

TEC 8.12.22 - Paper 7.1 - [Circulation Plan: Delivering the City Mobility Plan](#)

Comments from Spokes Planning Group

In general, Spokes welcomes the circulation plan proposals and we recognise that compromises have to be made. Nonetheless we have concerns with the current draft. We trust that councillors will consider our comments carefully.

Getting around by bike has an important role in public health and in climate but also has a unique capacity to accomplish short everyday trips of say 1 to 5 miles in a very short time – a capacity increased with the widespread popularity of e-bikes, which remove the former barriers created by hilly parts of the city. Cycling is thus ideally suited both to the 20-minute neighbourhood concept and also to travelling to the city centre or between neighbourhoods.

We are encouraged by the very strong statement in appendix 5 that the City's target to reduce car-km 30% by 2030 "*will be the benchmark for traffic modelling, in order not to bake in current levels of traffic*" and that the principles and trade-offs in the Circulation Plan will be considered in that context. We suggest that context allows more space and scope for cycling provision than is perhaps implied by the report.

Aspects which concern us are described below. However, the general issue underlying all our concerns is the need to ensure a connected and useful cycling *network*, rather than a series of disconnected and out-of-the-way routes, even if they are high quality.

1. Private motor traffic

Although, as we recognised above, the draft Plan is intended to support the 30% car-km reduction, it is difficult to see how this will be achieved without significant measures on the ground to ensure this. The current draft plan is only at outline stage, and perhaps for that reason does not yet show any restrictions, such as bus gates. Such measures will be essential and must be shown in the next iteration of the Plan. In particular, the Council should be aiming to remove private through-traffic (with some specific exemptions for, for example, blue badge holders) from the City Centre. This should be accomplished by the addition of modal filters such as bus gates to streets such as The Bridges.

2 . City Centre and local High Streets

We have a particular concern re High Streets/ shopping streets such as Dalry Road, Morningside Road, Portobello, etc, and the slightly different case of Princes Street.

Shopping streets are sometimes of restricted width, but are also important destinations and are likely to be significant links in any city cycle network. We hope there would normally be width for segregated cycling provision, e.g. as in the very popular tweet by Cllr Ross McKenzie a few weeks ago suggesting a bus gate, wider footways and segregated cycling in Gorgie/Dalry.

However, the draft maps seem to suggest cycle facilities being largely restricted to main roads, and ending before you enter destination areas – this is particularly notable in the city centre mapping. However, if families and the less confident feel unable to use a bike at their destination, they are unlikely to cycle at all for that journey, even if the other 80% or 90% of the journey is on high quality facilities.

Within the city centre we are particularly thinking of streets such as Broughton Street and Leith Street. In streets such as these, and in local town centres, wherever possible, carriageway space should be reallocated to allow for footways and cycleways of acceptable widths, even if in some cases the ideal widths of cycleway and of footway widening is not fully achievable.

Specifically on Princes Street, Spokes remains strongly of the view that protected cycling provision is vital for this major destination, but in part also to reduce the continuing non-blackspot crashes which occur when cyclists are travelling parallel to the tramlines but do encounter them. Some argue that George St is an alternative - but for many trips it is not, and would require several extra junction manoeuvres or tramline crossings to use it. Furthermore, we are extremely concerned that the current proposed concept of a 'cycle street' in the centre of George St (which Spokes originally reluctantly agreed in place of protected lanes) is being watered down more and more, with additional categories of motor traffic access now being actively considered.

3. Moving cycling into indirect side routes

Secondly, we are concerned that in some cases cycle routes appear to be being sidelined into indirect, twisty and/or hilly alternatives, which are also away from destination shopping areas.

One particularly obvious case is that cyclists appear to be relegated from the Bridges/Newington shopping street to the parallel Pleasance route – which has very few shops and at the north end is extremely steep and then leads up to the High Street via the cobbled and steep St Mary's Street.

It may be that the intention is to use the Bridges for the tram, but, given the infrequency of tram stops, and the nearness of the Pleasance, that this would be a better route for the tram, leaving the Bridges for buses, bikes, walking and wheeling.

There are perhaps parallels with the decision some 10 years ago to divert the 'flagship' CCWEL route away from the direct and most useful Shandwick Place/Princes Street route, going instead via back streets with complex turns and cut-throughs. For all its benefits, CCWEL would have been better as a direct, main road, segregated route, and leading to the City's main shopping street.

4. Use of reallocated roadspace

On one specific point of wording, we suggest that, to remove any ambiguity, the second bullet point in the Place, Walking, Wheeling section adds the word 'existing' so that it reads...

Generally avoiding any loss of existing pedestrian space to provide segregated cycling.

We can agree with the above sentence, but where *roadspace* is reallocated then it should be clear that the aim is to provide both wider footways and protected cyclist routes. Indeed, if reallocated roadspace can generally only be used for pedestrian purposes, then major projects such as the ongoing Meadows to George Street scheme will be ruled out.

5. Other deputations

On another specific we support the deputations on 7-7-7 by Edinburgh Bus Users Group and on Holyrood Park by Car-Free Holyrood.

In conclusion, the Council has made a valuable first step in developing the Circulation Plan, but modifications such as we suggest need careful thought.

We thank you for considering our deputation, and trust our points can be taken into account by the Committee.