

A CYCLE NETWORK FOR ALL, AT ALL TIMES?

Edinburgh Council's draft new *Active Travel Action Plan (ATAP)* shows segregated main road cyclist routes becoming the centrepiece of its cycling plans. We strongly support this major shift from the last ATAP.

"The (offroad) routes play a vital role .. but .. we now plan to develop a joined-up network of routes that feel safe to everyone at all times of day. This will need to use segregated cycle tracks on main roads .." [chap 5].

The Edinburgh Cycle Network will feature *"a primary network generally following main roads, usually the most direct, flattest and most socially safe routes"*

This ties in with Scottish Government "Active Freeways" proposals: *"high quality, direct, segregated routes for people walking, wheeling and cycling."* And most of the Edinburgh cycling investment will come from big rises in government Active Travel funds [spokes.org.uk 22.12.22]

Draft ATAP segregated route proposals include..

- ◆ Portobello-Musselburgh
- ◆ A8 Roseburn-Gogar (presumably extending CCWEL)
- ◆ Gilmerton-City (extending existing Bioquarter plans)
- ◆ Upgrading existing bollarded main road routes
- ◆ Lothian Road "boulevard," Tollcross to West End

Other draft ATAP proposals include..

- ◆ Dalry, Portobello, Leith town centre schemes
- ◆ Sub-20mph limits [requires Scot Gov permission]
- ◆ Major-junctions project for cycling/walking safety
- ◆ Traffic-light auto green when bikes approach

ATAP CONCERNS

The draft ATAP is very welcome, but is far from perfect! **Please raise the points that concern you with your councillors and in the forthcoming public consultation.** Two issues particularly concern us - see column 2 above.

◆ **Timescale** Apart from existing projects (CCWEL, Meadows - George St and Cameron Toll - Bioquarter) no new main road routes will even start till 2026. To reflect the changed policy, work should begin *now* on at least one such route – e.g. extending CCWEL to Corstorphine.

◆ **Unsegregated sections** There may be stretches of shared bus lane, or side-road options, where space is very tight, as decided in the Council's *Circulation Plan*. We strongly support public transport, but such breaks may deter less confident cyclists from the entire route.



CCWEL A8 cycle route nears completion at Roseburn Terrace
photo: pHpAlex at skyscrapercity.com

CITY MOBILITY PLAN (CMP)

The CMP [edinburgh.gov.uk/citymobilityplan] was agreed in 2021. The new Council has now published a set of *CMP Delivery Plans* including ATAP, Public Transport, Parking, Air Quality, Road Safety, the Circulation Plan and more. They will be consulted on jointly during April-June.

For initial Spokes thoughts and links to all the plans see the document called *Spokes Submission to TEC 2.2.23* at [[spokes.org.uk : documents : submissions : local](http://spokes.org.uk/documents/submissions/local)].

A big weakness is insufficient **demand management** ambition, particularly road-user charging of some form. 'Carrots' alone will not bring about major modal shift, such as Edinburgh's/Scotland's promised car-km reductions of 30%/20% respectively by 2030. Scottish transport expert **Prof Iain Docherty** [[@iaindocherty](https://twitter.com/iaindocherty)] says it is time for *"some very straight talking"* on this.

SPOKES BULLETIN

Spurred by covid, Spokes now has an extensive monthly email member circular. The 3-a-year printed Bulletin [spokes.org.uk/bulletin], sadly, is now history - but we plan a slimmed down version like this once or twice a year: useful for bike leafleting, bike shops, libraries, etc. Let us know if you could use a supply e.g. for bike leafleting.

Inside

- ◆ **Wales scraps roadbuilding!** - back page
- ◆ **Shopping by Bike** – centre page pullout
- ◆ **Tramline Crash Reporting** – new online
- ◆ **Cargobike grants** - for organisations
- ◆ **Minority Council** – is it working for transport?
- ◆ **Highland Explorer** - bike trains to Mallaig/Oban

Help Spokes, other cyclists, and yourself, by contacting your MSPs, MP, councillors and the press periodically. See back page for contacts. Ask them to raise your point with the relevant Minister/Convener. Send us the results!

SPACES FOR PEOPLE BIKE LANES

The statutory 6-month *Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders* consultation is well underway, ending 20 May.



"A journey I would have made by car until now. Never would have cycled on Queensferry Rd with my 10yo!" @stellotape56

Why you should respond...

- ◆ After this consultation the Council has legal power to make the lanes permanent (or modify or scrap them) and must make a final decision within 12 months.
- ◆ We strongly support the lanes, but improvement is needed. There's now big active travel cash from the Scottish Government so do make bold suggestions!

If you wish more background, web links etc, see item (6) in our [Jan 13 Action-Update](#) [spokes.org.uk : spokesworker]

FOR YOUR DIARY [spokes.org.uk for more info]

April 23 **Pedal on Parliament** [pedalonparliament.org](#)

May 24 or 26 [provisional] **Spokes Public Mtg**, ATAP [p1]

June 5-11 **Bike Week 2023** [cyclinguk.org/bikeweek](#)

June 13 [to be confirmed] **Spokes Bike Breakfast**

LEISURE BIKE RIDES - [www.cycling-edinburgh.org.uk](#) includes 'very easy' rides, regular rides, weekend rides.

EDINBURGH FESTIVAL OF CYCLING – no full festival this year, but some pop-up events will appear [edfoc.org.uk](#)

ONLINE MEMBER MEETUPS

Spokes plans 3 or 4 online member meetups this year, following a January trial. It was friendly, enjoyable and useful, with many ideas shared, from bike storage to air quality monitoring near schools. People are split 3 or 4 times, randomly, into groups of four, to chat for 10 mins. Dates will appear in member email circulars.

SPOKES MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Members who are due to renew for 2023 will be notified in their mailing. If so, do it now! - see instructions in mailing.

😊 THANK YOU 😊

Spokes is funded by donations from our 1000+ members and sales of our unmissable maps. Thus we can speak out without fear or favour, not worried about losing funds.

[Join Spokes!](#) Download or phone for application form.

SPOKES BULLETIN INFORMATION

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However, if you don't have time or patience to wade through the documents (which are not user-friendly) you can anyway respond, like this...

- ◆ Email to TRO.Consultations@edinburgh.gov.uk and to Edinburgh.Consultation@projectcentre.co.uk
- ◆ Say you are commenting on the *Travelling Safely Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders*
- ◆ Then make your points: e.g. their overall value, and comments/changes for specific schemes you use.

SCHOOL BIKE BUSES

The hugely inspiring Edinburgh bike buses continue to flourish; and James Gillespie 'Wee Unicorns' have just received a [Local Hero Award](#) from Ian Murray MP. See the incredible [Feb 24 video tweet](#) by @blackfordsafer1.



photo: Vivian Scott & Edinburgh Reporter

Inspired by the kids, there is now talk of commuter and student bike buses to support less confident adults!

SPOKES East Lothian Cycle Map (2023)

A strong and durable
all-weather map specially
designed for cyclists



Our totally revised 5th edition is expected early May
Details on website, twitter, member email at the time

SPOKES COMPETITION 2023

Email us with your ideas for our annual competition!
The topic must be suitable for almost anyone to enter – e.g. not just schools. 2022's *Shopping by Bike* provided many useful ideas, resulting in our *Shopping* factsheet.

CARGOBIKE GRANTS

Thanks to kind donations from Spokes members, and Galashan Trust support, Spokes offers grants to **community organisations** and **microbusinesses** who need a cargobike. Also a few grants to **Spokes member households** – using a surplus from our maps sales.



Dower House cafe cargobike

Charlotte's family cargobike

Details at: [spokes.org.uk : documents : advice : cargo-bikes](#)

TRAMLINE CRASHES

Spokes gets many reports of tramlines crashes, some with serious injury. Based on this and other sources, we have prepared an info sheet on causes and on how to, hopefully, reduce your risk of becoming a victim.

Find the info sheet via spokes.org.uk [23.2.23 blog].

TRAMLINE CRASH INSIGHTS

- ◆ Many crashes are at tramrail-crossing blackspots; but many are also to people cycling *in the same direction as the rails* (sometimes caused by traffic pressures)
- ◆ Many crashes are to *experienced cyclists*, due to an unexpected or unseen hazard: see 'Reducing the Risks'
- ◆ Many crashes result from *skidding* rather than wheel-trapping. Skidding is more likely when wet and/or when tramlines protrude slightly above road surfaces
- ◆ An underlying problem is *poor layout design*; e.g. not providing separated bike lanes. Thus while the Council has tackled several issues most cannot be fully solved.

OTHER UK CITIES

Sheffield Cycle campaign has set up an online portal for groups with reporting tools. See tramcrash.co.uk for Edinburgh, Sheffield and Nottingham, so far.

Note that *crash causes may vary between cities*; e.g. due to poor/good layout design, and quality of track installation/ maintenance.

CRASHED ON TRAM LINES?



Report it at www.tramcrash.co.uk
& help us improve cycle safety

REDUCING YOUR RISKS

These suggestions are made in good faith, but Spokes can take no responsibility for any consequences of using them. For a fuller version see website address opposite.

- ◆ approach tramlines as close to 90 degrees as possible, though the tramline layout often makes it impossible
- ◆ an angle of 60 degrees or more is said to be pretty safe from wheel-trapping; but be aware that skidding is still a serious risk, especially if wet
- ◆ cross tramlines in a straight line. When cornering, the bike leans slightly, making skidding more likely
- ◆ don't brake – this can make skidding more likely
- ◆ don't slow down, and do keep a sensitive but firm grip on your handlebars. This should reduce the risk of your wheel being deflected into the tramline groove
- ◆ if possible (it's often not!) keep a distance from motor vehicles, especially behind you. Traffic pressures make crashes more likely, e.g. affecting your crossing angle
- ◆ cycling between tramlines is often traffic-free, but we don't advise it as it means two tramline crossings at dodgy angles – and we know of crashes that resulted
- ◆ be very aware that many crashes are to experienced cyclists who regularly use tramlined roads - but there was an unexpected hazard, e.g. a tramline marginally too high, wetness causing slippage, or traffic pressures
- ◆ we hate to say this, but if the location or situation seems particularly dangerous (e.g. wet, lots of traffic) discretion may be the better part of valour ... it may be wise to get off and walk - if that is possible.



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pedal of the way*

MINORITY COUNCIL

[This was discussed further at [spokes.org.uk, 1.1.23 blog](https://spokes.org.uk/1.1.23/blog)]

Edinburgh is a minority Labour council (12 seats of 63), rather than a majority coalition with an agreed program. Full Council meetings can be very party-political but the Transport Committee (2 Labour seats out of 11) seems to work well. Different parties team up on different topics, so no one party can dominate, and often with a 'best of both worlds' outcome. Every party has suffered defeat when they could not garner enough support, and all too have had successes. So far, parties most in tune with Spokes aims tend to be Greens, Labour, SNP.

DECLARE YOURSELF!!

Possibly falling prey to conspiracy theories that Spokes controls transport policy, new Morningside Tory councillor **Marie-Clair Munro** stunned the Transport Committee (TEC) when, for no apparent reason, she asked all councillors to declare if they are Spokes members!



Cllr Munro at TEC

If this was pertinent (and it wasn't) then why not also Living Streets, the Bus User Group, Cockburn Assn, Transform Scotland or, dare we say it, the AA or RAC?

Spokes is just one such. We argue for our objectives and we provide many services for our members and indeed for the public - Spokes cycling/walking maps (around 150,000 purchased), grants to microbusinesses who need a cargobike, advice on avoiding tramline crashes, information stalls, email advice, etc, etc.

Long-standing readers may recall another outspoken Conservative, **Councillor Ralph Brereton** (Marchmont) "*Spokes can get lost and take its commie friends with it*" [[Spokes Bulletin #2](#)]. The good councillor later had a change of heart – a lesson for today, perhaps?

CLIMATE CRISIS <--> ROADS

The (important) focus on day-to-day and local issues sadly diverts gaze from the ever-growing climate crisis. Missing lettuce and tomatoes are one unmissable wee local hint, but real disasters around the globe, such as New Zealand's recent flood Gabrielle - their '*worst ever climate event*' – now rarely even reach the front page.

The UN warns there is now "no credible path" to the 1.5 degree level, to hopefully keep impacts tolerable.

Recognising this, the **Welsh government** has scrapped 40 of 55 road projects and set tough tests for any new scheme, including not raising capacity or speeds, both of which raise emissions [[google wales road building](#)].

The **Scottish Government** in 2020 '*committed*' to cut car-km 20% by 2030. A draft 'Route Map' to achieve this came out in 2022. It's now 2023: no final report and UK Climate Change Committee says the promise is "*significantly off track*" [[spokes.org.uk](#) blogs 24.2.22/22.12.22]

HIGHLAND EXPLORER BIKE/RAIL

The fantastic 20-bike-space Highland Explorer coaches will go to Mallaig as well as Oban from April, and it is hoped eventually to "all corners of Scotland."



And for anyone going bike-less to Inverness, Elgin or Oban, Scotrail offers 24-hour free Brompton hire!!

See: www.scotrail.co.uk : your journey : cycling : plan journey

HOW TO CONTACT POLITICIANS

1. Simplest - find them *all* at www.writetothem.com. Or...
2. MSPs – you have one constituency MSP and several Regional MSPs. Find them at scottish.parliament.uk/msps
3. Councillors web+phone below **Who runs the council?**

edinburgh.gov.uk	0131.529.3186	Lab (minority)
eastlothian.gov.uk	01620.827827	Lab (minority)
midlothian.gov.uk	0131.270.7500	SNP (minority)
westlothian.gov.uk	01506.280000	Lab (minority)

A PERSONAL VISIT??

Many people email their MSP/councillor, but why not visit their surgery for a chat on issues that concerns you: it could make an even bigger impact! Ask them for time/place.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Suggest bike parking sites: activetravel@edinburgh.gov.uk
Adult cycle training: 668.1996 info@thebikestation.org.uk
Bikes on rail, bus and ferry: www.travelinescotland.com:
Potholes, glass on paths, broken lights, in Edinb/Lothian: [Use lamp-post numbers to report location]. 0800.232323 www.edinburgh.gov.uk/clarence. Or www.fillthathole.org.uk.
Bad glass/dumping [Ed only] Rapid Response 0808 100 3366
Taxi issues: licensing@edinburgh.gov.uk [try taxi firm first]
Lothian Buses: mail@lothianbuses.com 554 4494.
Dangerous drivers, mobile use, drink-driving, speeding, other road crime: see www.spokes.org.uk : links : reporting
Emotional/practical victim support: RoadPeace 0208964102

Help Spokes, other cyclists and yourself by joining us!
Download a membership form at spokes.org.uk