

### 7.3 Tram from Granton to BioQuarter and Beyond Consultation for Strategic Business Case Development

Spokes is extremely concerned over the proposal to remove cycling from the Roseburn corridor.

**We appreciate that the report is about the contents and processes of the consultation, and we ask you to amend the consultation proposals such that retaining cycling on the Roseburn path (whether through a cycle/wheel/walk route beside the tram, or an onroad tram route) is a given in the consultation.**

1. Spokes has [always supported](#) the tram in principle, assuming holistic design in which cycling, walking and indeed bus are fully catered for (albeit that has not always been the case so far!) We see cycling as part of an overall sustainable transport and access strategy, not as single-issue.

*For the avoidance of doubt*, whilst Spokes would be very happy with a holistically-designed onroad tram route, and that would be much preferable for wildlife and nature, we have never opposed the option of tram on the Roseburn route if that is very clearly shown to be the best public transport route, provided good cycling and walking conditions remain.

2. A cycle/wheel/walk route beside the tram has always been considered feasible, and desirable, from the original tram proposals in the early 2000s, right up to the present. For example, the [2006 Tram Design Manual](#) (p90), “Cycle/pedestrian routes are to be provided alongside the tram track on those sections where the tram route follows a corridor currently occupied by a cycle/pedestrian path.” The existing path is 3m wide, and so is the proposed new path, albeit presumably with some significant pinch points.

3. The [2021 ESSTS Phase 2 report](#) (table 5.5) proposed two walk/wheel/cycle path options beside the tram – they rightly rejected a ‘do minimum’ (B1a) on the grounds that it contradicted council active travel policy. Remarkably, the new council proposal is *even less cycling-inclusive* than that rejected ‘do-minimum’ option!

ESSTS also proposed a ‘do maximum’ (B1b), which admittedly looked costly. A ‘do medium’ solution should be feasible, dealing with pinch points by means such as possibly replacing just a few of the more problematic structures, possibly some single-track, and accepting a number of remaining pinch points. This should be manageable in a £2bn project, particularly if the mitigations are fairly limited. *We have given an example of ‘do-medium’ in an appendix below.*

4. The onroad cycling ‘alternative’ proposed in the report does of course have some value in itself, but is **not** a valid alternative, with different connections and destinations, e.g. missing Craighleith Retail Park. Furthermore, it is certainly not of equivalent safety or attractiveness (e.g. Dean Bridge, [Orchard Brae steep climb](#), junctions). Indeed, table 4.2 in Appendix 2 says of this onroad alternative, “*provision would be worse towards Haymarket.*” And whilst the Circulation Plan mentions a cyclist route ‘connection’ across Dean Bridge, the Plan also shows Dean Bridge remaining part of the general traffic network. In summary, it is far from clear what standard this ‘alternative’ would provide, and parts of it clearly would not be the sort of route to attract a wide section of the population..

5. The North Edinburgh Network is well used for [utility purposes](#), not just recreation. It is a complete misnomer to describe it solely or even largely as a ‘recreational route.’

6. Utility use will increase further once the Roseburn-Canal project is complete (a major aim of that [£12.5m project](#)) and in the future once a regular tram improves security on the route during hours of darkness.

7. A concern of the present route is 'stranger danger' for walkers and cyclists (largely during hours of darkness). Whilst a tram will somewhat allay these fears, removal of those cyclists who are content to use the path in the evenings will have the opposite effect, significantly reducing public surveillance for walkers and wheelers, particularly given the ability of cyclists to arrive quickly if they hear calls for help.

8. The TEC report says the impact of removing cycling would be 'slight negative' (table 4.2 in Appendix 2). This is ridiculous, as we can see from the immediate reaction on social media – it would be a major negative.

9. The TEC report is itself ambiguous. Table 4.2 in appendix 2 says "Cycle provision cannot be provided" beside the tram whereas 3.2.1 says "Cycling will be discouraged"

10. Cycling on footpaths is legal in Scotland, under Section 1 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, with only a few exceptions which do not appear to apply here. So how would the Council either ban or 'discourage' cycling? – and would either be legal? Of course, under the Act, this right of cycle access must be "exercised responsibly."

11. Finally, the Future Streets Circulation Plan ([TEC report 7.2](#)) rightly includes this route as part of the 'Secondary Cycle Network' (see map below) i.e. it is important for both utility and recreational purposes, and linking from the Primary Onroad Network. **Councillors passing both reports unamended would be contradicting themselves and giving absurd instructions to officers – to discourage or even ban cycling on a route they have defined as part of the city's cycle network!**



Map from fig 3.3 of the Circulation Plan report, TEC paper 7.2

### Construction period

On a separate but vital issue, if the tram uses the Roseburn route, there will be a closure period of years for construction. Alternative cycling provision, as good as possible, must be provided during this period. Again, this should cover all destinations connected by the Roseburn path (e.g. Craighleith Retail Park), not just an end to end connection. A great value of cycling is that it is about *local access*, not just long distance trips.

## **Appendix: Providing for cycle/wheel/walk beside the tram**

In bullet point 3 above, we suggested a 'do medium' approach. Whilst we are not engineers, here is the sort of approach that might be considered...

- *Coltbridge Viaduct, Ravelston Dykes overbridge, Queensferry Rd overbridge*: major structures, where the cost of a replacement structure would be unreasonable. Options might be single-track operation, modifications to the structure (e.g. path attached beside the viaduct) or accepting a pinch point
- *A8, Craikleith Drive, Groathill Road South*: possible extra active travel bridge
- *St George's school bridge*: not sure here – the bridge may be listed
- *Path width*: there may well be scope to widen the path to 4/4.5m for most of the way, possibly enabling a path segregated between walking and cycling, thus actually enhancing current provision! This could be helped by raising the bottom of some cuttings, and lowering the top of some embankments, to widen the floor area.