strategies to enhance the user experience:

- Place Specific Improvement Strategies (PSIS),
- Overall Physical Improvements Strategies (OPIS), and
- Overall Social Improvements Strategies (OSIS).

This structure is also illustrated by the adjacent diagram ‘The structure of the study’.

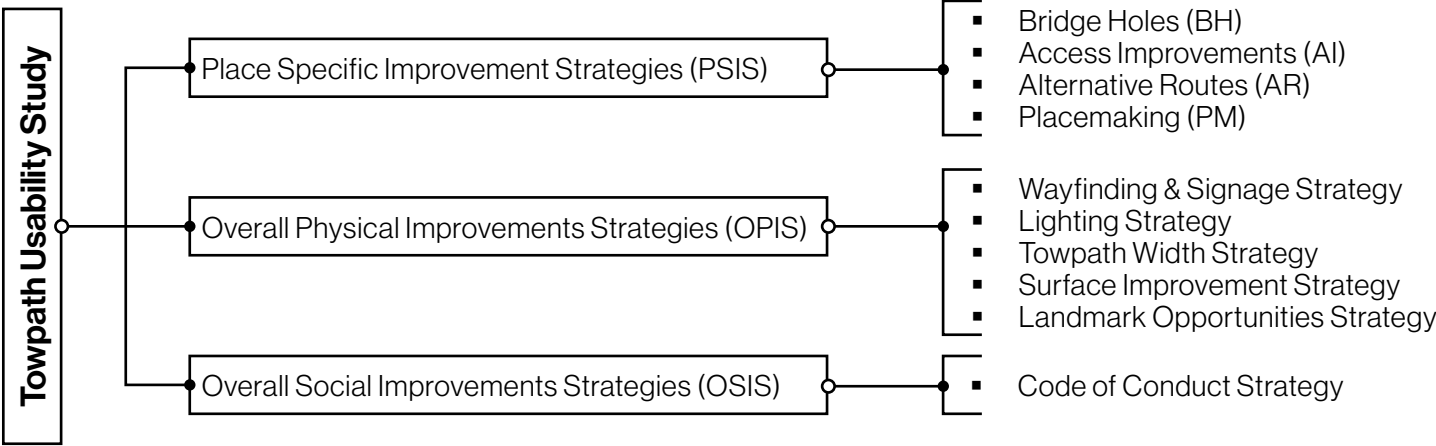
These strategies have come together via in-depth research and consultation, including a series of ‘Walkshops’ along the towpath conducted by the project team, as well as desktop research and two ‘Ideas Workshops’ with local stakeholders and the general public, who will be kept in the loop about further project development.

This document is structured in the order in which the study has been conducted:

- Research and consultation program with key findings from Walkshops and Ideas Workshop.
- Opportunities and strategies for how to improve the usability of the towpath based on the key findings, and
- Next steps and suggestions for how to take the study to the next level.

In Chapter 3 Opportunities and Strategies a Test Area is suggested from East Harrison Park to Meggetland where an opportunity to test many of the suggested strategies is identified. The aim for the Test Area will be to study and evaluate the strategies effect on the use of the towpath before investing and implementing them along the entire stretch of the towpath. Looking at cycling speeds, perception of safety, behavioural improvements and user numbers.

In the future, when funding becomes available, Scottish Canals will look to implement the towpath improvement strategies, and as such this study should be considered as a part of the wider improvement project.



The structure of the study

Place Specific Improvement Strategies



Bridge Holes



Access Improvement



Alternative Routes



Placemaking



Wayfinding & Signage strategy



Towpath Width Strategy



Surface Improvement Strategy



Lighting Strategy



Landmark Opportunities Strategy



Code of conduct

Overall Physical Improvements Strategies

Overall Social Improvements Strategies

