

## TEC 18.6.26 - Written deputation from Spokes

### Item 8.1 [Trams from Granton to the BioQuarter/Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh and Beyond Consultation and Market Research report](#)<sup>1</sup>

## Onroad Tramlines – the Bridges Corridor

The purpose of this deputation is to emphasise to councillors the dangers to people who get about by bike of onroad tramlines, and the need to give maximum attention to this in designing the system.

As was highlighted in [our consultation submission](#)<sup>2</sup>, we are particularly concerned about the Bridges corridor, where specific conditions including road width, traffic levels and the need to cater for large numbers of pedestrians exacerbate the difficulty of ensuring maximum cyclist safety. We suggested a wide range of ameliorative measures, ranging from alternative routes or single tracking, through to lesser design and traffic management approaches.

Whilst alternatives to the Bridges may exist for many trips (notably the Meadows to Princes Street project, should that interminably delayed project ever be implemented), for many other trips the Bridges remains by far the most suitable and likely choice of route. It is of course also a destination in its own right, for shopping, business and residential. Furthermore, visitors to the city will not be familiar with where cycling is less or more safe. As such, many cyclists are likely to continue to be found here, and therefore every effort must be made to maximise safety.

### The likely scenario

[Annex 4](#)<sup>3</sup> in the TEC papers gives council responses to themes from the consultation. In particular, it is adamant that the Bridges corridor must be retained (rather than alternatives) and that single-tracking is not feasible here. Whilst we would still hope for reconsideration, that now seems unlikely. Thus there is likely to be double-track tram, with widened footways, leaving cyclists undesirably close to tramlines. Indeed, where there is a parked vehicle (legally or not), or a bus stop, will cyclists be faced with crossing the nearside tramline at a very dangerous angle, or waiting, or dismounting and walking past?

We therefore urge councillors to ensure that every effort is made to ensure that the design minimises these dangers to people cycling, whether to access shops and other premises in the area, or en route to/from Leith or other destinations..

Measure which we have suggested include:

- Use of a bus gate to minimise non-essential motor traffic (as was proposed by the council as a measure in the pandemic, though never implemented)
- Not using a central reservation between the tracks, to maximise space outside the tramlines
- Avoiding kerbside platforms (which entail all cyclists crossing lines at a very dangerous angle)
- Ensuring adequate width between kerb and tramline (our submission referenced guidance on this, including [this](#)<sup>4</sup> from the UK government's specialist agency, Active Travel England)
- Preventing kerbside parking, legal or illegal
- Advance cycle traffic lights with generous timings
- Such other traffic management measures as are helpful

## The dangers of onroad tramlines

**The dangers of bike/tramline crashes and injuries, some life-changing, are real, not imagined.** Tramline 1 was designed with no real consideration to cyclist safety (or, indeed, pedestrians), resulting in many crashes. See this [BBC Scotland report](#)<sup>5</sup> detailing crashes, injuries, the death of Zhi Min Soh, and compensation paid by the Council following early successful court cases brought by victims. [Here](#)<sup>6</sup> is a more recent example, from January 2026.

Fortunately, the rate of crashes has declined since the early years, as the Council has tackled known blackspots. However, analysis of tramline crashes reported to Spokes suggests, perhaps unexpectedly, that some 60% occur not at crossing-point blackspots, but at random locations [when the cyclist is travelling in the same direction as the tramlines](#)<sup>7</sup>, not needing to cross the lines, but is forced into them by traffic, or encounters them for other reasons. Blackspot remediation is not possible in such cases, since there are no blackspots. **The only 100% effective solution is physical separation from tramlines** but, where this is not agreed, maximum thought must be paid to other measures to achieve the greatest safety possible.

## Cyclists and tramlines – evidence from Spokes website reports

Spokes has a website page for [reporting tramline crashes](#).<sup>8</sup> Obviously, given that there have been literally hundreds of A&E tramline-crash visits ([Prof Oliver's study](#)<sup>9</sup> of the first 7 years of tramline 1 identified 191 admissions to A&E for tramline injuries) our survey is only capturing a small percentage of victims. Nonetheless, the 74 responses so far are sufficient to provide some myth-busting data on crash *causes*, and which are relevant in thinking about tramline design. In particular...

- 64% of cyclists experiencing a tramline crash were intending to continue *in the same direction* as the tramlines, rather than (36%) to cross the tramlines to the other side or at a junction. [In many cases the crash was due to traffic pressures, in others due to layout]
- 36% happened when there was “very little or no traffic”
- However, 47% said that *traffic pressures* or worries about nearby traffic contributed to their crash
- 38% were caused by *skidding*, 21% by skidding followed by wheel-trapping, and only 31% by wheel-trapping alone
- 71% of crashes were in daylight, 29% in lighting-up time
- 85% of victims said they were “*reasonably or very*” *confident cycling in traffic*
- 56% said they regularly used the route in question, 35% occasionally, and for only 10% was it the first time they had encountered these tramlines

## The Leith Walk example

Although separated bike lanes appear now to be ruled out in the Bridges, councillors may be interested in evidence from Leith Walk, where segregated bike lanes were introduced as part of the tram project. There has been justified criticism over some aspects of these lanes, but the safety record is excellent.

Firstly, and in great contrast to tramline 1, in the roughly 4 years so far, we have **only heard of one bike tramline crash** – when the cyclist left the bike path and joined the carriageway (which was then empty), in advance of her planned junction turn.

The position for **pedestrian safety**, however, will surprise many, and is hugely welcome. Despite predictions of increased pedestrian casualties as a result of the bike lanes, police stats show that Leith Walk [pedestrian casualties](#)<sup>10</sup> *have in fact fallen astonishingly* [credit to [Ed Tissiman](#)<sup>11</sup> for identifying this]. The reasons for this are not known but, given that virtually all pedestrian injuries result from motor vehicles, we speculate that crucial factors are the separation of pedestrians from the carriageway by the cycle lanes, and safer road crossings due to the ban on kerbside parking.

## Further & background information

- [Spokes article on the tramline consultation](#)<sup>12</sup>
- [Spokes submission to the consultation](#)<sup>13</sup>

## Footnotes: hyperlinks to references in the above text

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- 1 <https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/documents/s100192/Item%208.1%20-%20Trams%20from%20Granton%20to%20the%20BioQuarter-Royal%20Infirmary%20of%20Edinburgh%20and%20Beyond%20Consultation.pdf>
- 2 <https://www.spokes.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/2511-CEC-tram-G-B-Spokes-FINAL.pdf>
- 3 <https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/documents/s100197/Item%208.1%20-%20Trams%20from%20Granton%20to%20the%20BioQuarter-Royal%20Infirmary%20of%20Edinburgh%20and%20Beyond%20Consultation.pdf>
- 4 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/critical-safety-issues-for-walking-wheeling-and-cycling/critical-safety-issues-for-walking-wheeling-and-cycling#effective-width-next-to-tram-lines>
- 5 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-edinburgh-east-fife-62969521>
- 6 <https://www.spokes.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Tramline-crash-Jan-2026.jpg>
- 7 <https://www.spokes.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/2511-Tramline-crash-info-sheet.pdf>
- 8 <https://www.spokes.org.uk/documents/public-transport/tram/>
- 9 <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00402-018-2890-4>
- 10 <https://bsky.app/profile/spokes.org.uk/post/3mlyoyzvfvc2v>
- 11 <https://bsky.app/profile/edtiss.bsky.social/post/3mly6on63a22n>
- 12 <https://www.spokes.org.uk/2026/06/tram-consultation-next-steps/>
- 13 <https://www.spokes.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/2511-CEC-tram-G-B-Spokes-FINAL.pdf>