

Princes Street and the Waverley Valley

Public Consultation Response 22.02.25 (updated)

Spokes welcomes the opportunity to comment on the future of this important location. Our comments are numbered according to the numbering in the online consultation.

Q16 Castle Street

Public realm improvements on Castle Street and throughout the city centre are supported. At Castle Street, additional cycle parking should be provided as part of these improvements. It should also be investigated whether informal cycle access from Princes Street to Castle Street and vice versa can be included.

Q17 The Mound Precinct

The mound precinct project should include new cycle parking for this central location, to improve the current provision of 5 No. removable Sheffield stands by the pedestrian crossing and investigate locations which would not require them to be removed for, often lengthy, events.

Spokes believes junction safety improvements are needed where Princes Street westbound crosses the mound. This, along with the West End junction, are the only sections of Princes Street where it is unavoidable to cycle on the tramline amongst motor vehicle traffic.

The public realm works should investigate reducing the length cyclists are exposed to this hazard. This could include separated signal phasing or relocation of the stop line. The public realm works would be inherently linked to kerb alterations, to avoid any net reduction in footway.

Spokes members have reported that the early release lights, advisory signage and Tram Safety guidance are of limited success due to compliance issues, often resulting in motor vehicles passing cyclists adjacent to the tramlines in this single lane. It is clear that further measures are necessary.

Q18 Waverley Bridge

Spokes supports the pedestrianisation of this street and intention for additional public realm. However, we are concerned by the lack of emphasis given to the cycleway in the concept sketch. Spokes members have reported issues with the interim scheme including obstruction by loading vehicles and temporary traffic management that we believe will remain in the proposed scheme unless addressed.

The strategy should give clearer priority to the cycle access on Waverley Bridge and its role as a cycle link providing a low-traffic route via Cockburn Street. This could include a more clearly demarcated cycleway and the extension of the public realm to the Waverley Market goods entrance to limit on-street loading.

Q25 East End (5.3.4 in the draft strategy)

The east end of Princes Street is an unpleasant and even dangerous gap in the strategic cycle network which is likely to completely deter many categories of cyclists. Spokes strongly supports the introduction of segregated cycleways in this area.

Spokes strongly supports the re-introduction of the two-way bus gate at the East End of Princes Street. This will prioritise public transport, walking and cycling at a key point in the city's transport network. However, it is clear that this bus gate, as well as any parking restrictions, must be adequately enforced given the previous and ongoing noncompliance in the area.

Spokes further supports short/medium term measures to address the acute safety issues at the east end of Princes St including amended taxi/loading arrangements, footway widening and measures to improve cycle safety. The current arrangement is unsafe for walking and cycling and significantly disrupts key public transport.

Q 26 Cycling - PRINCES STREET

Spokes do not agree that the approach shown is the only or best way to introduce a segregated cycle lane but strongly supports the provision of segregated cycle lanes along the full length of Princes Street. We would welcome a meeting with officers to discuss the options available, such as the removal of some public service vehicles.

Whilst we recognise that there are space constraints, Princes Street has always been a more popular cycle route than the parallel streets, and is clearly an important destination in its own right.

Importantly, Princes Street is the direct route for many journeys which would otherwise require crossing and re-crossing the tramlines. This manoeuvre, as the Council knows, has resulted in many bike crashes, injuries and council compensation payments following the precedent created by Lady Wolff's judgement in 2019.

Spokes believes safety improvements must be made on the street, regardless of its status in the City Centre Mobility Plan. These hazards span the full length of the street and can only be fully mitigated by the end-to-end solution of a segregated cycleway.

The route reflects a strong desire line, evidenced by its popularity despite the lack of dedicated infrastructure. Through provision of safe cycling, the street represents the greatest opportunity in our city to encourage more active travel users, as per the Gehl Architects report 2010.

We also note that:

- Public consultations in previous years and Spokes's own member surveys have shown strong support for a Princes Street cycle route.
- Cycle lanes (albeit unprotected) were installed in Princes Street when then councillor David Begg was Transport Convener, and operated well, only to be removed by a subsequent council.
- The Council-commissioned 2010 report by Jan Gehl, a leading expert on sustainable city design, clearly seeks provision for cycle use in Princes Street.

- Permeable city centre cycle use is vital if Edinburgh is to achieve its targets for growing cycle use - including its targets for all trips, i.e. everyday trips to shops etc, not just commuting. People of all ages and abilities need to get to destinations such as shops, the Gardens and Waverley Station by cycle.
- We believe that there is adequate space for cycleways once a properly considered design is developed alongside junction safety improvements.
- When the City Centre Transformation plans for Lothian Rd and the Bridges Corridor are implemented, alongside the existing CCWEL and George St - Meadows links then Princes St will become an even more popular cycle route. Cycle space provision for all the cyclists headed to and through it will therefore be required. Spokes traffic counts show that cycles form 15%-20% of all vehicles travelling north on Lothian Road and Forrest Rd, and it is likely that this will increase once safe space is provided.

Q33 Station, Place Brief (6.5.2 in draft strategy)

The brief should include a need to retain and increase the quantity of cycle parking provision in any future development. It should also include the provision of a "Bike Hub" including secure parking, bike servicing, retail, information point, bike hire etc. We note that a Bike Hub was promised by Abellio (2.1.1 [here](#)). Bike hubs are now in operation at several UK stations and are widespread in parts of Europe.

Spokes strongly supports the planned north-south walking, wheeling and cycling link across the east end of the valley.

Q34 Waverley Station - access (6.5 in draft strategy)

The strategy should seek to retain quality bike access right into the station in any future development. Current access from Waverley Bridge involves a spring-loaded gate to ensure dismounting, and should be improved to allow disabled cyclist use. Access from Calton Road and Market Street involves step access and should be improved.

Q36 Waverley Market (6.5.4 in draft strategy)

Spokes supports footway widening and note the past success of the Omni Centre in this respect, which in turn also provided space for a segregated cycleway. Future redevelopment should include the provision of cycle parking.

Q43 General feedback - West End (section 5.3.1 in draft strategy)

The strategy should emphasise the urgency of making the West End junction safe for cyclists. The junction was listed as the top priority junction in the Major Junctions Review in 2023 and is where [Zhi Min Soh](#) was killed in 2017. With current resources, it may easily be another seven years before the Lothian Road project is finished, and to leave the West End junction in its present state of danger for so many more years is surely unacceptable.

