

Travelling Safely – [TRO/21/27B](#) [North area schemes]

INTRO

Spokes strongly supports the North Edinburgh TRO/ETRO and its significant contribution to encouraging people to walk, cycle and use public transport in the city.

Where **lane defender units** have been used in cycleways, efforts should be made to replace these with more permanent materials such as Scan kerbs as used on Holyrood Road. This both improves the visual appearance of the cycleway and provides a more continuous protected nature to the route.

Many of the schemes do not cater adequately for cycle safety at **junctions**, and this should be improved as the schemes are taken forward. These are the greatest danger areas, and also the sections most likely to deter people from using a bike. An otherwise attractive segregated route with a difficult junction at the end or elsewhere is likely to deter many potential cyclists from using any of the route.

There are numerous instances across the scheme areas where cycleways have an unacceptably **poor surface** from their time as vehicle lanes. Given the narrow nature of many of the cycleways, this can cause acute issues for cyclists. Notably, those taking avoiding action may potentially strike a lane defender. The surface of all cycleways should be reviewed, and suitable resurfacing undertaken where required.

Where **motor vehicle prohibitions** are proposed, access should always be retained for people walking and cycling - including on non-standard cycles such as cargo bikes and trikes.

There are numerous sections of cycleway where **kerbside motor access** is allowed and provided. Any instance of this, which forces cyclists to rejoin traffic, reduces the safety and attractiveness of the route and should be avoided where possible. The use of floating parking and loading bays, as well as relocating loading to side streets, has been successful in the city and should be used in further locations.

Drivers parking/waiting **close to the start or end of segregated areas** making it difficult on entry and dangerous on exit requiring cyclists to immediately pull out to overtake. For example, this is especially a problem on Rodney Street northbound just after the Bellevue Chapel on a Sunday.

Cleaning of the cycleways it is often irregular and there tends to be a build up of mulch and debris in a number of locations.

SPECIFICS

Crewe Road South

The protected cycleways have proved highly popular especially for access to the Western General Hospital and need to be retained along with the carriageways reduction at the Orchard Brae roundabout.

1. There is a significant build out towards the northern end of the road for a pedestrian crossing. Due to the reduced lane width, there is a gap in the cycle protection and cyclists have to merge with traffic. Alternative solutions are required, such as a cycle by-pass around the back of the crossing, so that cyclist protection for southbound cyclists can be continuous. Clearly such an intervention was outside of the scope of the “temporary measures” but should be implemented now.
2. The surface in the cycle lanes is very poor, and should be improved.
3. At Comely Bank Roundabout, the geometry of the roundabout should be physically changed so that drivers cannot use the desire-line and go straight across the hatching from eg Craighleith Road to Comely Bank Road. Recent observation is that the lane narrowing markings on the roundabout are being abused and having limited effect at traffic calming. Cyclists are also in danger of being overtaken on the roundabout and then “left-hooked” when drivers get back into the lane. A more effective intervention is required.

Ferry Road

The protected cycle-ways on Ferry Road have been very welcome and they should be improved and made permanent.

1. Options for safe cycling, linking to other cycle routes, should be investigated at the junction with Inverleith Terrace and at the Ferry Road/Crewe Road South roundabout. This roundabout is a major deterrent to cycling in the area and came out with a high score in the Major Junctions Review. It poses a significant danger to cyclists.
2. Waiting by coaches should not be permitted, alternative waiting areas should be provided. Even if drop-off only is permitted, this brings the alternatives either of a large group of people exiting from the coach into the cycle lane, or, if the parking is

kerbside, forcing cyclists out into the main traffic lane outside of the coach. There are also many bus stops, causing similar problems for cycling. Consideration should be given to introducing floating bus-stops so that cyclists have continuous protection.

3. The cycleway surface is very poor and needs to be resurfaced in some places. Also, debris often builds up in the cycleway - more responsive cleaning should be provided.

West Shore Road and Marine Drive

Spokes welcomes the interventions on West Shore Road (WSR) and Marine Drive and would like to see further interventions and improvements. The new development on Marine Drive has provided an excellent off-road cycle path. West Shore Road is a very popular, mainly leisure, cycle route and needs further attention and a safe link to the existing off-road path on Lower Granton Road.

More and more businesses are opening up on this road (WSR) and it is getting busier and busier and traffic at times includes large lorries and drivers often speed.

One of our members wrote "I do cycle down West Shore Road, and I find it really challenging. I usually cycle with my kids on that road, and the cars, while there's not a lot, they pass fast and tight because of the road design. The pavement of the road itself is poor and I have had a flat tyre on this stretch of road - which was really stressful on my cargo bike! We had to lock it up and take a taxi home - there's no other option when my cargo bike goes down."

The footway surface is not a suitable alternative for children and is discontinuous.

The original proposal had been for a protected cycleway, but this was not progressed.

The closure at Gypsy Brae has helped to significantly reduce the traffic, especially from what it would have been given the extensive construction work on Marine Drive etc.

1. The segregated cycleway option should be re-investigated and will prove very popular with residents of the new developments, where some really excellent cycle infrastructure is being implemented.
2. In the short term, the council should proceed with the proposed introduction of a 20mph limit, supported by speed reduction infrastructure. Also, as mentioned in ["Spokes response"](#) to the Spaces for People Consultation – West Shore Road 2 April 2021", the barriers at the cycle feature that was introduced to enable access to the waterfront, need to be spaced further apart to make them more navigable by bike - especially larger and cargo bikes. These were not changed at the time of implementation due to the limited scope of the project.

Bellevue to Canonmills & Broughton Street

The protected cycleways from Canonmills to Broughton Street have been very welcome and are being well used and should be improved and made permanent together with the footway extensions that have resulted in carriageway space reductions at junctions.

Broughton St is a vital link and an important destination in its own right, and retaining the uphill protected cycleway is absolutely vital. For both purposes, particularly given that cyclists will be travelling relatively slowly compared to motor vehicles on this uphill stretch.

Broughton Street is the least steep way of getting into the Centre from the North and is thus very attractive to cyclists.

We received the following from one of our members:

“I am writing in strong support of retaining the bike lanes along the Bellevue to Canonmills route. My wife and I recently purchased our flat on Rodney St. and its accessibility by bicycle was a central factor in our property purchase. I commute and travel every day by bicycle up this route, often several times per day, and would not feel safe doing so if I had to weave around parked cars, or did not have the safety of a divided lane. The route could still use improvement, but it is a huge step in the right direction. Beyond its personal value, I see how many, many people use the route, especially because it connects to the Goldenacre and Warrison paths. Even though cycle route 75 takes a different path, the steepness of the hill and the cobbles along Scotland St. make it very impractical (and almost impossible) to comfortably cycle. In effect, the Bellevue to Canonmills route is the true route connecting the northside active travel paths to the city centre, and hopefully soon to the exciting George St. and Meadows to George St. developments.”

Firstly, we will cover issues mainly concerned with the southbound (uphill) cycleway).

1. We are concerned that cycle defenders have been removed between Canonmills and Broughton Road southbound. The replacement works should include continuous protection for cyclists and the waiting restrictions modified as necessary.
2. An Early Release traffic signal at the junction with Broughton Road is needed so that southbound cyclists can get up the hill and out of the way of left turning vehicles. This would also be helpful for those heading north to get a good start and “take the lane” for going ahead to Inverleith Terrace via Huntly Street.
3. Cyclists are exposed to danger when a bus is at the stop just beyond Heriot Hill Terrace. This and other bus-stops along the route should be redesigned to provide continuous protection for cyclists - eg using floating bus stops.
4. The footway extension on Rodney Street southbound needs to be considered in conjunction with making the cycleway up to East Claremont St permanent.

5. Spokes has noticed that red surfacing has recently been added across the mouth of East Claremont Street – this is welcomed as drivers often creep out causing cyclists to veer out of the cycleway. The same treatment should be applied at all side-street crossings and at any pinch points (although these will hopefully be eliminated) and where possible the give-way markings moved back a little.
6. The cycle protection finishes before the double-length bus stops at the end of Bellevue and needs to be extended up to the roundabout. This will require a redesign and infrastructure interventions such as floating bus stops in the very wide space available.
7. The carriageway narrowings on all of the approaches to the Broughton Street roundabout are very welcome and should be made permanent as footway. Whilst some were added as footway extensions, providing a desire-line crossing for pedestrians that so choose, they serve the dual purpose of narrowing the approach lanes thus slowing vehicles consistent with the markings reducing the width of the carriageway on the roundabout. However, the markings are often ignored by drivers and should be replaced with more physical interventions. Consider also making the “desire-line” pedestrians crossing more formal.
8. The southbound cycleway on Broughton Street has some problems that need to be addressed, for example drivers parking close to the start of the cycleway and interruptions for bus stop space and side street crossings, where the cycleway needs to be made more obvious. Consideration should be given to improving these situations as part of the changes to make it permanent.
9. Being the least steep way of getting into the Centre from the North, Broughton Street is very attractive to cyclists that are deterred from using Scotland Street and Dublin Street, due to their steepness and the very poor cobbles. However, many cyclists are not comfortable with the segregation ending before the top of the street and prefer to turn right into Albany Street before reaching the top. There is nowhere for cyclists to wait safely to make this turn. Attention is needed as to how to make this manoeuvre safer for cyclists. The footway on the west side is also dangerous for pedestrians with many drivers turning left into Albany Street and the unpredictability of drivers turning right into it - also as to whether they are going to give way to pedestrians! On top of this, southbound drivers sometimes queue jump and ignore the keep left signs on the traffic island and drive up the “wrong” side of the road. The junction needs to be redesigned to make it safer for all.
10. The southbound protected cycle-way should be extended to the top of the street (as referred to in 9), to link up with the Picardy Place, Leith Walk and York Place (CCWEL) cycleways.

Moving on now to the Northbound (downhill cycleway)

Contrary to some views, the Northbound protected cycleway is well used and a benefit to cyclists of all ages and abilities. It has some challenges, largely due to the constraints of the temporary works. In making this permanent, solutions should be found for these deficiencies. Ideally we would like a downhill protected cycleway included on Broughton Street, but recognise that there are more constraints there. Cycling downhill before the protection was installed was not an attractive option and totally unsuitable for those not used to driving in traffic and should not be considered as an alternative to resolving the problems.

The opportunity should also be taken to improve access to and from Picardy Place by bicycle - there is no direct cycle route to Broughton Street from the CCWEL on York Place and the current road markings are highly dangerous putting cyclists in danger of being undertaken and then left-hooked.

1. There are several side-streets and openings that interrupt the continuity of the protection. These can be made safer with red surfacing, radius tightening and suitable kerbing separation.
2. There are several bus stops where the buses either have a lay-by or stop in the cycleway. Again, these can be redesigned to provide continuous or improved protection for cyclists.
3. Vehicles are allowed to park in the cycleway at various times and sometimes park close to the end of the cycleway causing cyclists to make a sharp turn putting them at risk from following drivers. Where parking is necessary it should be moved to the offside of the cycleway.
4. The protected cycleway should continue up to the Eyre Place/Broughton Road junction.
5. Cycle symbols should be added to the carriageway surface to guide cyclists to the offside lane for proceeding straight ahead to Inverleith Terrace and to warn drivers of their proximity

IN CONCLUSION

Spokes feels that all of these schemes have been a great success, despite the limitations of the temporary provision and the speed at which they had to be installed. Much should have been learnt about how well they have worked and hopefully can be applied to the making permanent of the facilities.

Thank-you for the opportunity to comment and we look forward to working with the project team on the implementation of the permanent schemes.

Martin McDonnell, Spokes

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