

TEC 07.03.24 Agenda Item 7.3

Travelling Safely Greenbank to Meadows Quiet Connection Public Engagement and Next Steps

Response from Spokes South Edinburgh, March 2024

*This response considers the proposals for Greenbank to Meadows Quiet Route on options for re-designing the **Braid Estate** section only. We support the Officer recommendation for Clinton Rd. See Blackford Safe Routes deputation for further details.*

In a week where a young cyclist's life was lost in our city, we ask Councillors to carefully consider their vote on the proposals for this well-used Quiet Route that connects many schools in the area and beyond.

We are also very concerned that other safety projects will be cancelled to fund the Braid Estate Option 2 or 3, particularly given that the consultation did not advise residents of the relative costs of the different options.

We urge members of the Committee to vote for Braid Estate Option 1; an inexpensive option that allows the same benefits already enjoyed by those currently living in Braid Avenue to be provided to others across the Braids estate, particularly in the Midmar area where people are worried about vehicle volumes and behaviour (officers report to Committee, sections 4.26 and 4.27). This option will also increase cycle safety and provide a disincentive to rat-running traffic whilst still allowing locals vehicle access.

Voting for either Options 2 or 3 (estimated £200k - £400k) is very poor value for money which will come at the cost of delay or abandonment to other key active travel projects - which should have been specified in the report so that councillors can make an informed judgement. Examples of how that money could be better deployed are basic things like the replacement of the broken toucan crossing on Whitehouse Loan or simply resurfacing Canaan Lane / Woodburn Terrace. Getting the basics right! It will also take away valuable officer time from other active travel schemes.

Residents from outside the Braids area have signalled that they want to return to using the Braids Estate as a traffic light avoiding cut through, but are currently deterred by filters, so we believe Option 3 in particular will increase traffic through the Braids Estate. We would question why councillors would take that risk to their climate and road safety targets.



Detailed comments:

Spokes have the following detailed comments on the proposals;

Walking Route between South Morningside & Canaan Lane Primary Schools:

Option 1 retains the safe walking route between the two school Primary campuses.

Traffic Evaporation:

Item 4.39 of the paper states that; *“the modal filters introduced in the Braid Estate may have successfully reduced the level of traffic travelling through the area. As such, it is possible that their removal may jeopardise this, resulting in an increase in overall traffic.”* The car counts were at 10,450 daily in 2019 down to 6,283 in 2023. This is a **39% reduction**, so Option 1 will more than contribute to the Council's 2030 30% target.

Speeding Traffic:

A key issue repeatedly raised at Morningside Community Council is the speed of vehicles in the area. Braid Av has had the greatest reduction in average speeds whilst filters were in place. See Aug 2022 TEC papers where average speed was 28mph is now reduced to 17mph, a **37% reduction**. Why would Councillors vote to increase speeds on a quiet residential street with an active travel route designated on it? Vehicle speeds would create dangers for vulnerable cyclists versus impatient drivers at each end of Braid Avenue where the segregation ends/before it starts.

Heavy Segregation is inappropriate and over-costly for residential areas:

We were delighted when all Councillors voted for the City Mobility plan which called for, amongst many things, a cycle network that is partly on main roads with suitable segregation and where that is not possible, quietened neighbourhoods. Options 2 or 3 would set a precedent for future *‘quietened neighbourhoods’* to have segregation that would make implementation of the CMP, both slower and much more expensive. Segregation would have to be wide enough to permit side by side cycling (parent and child) as children grow up and learn to cycle on their own bikes but need some help/support.

Removing all filters (option 3) should be rejected:

The rationale for Option 3 appears to be to share the misery of increased traffic volumes across the whole estate, in contrast to Option 1 which would share the well-being. No filters and the resultant substantially increased levels of traffic across the estate makes it less safe, in particular for categories of cyclists such as the following;

- *Those with older or little legs who can't take the Braid Avenue hill in one long stretch*
- *Those living inside the Braid Estate and cycling*
- *Those whose destination is further East (e.g. Kings Buildings or Infirmary)*

In conclusion, despite current opinions from some residents about being inconvenienced, Edinburgh has many examples of decade old filters to streets where residents have got used to and support the filters that cause them some inconvenience but keep traffic volumes light just like the residents of Braid Av. Councillors should vote for Option 1.