

# Transport and Environment Committee

10am, Tuesday, 2 June 2015

## George Street Experimental Traffic Regulation Order – Interim Cycle Lane Options 2015/16

Item number	7.4
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	11 – City Centre

### Executive summary

On 29 April 2014, the Transport and Environment Committee approved a year-long trial to introduce an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) on George Street. The trial layout introduced a dedicated two-way cycle lane, additional pedestrian space, a one-way traffic management system, and additional space that businesses, Festivals and events could animate, to bring new activity to the street.

The trial began on 8 September 2014 and will end in September 2015. A design process is taking place during the trial period, examining a range of alternative layouts for George Street in the long run. Any long term design will be the subject of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), meaning there will be a period of a year or more between the ETRO trial period finishing in September 2015 and a permanent TRO design being approved and implemented. During that interim period George Street will revert to the previous layout with four traffic lanes and a wide range of kerbside loading, parking and bus and taxi stances, as well as parking in the central reservation.

This report outlines the options for an interim cycling facility on George Street in the period between the ETRO concluding and a permanent TRO being implemented.

### Links

Coalition pledges	<a href="#">P24</a> , <a href="#">P28</a> , <a href="#">P31</a>
Council outcomes	<a href="#">CO19</a> , <a href="#">CO20</a>
Single Outcome Agreement	<a href="#">SO1</a> , <a href="#">SO4</a>

## George Street Experimental Traffic Regulation Order – Interim Cycle Lane Options 2015/16

### Recommendations

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- 1.1 It is recommended that the Transport and Environment Committee:
  - 1.1.1 agrees that a cycle lane facility will be retained, on a more conventional one-way layout, and opportunities to use the central reservation as civic space and public realm will be explored on George Street in the interim period between the ETRO ending and a long term TRO being promoted;
  - 1.1.2 and agrees that, taking account of the fact the range of options are limited by legal and financial restrictions, the cycle lane during the interim period will be an advisory cycle lane as per the design in Appendix One.

### Background

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- 2.1 On 29 April 2014, the Transport and Environment Committee approved a year-long trial on George Street. Using an ETRO, this introduced a dedicated two-way cycle lane, additional pedestrian space, and a one-way traffic system for motor vehicles, that will be in place from July 2014 to September 2015.
- 2.2 The purpose of the time-limited trial is to test different ways of animating the space, to improve the vibrancy of the street, and to assess the transport impact on George Street and surrounding roads when part of the street is closed to traffic. George Street is a key part of the city's UNESCO World Heritage Site, a key retail street, an important street for the hospitality industry, and a place where people live, work, visit, park, shop, worship, commute through and socialise.
- 2.3 George Street is a key part of Edinburgh's dynamic city centre and is included within the National Cycle Network and the Council's proposals to create a family friendly cycle route from Roseburn to Leith.

- 2.4 The trial year is accompanied by a major piece of design work, which is being led by an independent designer. The designer has been tasked with leading and facilitating a design options process, involving all stakeholders, to explore a wide range of options for the long term future layout of George Street. The long term layout will include a dedicated cycling facility. There has been strong and consistent feedback from stakeholders that the long-term layout for George Street should include a segregated cycling facility.
- 2.5 At its meeting of 17 March 2015, the Transport and Environment Committee considered a report on the mid-year review of the George Street ETRO and agreed to receive a further report on the options for cycling provision on an interim basis.

## Main report

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- 3.1 An ETRO is a time limited Traffic Regulation Order and it is not possible for an ETRO design to automatically roll forward into a permanent TRO design, even if a Local Authority wished to do so.
- 3.2 In this case, the street layout that exists at present will be removed upon expiry of the ETRO in September 2015, and at that point George Street will revert to its previous layout (as it was in June 2014), with four lanes of traffic and a mixture of kerbside loading and parking facilities, bus stops and taxi stances.
- 3.3 The long term design solution, which will be subject to a TRO, will examine all the options for segregated cycle facilities on George Street, as it will have sufficient time to do so. There are some requirements of a segregated cycle facility that rule it out as an interim measure because it cannot be delivered within a short period of time. Any design that required a restriction on loading facilities, a need to move disabled parking bays, or requirements to change bus stops, taxi stances and other parking bays would require a TRO, and significant public consultation. They would not be reasons to rule out a segregated kerbside facility in the long term street layout design.
- 3.4 However, an interim cycle lane provision, if it is to be implemented in September 2015, requires a different approach to a long-term design process. There is a significant risk that any proposal requiring a TRO could not be introduced in time for September 2015, and it is important to ensure there is a seamless introduction of an interim cycle facility that can be introduced immediately when the current ETRO expires.

- 3.5 The interim solution should be cost-effective to ensure that all available resources can be used to support the long-term design work. The interim proposal must be safe to use, and its visibility is crucial as it will help to establish the principle of a permanent cycling facility on George Street along a more conventional and symmetrical layout than the ETRO layout.
- 3.6 Research during the ETRO has found significant support for any long term cycle facility on George Street to be symmetrical and aligned on a more conventional basis with eastbound traffic on the northern carriageway, and westbound on the southbound carriageway. This will be introduced with the interim proposal.
- 3.7 In terms of practical and deliverable interim measures, that could be implemented in September 2015, and which would not divert resources away from the long-term design process, there were two deliverable options.
- 3.8 The preferred solution is an advisory cycle lane that is not kerbside, but sits in between the two lanes of carriageway in each direction (see Appendix One). It retains a dedicated cycle facility, it does not require a TRO, is cost-effective, and as an interim measure it provides a clearly visible and unbroken cycle lane while returning symmetry to the street. It has no impact on loading and parking facilities, and no impact on the public transport network (bus stops and taxi stances). It is the type of cycle way that has proved to be effective, safe and popular on the south side of the city, having been implemented from Causewayside to Kings Buildings.
- 3.9 This interim measure would not be a segregated cycle lane, but it could be installed seamlessly at the same time as the removal of the ETRO layout in September 2015 without requiring a TRO or any further consultation.
- 3.10 An alternative solution, that is deliverable but less preferred, would be to install a kerbside advisory cycle lane. This could also be installed in September 2015 as it would not require a TRO or any further consultation. However, it is also unsegregated, and it would not provide a straightforward unbroken visible cycle facility on George Street. It could not impinge on any loading bay, parking bay, bus stop or taxi stance. It would have to either skirt round these obstacles, which are manifold on every block, or it would need to be hatched in the spaces in between the loading and parking bays and the bus and taxi stances. It would potentially lack clarity visually, be unmistakably stop-start in nature, be more difficult to read and follow for the less experienced cyclist, and it would be potentially more dangerous as a consequence.
- 3.11 Given these factors, the unbroken cycle lane, located between live traffic carriageways, that has proved successful on the south side of the city, is the recommended approach as an interim measure, and is more likely to help establish the principle of a dedicated cycle facility with the broad range of other stakeholders on George Street.

## Measures of success

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- 4.1 An interim cycle facility is introduced in a seamless manner on George Street, being installed at the same time as the ETRO layout is removed in September 2015.
- 4.2 The interim cycle facility retains the visible presence of a cycle facility, both eastbound and westbound, on George Street for the period between the ETRO expiring and a permanent TRO being introduced. This will help to establish the principle of George Street being a key street for the cycle network, both as part of the National Cycle Network and the family cycle network in Edinburgh, amongst cyclists and for other stakeholders on George Street.
- 4.3 A more attractive environment for those travelling to, living in, working and visiting the area delivered in line with a long term strategic vision for the city centre and the Council's Active Travel Action Plan.
- 4.4 The delivery of a project within agreed timescales and budget.
- 4.5 The delivery of a cycle facility that is safe and visible for the interim period, but which does not divert resources or attention from the key work stream of delivering an appropriate cycle facility within the long-term design process for George Street.

## Financial impact

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- 5.1 The cost for implementing the proposal will be contained within the Services for Communities budget. During the ETRO, any items and materials procured to enable the trial to take place have been selected on the basis that they have a resale or reuse value, where practicable. When the trial concludes these items can be sold on or used by the Council elsewhere in the city. The precise costs will be reported at the conclusion of the trial. The same approach will be adopted for the design and delivery of the interim cycle facility, to enable resources to be concentrated on creating and delivering an appropriate long-term design and layout for George Street.

## Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

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- 6.1 The proposals emerged from a report to the Transport and Environment Committee on 29 October 2013 "Building a Vision for the City Centre - Consultation Outcome".
- 6.2 The proposals have been developed in consultation with stakeholders in line with the design brief and recommendations laid out in that report.

- 6.3 An ETRO provides a flexible opportunity for a Local Authority to test out different transport and public realm layouts for a set period of time, but the legal process governing ETROs does not allow for the traffic order to continue beyond its expiry date, in this case September 2015. The ETRO project has identified that it will be important to publicise the fact the street will return to four lanes of traffic in September 2015, for the period while the future layout of the street is being considered and the appropriate Traffic Regulation Order is processed. This report recommends a deliverable interim arrangement for cycling for during that period.

## Equalities impact

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- 7.1 An Equalities and Rights Impact Assessment (ERIA) has been carried out and is ongoing for the duration of the wider George Street Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) project, which will run until September 2015.
- 7.2 The layout of the street has been influenced by consultation feedback from a wide variety of equalities groups, to ensure ease of access could be maintained for all equalities groups, including by ramp access onto any outdoor seating areas. This was previously reported to Committee on 29 October 2013 and 29 April 2014.
- 7.3 The incidence of crime and air quality levels on George Street and surrounding streets are being monitored as part of the research package which will run for a year alongside the proposed George Street trial. Local residents' groups have been included in specifying the research package, to help ensure the right information is captured, recorded and analysed.
- 7.4 The George Street ETRO layout was subject to a Stage 2 Road Safety Audit. The proposed interim cycle facility will also be subject to a Stage 2 Audit.

## Sustainability impact

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- 8.1 The delivery of improvements in the city centre will help increase pedestrian and cycling activity in the area. In addition to introducing a café culture, the wider George Street trial should reduce carbon emissions in the street. Sustainability impacts, including air quality and traffic movement in the street and the surrounding area, will be assessed as part of the evaluation of the trial project.

## Consultation and engagement

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- 9.1 An Experimental Traffic Regulation Order has so far proved to be an effective means of engaging interested groups in the policy-making process. An extensive pre-consultation design exercise took place in January, February and March 2014. A quarterly stakeholder group has governance and oversight over the extensive research project that is being delivered as a key aspect of the project. This group – which is open to members of the public and all interested parties – is also included in the design options process that is working towards a long-term layout for George Street. The wide range of stakeholder groups includes:
- the New Town & Broughton Community Council and individual members of the public;
  - residents' groups from the local neighbourhood including Heriot Row, Albany Street, Drummond Place, Great King Street, Great Stuart Street and others;
  - transport bodies such as Spokes, Sustrans and Living Streets;
  - heritage bodies Historic Scotland and Edinburgh World Heritage Trust;
  - the emergency services; and
  - local and national bus operators, taxi operators, and local businesses, which were contacted through Essential Edinburgh.
- 9.2 A variety of Council Services have also been included in the consultation and design process, that will produce options for the long-term layout of George Street.
- 9.3 Local Elected Members have been given advance sight of the proposed plans. The key observations were that it is positive that a facility will be maintained after the ETRO, though noting that the three junctions on the street present difficulties for a less experienced cyclist and there is an unavoidable conflict with buses.

## Background reading/external references

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[City of Edinburgh Council – Local Transport Strategy 2014 - 2019](#)

[Building a Vision for the City Centre, Transport and Environment Committee, 19 March 2013](#)

[Building a Vision for the City Centre- Consultation Outcome, Transport and Environment Committee, 29 October 2013](#)

## John Bury

Acting Director of Services for Communities

Contact: Iain MacPhail, City Centre Programme Manager

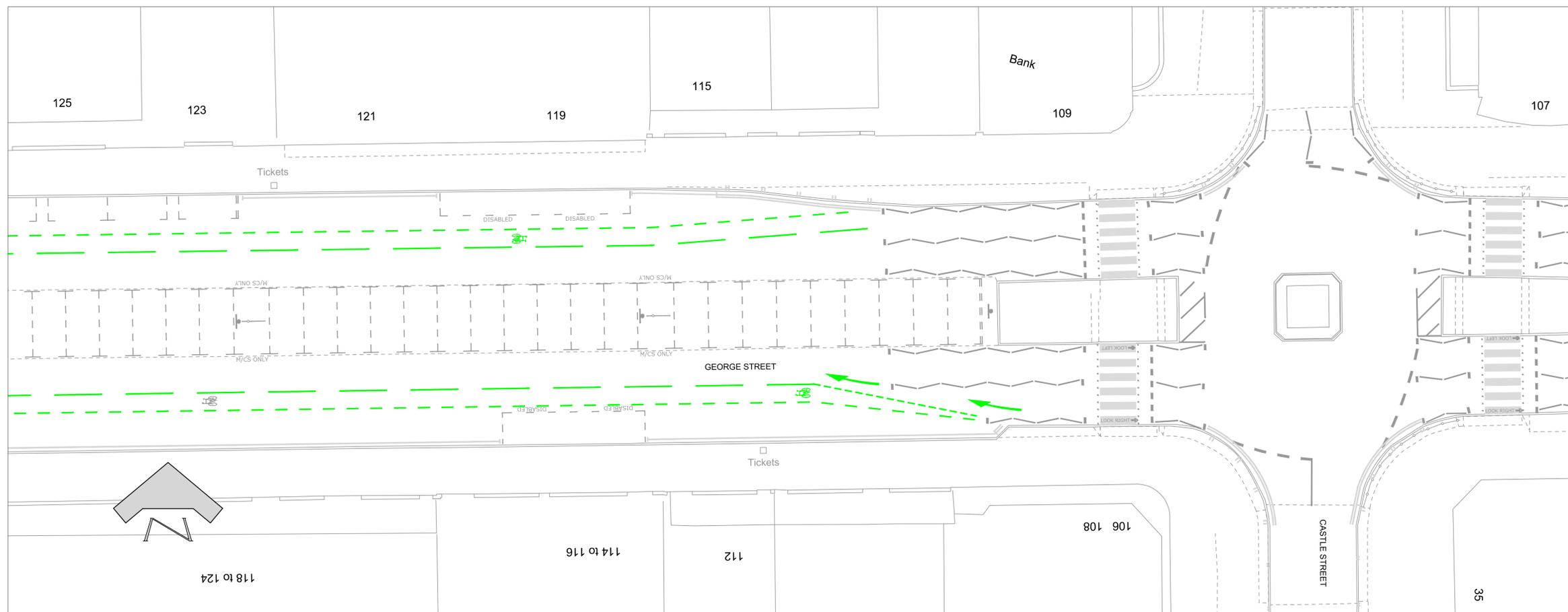
E-mail: [iain.macphail@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:iain.macphail@edinburgh.gov.uk) | Tel: 0131 529 7804

## Links

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<b>Coalition pledges</b>	<p><b>P24</b> – Maintain and embrace support for our world-famous festivals and events</p> <p><b>P28</b> – Further strengthen our links with the business community by developing and implementing strategies to promote and protect the economic well being of the city.</p> <p><b>P31</b> - Maintain our City’s reputation as the cultural capital of the world by continuing to support and invest in our cultural infrastructure.</p>
<b>Council outcomes</b>	<p><b>C19</b> – Attractive Places and Well Maintained – Edinburgh remains an attractive city through the development of high quality buildings and places and the delivery of high standards and maintenance of infrastructure and public realm</p> <p><b>C20</b> – Culture, sport and major events – Edinburgh continues to be a leading cultural city where culture and sport play a central part in the lives and futures of citizens.</p>
<b>Single Outcome Agreement</b>	<p><b>SO1</b> – Edinburgh’s economy delivers increased investment, jobs and opportunities for all.</p> <p><b>SO4</b> – Edinburgh’s communities are safer and have improved physical and social fabric.</p>
<b>Appendices</b>	<p>1 Proposed interim cycle facility layout on George Street (total of 4 pages)</p>

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Edinburgh, EH8 8BG  
Telephone: 0131 200 2000

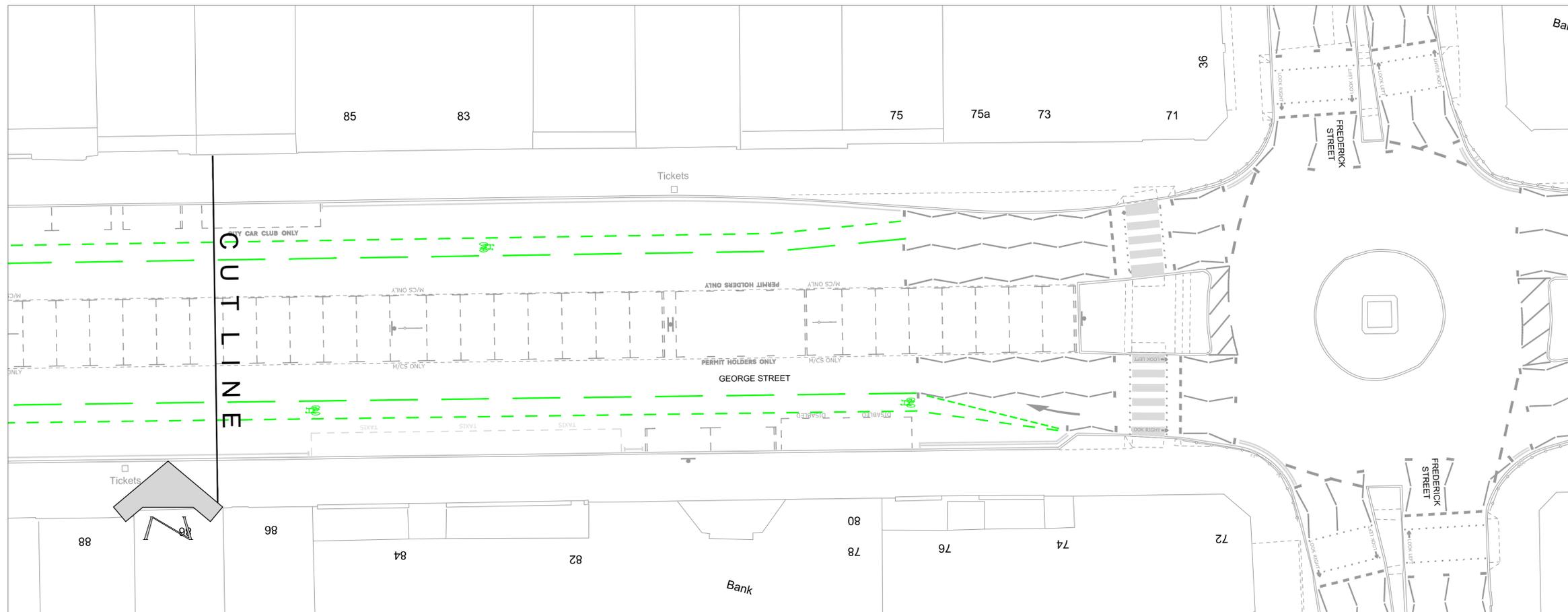
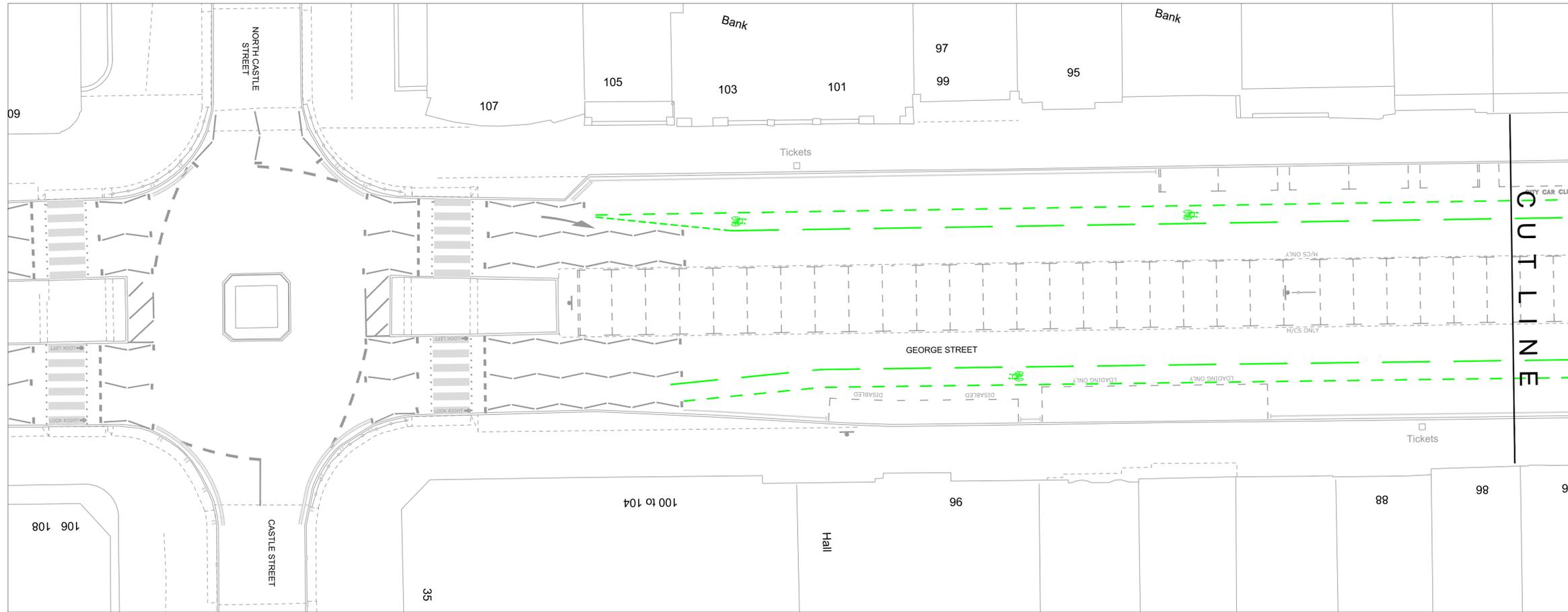
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George Street Experimental Order  
Removal of Measures  
Advisory Cycle Lanes

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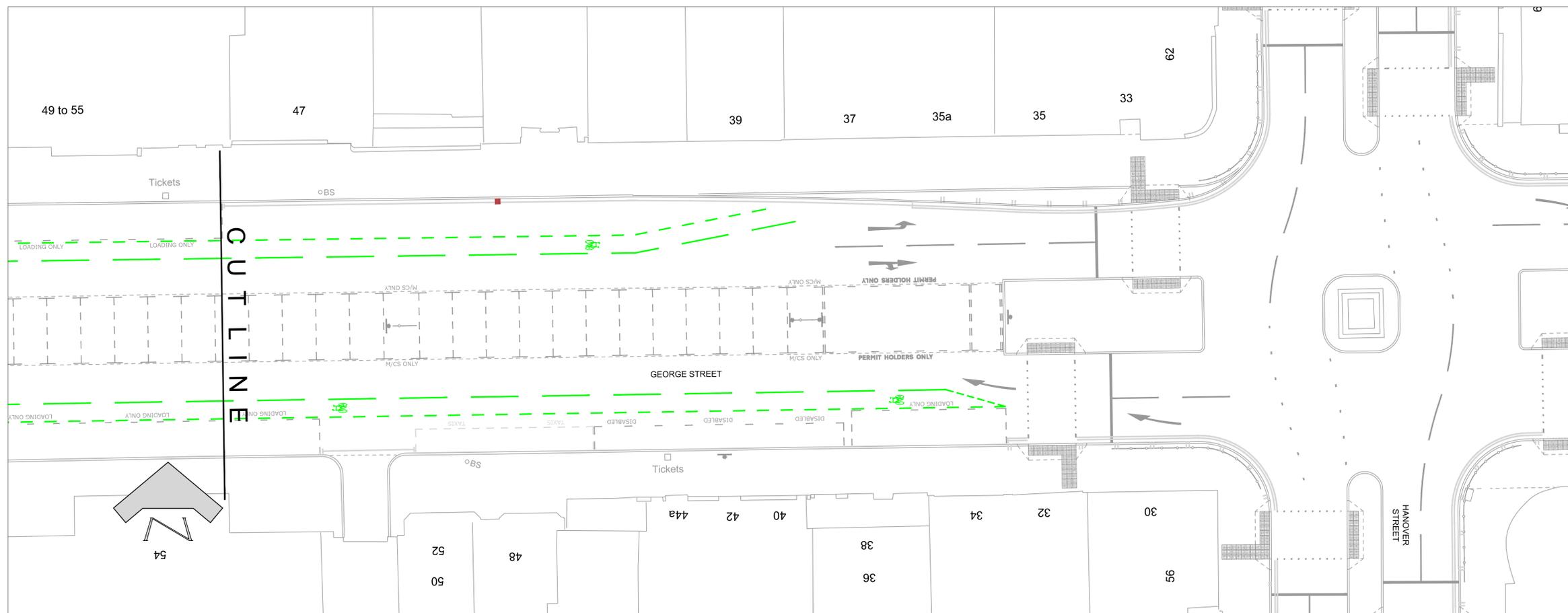
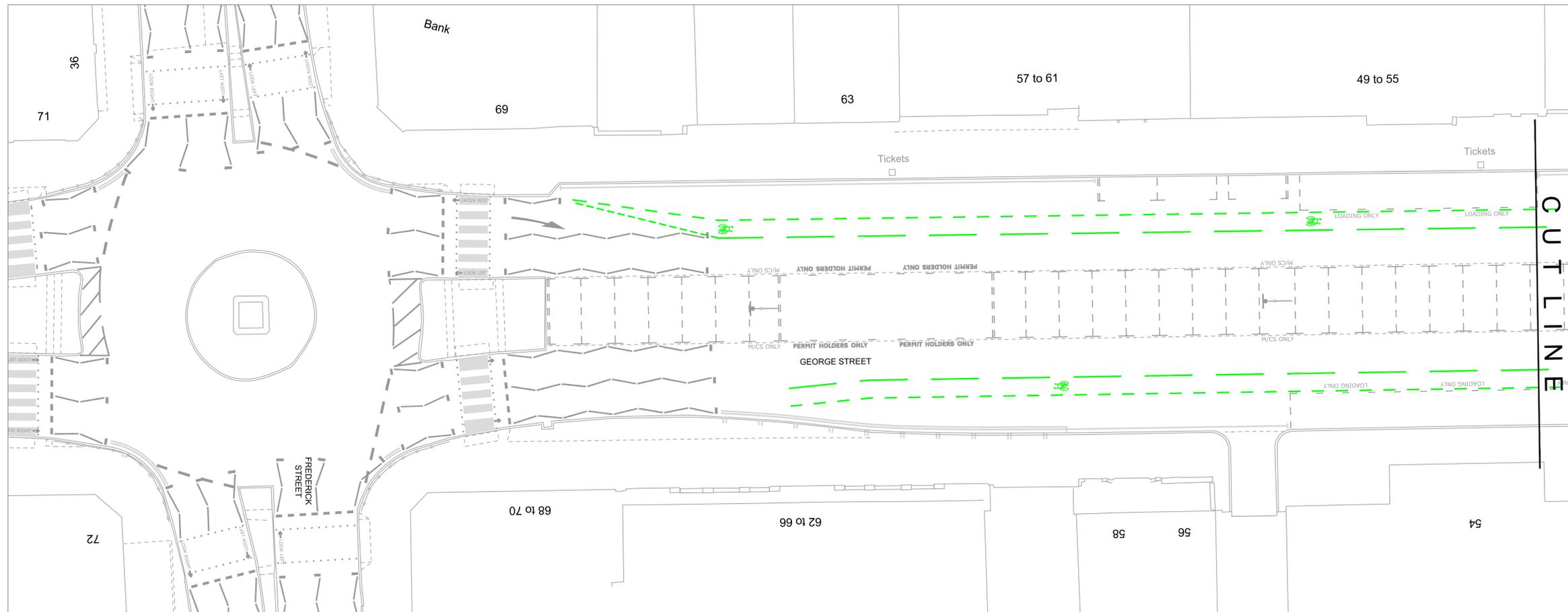
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Drawing 2 of 4

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