

Greenbank-Meadows Consultation ..Spokes Response .. October 2023

Spokes South Edinburgh are making this response to the consultation by City of Edinburgh council on the [Greenbank to Meadows Quiet Route](#) which closes on **22nd October** .

Background

We welcome the opportunity to contribute to this survey, although we suggest that it was unnecessary and will not necessarily result in people being happy with the final choice.

Permanent long planned works underway on Braidburn Terrace and at the junctions at either end are **not** included in this survey, which assumes the permanent changes will provide all cyclists with a safe connection to the QR at the South end. We are not at all confident that this can be assumed in respect of the junction with Braid Road/Hermitage Drive for reasons we have made clear in previous responses and further work may be needed.

Summary of Response

None of the options on display are perfect. However, of the options in the consultation...

Braids Estate - we support Option 1 (and we propose improvements to it)

ClintonRoad/Whitehouse Loan - we support Option 2, but only as a trial.

Detailed response

This Quiet Route provides access to several schools and nurseries as seen by the nature of the journeys being made. We are delighted to see this but it is only a start. Both Heriots and Watsons are providing regular bike buses from Fairmilehead showing the possibilities for this route to remove traffic. We would like to see it being made safe enough for parents and children (and older children alone) to cycle without need for a bike bus (which are limited in frequency because of the need for volunteers), but we don't believe this will happen if traffic through the route is increased

The previous major change to this Quiet Route (reopening Braid Road to Northbound traffic) has resulted in increased volume of traffic flowing North/South through the Braids / Comiston Rd as reported at TEC committee in August. We believe Options 2 and 3 are bound to result in a further overall increase by making it easier and more direct for drivers from elsewhere in Edinburgh South and beyond to travel through the Braids Estate. Similarly, changes to introduce Southbound traffic on Whitehouse Loan will probably make short journeys by car more attractive and thus increase traffic volumes at the expense of the many parents shepherding young children home from school and relishing having the safety to do that. This is no way to meet climate change targets for the city, which the council is committed to meet.

Response to the Three Options for changes to the Braid Estate

Option 1

Includes some additional measures to limit interaction between vehicles and cyclists at points where it can be dangerous or frightening to cyclists eg Braid Cresc. We approve of the intent and this would be the safest option for all cyclists (not just the agile and the fit). It also keeps the Braid Estate permeable to cyclists living in the Braids Estate and would go some way to enabling the crossing of Comiston Road near South Morningside school.

Many schools are already accessible along the length of the entire Greenbank to Meadows QR and future expansion of the route by making several crossing places along the route safer would allow more people access. We would recommend the following crossing places for this

- just South of Morningside PS,
- between Canaan Lane and Morningside Park,
- between Newbattle and Morningside Place,
- between Canaan Lane and Whitehouse Loan
- and across Laurieston Place to provide access to Heriots .

We are surprised that the consultation didn't mitigate the dangers posed by current traffic levels on Midmar for Eastbound cyclists using the part of the QR but heading via Midmar (e.g. heading towards Oswald Rd / Kings Buildings). The right turn onto Cluny Gardens is dangerous because of limited visibility and traffic speed, whilst the left turn into Midmar (uphill with parked cars) creates a dangerously narrow space where following cars want to overtake. We suggest that making this junction much safer and easier for both cyclists and drivers would remove much of the pressure for Options 2 and 3. In addition if a connection could be signposted between the

Greenbank to Meadows QR and QR6 (e.g.through Astley Ainslie, Oswald Rd, St Albans Rd) many cyclists may prefer to use that rather than Cluny Gardens/ Charterhall Road).

Options 2 and 3

The two remaining options are in response to pressure from drivers (not necessarily living on the Braids Estate) to reopen Braid Avenue by removing the barriers which prevent drivers driving straight through to an easy exit onto Cluny Drive through Traffic Lights. This is currently possible by a slightly longer route via Midmar or Midmar Gardens, and Cluny Drive) if drivers wish to use these facilities.

This easier passage proposed will encourage an increase in rat-running through the Braids Estate, in the same way that the last reopening of Braid Road to Northbound Traffic increased overall Traffic, as reported at the CEC TEC in August. This works against all of the plans the council is making to reduce miles driven to achieve climate change impact reduction targets.

Providing segregation along Hermitage Drive and Braid Avenue is an acknowledgment that allowing increased volumes and speeds of traffic decreases safety for cyclists. It is an expensive solution to be employed on busy roads, not quiet routes on the way to / from schools. The City Mobility plan says that quiet routes through residential areas such as the Braid Estate, made permeable by preventing through traffic, are to be a part of the safe cycling network. There will always be resistance from people who don't want to give up a quick and direct route : it's human to want to keep it but trying to find a way to keep a ratrun will not help reduce driven miles, and once conceded in one neighbourhood will be difficult to return to a quieter safer route.

Both Option 2 and 3 make it less safe for residents to join the quiet route, or cycle through their neighbourhood, and also for children living along Braid Avenue to cross the road. In addition Option 3 doesn't give cyclists any other alternative to climbing a steep hill in one go regardless of their abilities , and fails to make it easy for cyclists to join/leave the QR along the way because of increased traffic on other roads.

Finally, the local residents have lived with the temporary feel of the QR for too long and we should move as quickly as possible to involve them in creating more pleasing and in keeping with the area. Please see our thoughts on how these could look later in this response.

Response to the Three Options for changes to the Whitehouse Loan area

We are unsure about a modal filter on Clinton Road but believe a trial would be worthwhile. If a trial was conducted checks should be conducted to ensure that it does not increase the traffic along the Grange Road/Newbattle Terrace providing a more dangerous stretch of the Quiet Route between Canaan Lane (north end) and Whitehouse Loan.

We do not support the reintroduction of southbound motor vehicle traffic south of Strathearn Road where we regularly see parents after school shepherding young children.

Look & Feel of the Quiet Route

Wayfinding:

Wayfinding signs could make a really important contribution to the use of the QR showing people the many destinations that could be reached with average cycle times. The lack of clear signage is regularly commented on by cyclists to Spokes and as a minimum should be of the standard of other CEC QRs.

An enhancement of this would be to have average journey times to Schools, The Meadows or Waverley/Haymarket Train Stations perhaps. This would give those using the route confidence it gets them to where they need to be.

On road painted "QR" symbols could be added to enable a quicker implementation. However long term a permanent replacement through other means



Examples of surface applied wayfinding

Links to Plewlands, Morningside, Bruntsfield shopping areas should also be signposted in order to encourage local shopping trips by bike.

Modal Filters:

Also the QR has a rich heritage passing various listed buildings or points of interest (natural and man made). These have been explored in the FOTQR group and could form the basis of interpretation at the modal filter points making these more of a place to dwell than now.

For example in road tree planting and carriageway narrowing would help green the filters and provide areas for increased biodiversity, sustainable urban drainage (SUDS), seating for the elderly or children to play.



Examples of modal filters in the London Boroughs of Hackney & Waltham Forest.

The existing wooden benches on Whitehouse Loan are a good example of how the route could be used and made more friendly for those less able.

Surface Condition:

If the QR is to be of high utility for cycling the surface condition should have a high standard to enable all cycle users to use it. Spokes South is aware of incidents where eBike batteries have bounced loose of their housing on Canaan Lane due to the poor condition of the surface. It is not a luxury to expect a comfortable cycle, as for many disabled cycle users it can be a key cause of pain.

Cycling by Design 2021 gives guidance on the service level indicators for cycle routes such as the Meadows to Greenbank to Quiet Route. Given the status of the route it should be prioritised for resurfacing to become fully legible as an active travel route.

Resurfacing would be a good opportunity to add red or buff aggregate chips to make an intuitive route to follow along the way. This would be sympathetic to the Conservation Areas the route passes through.



Example of buff surfacing and aggregate in use in Stirling and Longniddry