

Traveling Safely Briefing note

Princes Street Bus Lane / Gate



Existing Layout:

At the East end of Princes Street a bus lane/gate is currently in operation between the hours of 8:30am to 6:30pm. All other Spaces for People measures have been removed from this location.

Issues:

Due to the additional pressures being experienced on the network as a result of tram works and North Bridge refurbishment works our partners in Police Scotland, Lothian Buses, Edinburgh Trams and private hire operators have requested that the bus lane/gate on Princes Street is removed. This request has been made through the Tram Traffic Management Review Panel, the Citywide Traffic Management Group and other forums where we share knowledge and experience of using and managing the network with valued stakeholders.

The removal of the bus lane/gate will allow traffic to enter Princes Street and turn right into South St David Street to continue their journey. Lothian Buses have advised that this will relieve some of the pressures their services are experiencing on York Place and surrounding streets due to ongoing tram works and associated diversions. It will also allow another option for traffic diverted by the North Bridge refurbishment work.

Edinburgh Trams advise that this change in traffic management will have no impact on their services and traffic will flow much more freely now their services are curtailed at Shandwick Place for two months.

The Police advise that removing the bus lane/gate will resolve road safety concerns that have been raised due to poor driver behaviour at the location.

Due to the positioning of the bus lane/gate situated west of the junction with West Register Street, it has been very difficult to give advance warning to drivers of the bus lane. Additional signage and line markings were installed however it has not been effective in reducing the number of vehicles who are using the bus lane. Additional issues raised at this location:

- Difficulty with enforcement.
- Requires a high level of Police enforcement.
- Its effectiveness is reduced due to is being set back from the North Bridge Junction.
- The temporary layout / signage does not provide a clear enough visual deterrent for drivers.
- High volume of vehicles carrying out U-turns to avoid the bus lane/gate, but also linked with high volume of taxis picking up and dropping off outside the Balmoral.
- Additional traffic congestion due to the North Bridge and Tram works.

Future Plans:

Having a bus lane/gate at the east end of Princes St is a long term ambition for CEC, but it has not been as successful as hoped in a temporary situation due to the limited legal powers and temporary infrastructure. Accommodating loading and access for the Balmoral was difficult due to the works being carried out on North Bridge.

Next Steps

As a result of requests made by our partners we recommend removal of the bus lane/gate.