

Leadership Advisory Panel

10.00am, Tuesday, 31 March 2020

Edinburgh City Centre Transformation: George Street and First New Town: Project Update

Executive/routine Wards Council Commitments	Routine 11 – City Centre 16, 17, 18, 19, 27, 39
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1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Panel:
 - 1.1.1 notes the continuing work to progress the final agreement terms with Sustrans Scotland;
 - 1.1.2 notes that the Council is currently procuring the required technical design support enabling the next stage of design to be expedited;
 - 1.1.3 notes that a detailed project delivery plan for the remainder of the project will be reported to Transport and Environment Committee at the earliest possible opportunity; and
 - 1.1.4 the findings and outcomes of the next series of project consultation and engagement will consequently inform a production of the final design recommendation. This will form the basis of a report to Transport and Environment Committee.

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Edinburgh City Centre Transformation: George Street and First New Town: Project Update

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Following formal notification that the Council was awarded multi-year funding from Sustrans Scotland for the George Street and First New Town (GNT) project, this report updates the Panel on the development of the project and notifies the Panel of the preparatory works underway and next steps required to progress GNT as a capital funded project.

3. Background

- 3.1 Edinburgh is a leading global capital city with world-renowned quality. The First New Town, of which George Street forms its core, carries significant and unique value, and as a legacy, has exerted a major influence on the development of urban architecture and town planning throughout Europe. The George Street of today retains a high degree of authenticity and is conversed through UNESCO World Heritage Site status.
- 3.2 George Street is a hive of activity and a place to work, visit and live. It bequeaths status as arguably the city's premier shopping street and supports a substantial high-quality hospitality offer. The area also serves as a prime location for business and plays a considerable role in Edinburgh's economic vibrancy.
- 3.3 Although of exceptional architectural quality, many of the city's New Town streets and special places are too often dominated by flowing traffic and vehicular parking. A series of people focused and placemaking studies (including Gehl Architects – Public Spaces Public Life Study) commissioned by the Council recognised Edinburgh cannot be complacent if it is to protect and improve the special quality of the city centre.
- 3.4 In response, the Council during 2014 and 2015 trialled new layout and operating arrangements on George Street to strengthen appeal as a civic space and promote economic benefit. Independently run surveys were conducted throughout the trial period, and evidenced strong public appetite for long term operational change and improvement to the street. Subsequent to the trial, initial design principles were

developed for George Street with the input of local stakeholders. These were approved at [Transport and Environment Committee in June 2016](#), and form the basis of current design development work.

- 3.5 As reported to [Transport and Environment Committee in October 2017](#), Committee agreed to the development of a 'blueprint' layout for the GNT area. Consequently, multi-disciplinary design consultants (WYG Ltd) were commissioned to support the Council in the development of a 'blueprint' capable of withstanding future operational change whilst preserving the street's authentic character.
- 3.6 Edinburgh is commonly ranked as one of the most liveable cities in the world and the city centre is home to around 26,000 residents. Ensuring residents and wider citizens have the opportunity to influence and shape the future of the city is essential to achieving a robust and long-lasting design and operational aspirations for the GNT study area. Following a long programme of consultation, project design objectives and their considerations were developed for GNT area and have since been [published online](#). Structured around these agreed design objectives, further extensive consultation subsequently informed the development of initial core concepts; which elicited broad public support. Outcomes of the consultation and the emerging concept design fundamentals were reported to [Transport and Environment Committee on 16 May 2019](#). Concepts included:
- 3.6.1 Wider pavements on both sides of George Street along the entire street, increasing circulation space and accessibility for all pedestrians. This is primarily achieved by the reduction in space dedicated to motorised vehicles (eg overall reduction in carriageway width and the removal of parking bays). Wider pavements and narrower road space means pedestrian crossing in all directions is improved and is to be further prioritised through supporting measures (specifically, and most importantly, pedestrian arrangements at all junctions are to be safer and more convenient).
 - 3.6.2 Café style spill-out and seating areas adjacent to building-lines, adding street vibrancy and animation, will have appropriate limits ensuring adequate pavement widths are maintained for unimpeded pedestrian movement.
 - 3.6.3 Introduction of 'parklets' (or dwell zones) will include areas of seating, providing much needed opportunities for rest and relaxation in a safe and comfortable street environment.
 - 3.6.4 A two-way cycleway on George Street that connects into wider strategic cycling network, (specifically the committed City Centre West East Link and Meadows to George Street schemes). The design detail of how the two-way cycleway will be segregated from both pedestrian areas and vehicles is to be developed with stakeholders at the next stage of design.
 - 3.6.5 The removal of general 'Pay & Display' parking bays from George Street obtained general support from a wide range of consultees. The principle to reallocate space in favour of non-motorised purposes is already established for the city centre and the Final City Centre Transformation Strategy (CCT),

as agreed at [Transport and Environment Committee on 12 September 2019](#), highlights the removal of on-street parking in the Edinburgh's historic core as necessary, to rebalance for high quality public realm. Furthermore, the approved St James Centre's [Outline Planning Approval](#) report in 2008, noted the significant increase in off-street parking created an opportunity to reduce on-street parking in the surrounding city centre.

- 3.7 At a strategic level, the approved CCT Strategy, unified existing city centre projects, including GNT, into a singular holistic delivery plan. The CCT Strategy identifies key quiet zones in the city centre where people will have priority, with vehicles given access as 'guests'. George Street is identified as one of these areas, where significant public realm improvements and pedestrian priority will be delivered. GNT is one of the earlier programmed projects within the CCT delivery plan, and once implemented, the scheme will make a significant contribution towards realising the vision of transforming the city centre as a revitalised, more vibrant and people focused place.
- 3.8 Furthermore, and more recently, [Transport and Environment Committee on 16 January 2020](#) approved the City Mobility Plan (CMP) - Draft for Consultation. The CMP strategy frames a bold, ambitious and rapid change agenda (underpinned by a target to be net carbon zero by 2030) and sets out a basis for significant tram, bus network and active travel interventions to improve mobility and address key challenges. The strategy will mean car and heavy bus dominated traffic within the city centre will be replaced by walking, cycling infrastructure and lighter, and by smaller cleaner passenger vehicles for those who with mobility constraints would find this approach too challenging. The CMP strategy, out for consultation, aims to ensure that Edinburgh will remain as a leading global city by improving places for people to live, work, visit and enjoy.
- 3.9 Specific CMP proposals target a significant redesign of the bus network by 2025, based on the 'to not through' principle, and by 2030 the city centre is to be largely car free. The next stages of the GNT project will align with CMP consultation findings (along with any subsequent commitments as they emerge) and will explore any opportunities that offer the potential to maximise the GNT area as a people focused place. Any emerging opportunities will be explored alongside significant consultation with stakeholders with updates to Transport and Environment Committee being reported in due course.

4. Main report

- 4.1 In July 2019 the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity announced that George Street would be one of five projects in Scotland to be awarded multi-year funding, through the [Sustrans Places for Everyone programme](#). The award provides funding for the continued development, and subsequent delivery, of the public realm improvements on George Street.

- 4.2 The formal notification that the Council was granted multi-year funding from Sustrans Scotland serves as a significant project milestone and progresses the scheme into a new phase of considerable development.
- 4.3 Furthermore, the newly secured funding critically enables the project to accelerate the next phases of project development and as a result (and in line with good practise) preparatory work is underway to revise and develop more appropriate project governance, management and procurement arrangements; in order to boost production and expedite the project's overall delivery.
- 4.4 The Council and Sustrans Scotland continue to make progress with the final funding arrangements, associated legal terms and overall delivery programme agreements.

Consultancy Procurement Plan

- 4.5 The further development and ultimate delivery of the GNT project cannot be fully resourced in-house by the Council (for both capacity and capability considerations). Therefore, an exercise to competitively procure the necessary technical consultancy support that will assist the Council in developing the next stages of the project is currently underway. The tender evaluation criterion will place an emphasis on quality with additional measures ensuring that best value is also achieved. The Council's Commercial and Procurement Service have indicated that the most appropriate route available in securing the required consultancy support would be via the Scotland Excel Engineering and Technical Consultancy Services Framework Agreement 06-16. This Framework Agreement also ensures that consultancy rates will remain competitive.
- 4.6 The conclusion of the competitive procurement tasks associated with securing this new commission, resulting in the appointment of the preferred consultant, is expected early in the first quarter of the next financial year.

Development of an Operational plan

- 4.7 Once appointed, the new consultant will be commissioned to further develop and subsequently execute, in partnership with and to the satisfaction of the Council and Sustrans Scotland (the client team), a detailed project delivery plan (PDP) for the remainder of the project; including the construction phases. A key outcome of the PDP is to achieve an early promotion of the required statutory consents, and the consequent management of processes associated with securing the necessary powers under which the scheme can be constructed (of which the associated Traffic Regulation and Road Orders are most critical of all).
- 4.8 Key to obtaining the required statutory consents, will be the further development and conclusion of a final design proposal and accompanying Operational Plan. A number of operational changes will be required to support the delivery of the project and to ensure that design outputs are maximised. Building on all relevant work undertaken previously, once appointed, the technical consultant will be required to deliver an exemplar, innovative and creative Operational Plan supporting the interdependent final design proposal. The Operational Plan is a crucial component of the project, as it proposes (in detail) the future arrangements for loading,

servicing and vehicle access in the area. Furthermore, the fundamental principles of an Operational Plan to be explored (delivering pedestrian priority, possibly through set periods of the day where the streets operate without non-essential vehicle access but permitting limited bus services or blue badge access where appropriate) were reported to [Transport and Environment Committee on 16 May 2019](#).

- 4.9 Furthermore, as reported to [Transport and Environment Committee on 5 October 2017](#) the final design must deliver a robust proposal that is not only deliverable and operationally sound in the short term but also capable of responding to wider operational change in the future, through a recalibration, and without triggering a significant redesign requirement.

Public Consultation and Engagement

- 4.10 Ensuring citizens have the opportunity to influence and shape the future of the city centre is essential and substantial consultation and engagement is key in the further development and production of a final design and Operational Plan for GNT. The development of the project (from its inception through its journey of the 18-month trial layout and creation of design principles, design objectives and initial concepts) has been underpinned by its exemplar and extensive approach to consultation and engagement. The 'Places for Everyone' funding award, enables further investment in the consultation and engagement programme as a core part of the next stage of the project.
- 4.11 The next series of consultation and engagement will be brought forward in the context of the existing project, target CCT outcomes and take cognisance of emerging CMP consultation outputs.
- 4.12 The findings and outcomes of the next series of GNT consultation and engagement will form the basis of a report to Transport and Environment Committee and will subsequently inform the production of the final design and Operational Plan recommendation for the area.
- 4.13 A detailed consultation and engagement programme for the remainder of the project is to be agreed with the consultant on their appointment and will be made available to Transport and Environment Committee as part of the PDP.

Project Management and Governance

- 4.14 As highlighted in paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2, the formal notification that the Council was granted multi-year funding progresses the scheme into a new phase of development. This funding critically enables the project to accelerate the next phases of project, and as a result, preparatory work is underway to revise and develop project governance and management arrangements.
- 4.15 Whilst the delivery of the project will be aligned with the wider CCT delivery plan and will be managed and synchronised through the Council's City Centre Programme Delivery Board (which is the coordinating body for all major city centre projects, such as, City Centre West East Link and Meadows to George Street

schemes), the acceleration of programme and sensitivities and level of stakeholder engagement to deliver this significant capital project, now requires a dedicated project management delivery resource within the Council. As a funding partner in the delivery of the GNT project, Sustrans Scotland have similarly allocated dedicated officers from within their organisation to resource their project obligations.

4.16 The Council project management delivery team proposed will comprise of:

4.16.1 a part-time project client (already in post);

4.16.2 a full-time senior project manager (already in post); and

4.16.3 a full-time project manager - with core stakeholder liaison and communications duties (to be secured).

4.17 The preparatory recruitment processes to secure the required project management personnel, specifically the project manager with dedicated stakeholder liaison and communications duties, are underway and being expedited. Council staffing costs associated with the next stages of the project will be 100% funded from the Places for Everyone programme.

Project Design Progress update

4.18 Since receiving the formal notification of the award for funding, the Council (working with Sustrans Scotland) has prioritised preparatory tasks to secure the bolstering of resources to boost productivity during the next stages of the project; which is vital in achieving the overall accelerated delivery of the scheme. However, critical project development workstreams are still being maintained in parallel. These include:

4.18.1 Stakeholder workshops, specifically focused on progressing unresolved issues, (issues which were reported to [May 2019 Transport and Environment Committee](#)) were delivered in July and November 2019. Both workshops were positive and constructive in progressing project design considerations. Outcomes of the workshops included:

4.18.1.1 introduction of Dwell Zones;

4.18.1.2 repurposing of the proposed introduction of Plazas spaces mid-block;

4.18.1.3 options for the James Clerk Maxwell Statue, including relocation; and;

4.18.1.4 co-ordination of Street Greenery, proposal is to contain greenery with designated areas.

4.18.2 Further consideration will be given to each of above elements, each with input from appropriate stakeholders who may be affected, during the next stages of the project. A summary of the stakeholder workshops is appended to this report.

4.18.3 A Heritage Statement has been developed for the GNT design area and establishes a baseline description of the areas heritage 'assets' and less

tangible elements that, together, contribute to First New Town's recognised 'Outstanding Universal Value' (OUV). The full version of the Heritage Statement was made available [online](#) and has been widely circulated amongst stakeholder groups. Furthermore, the Statement will underpin a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) process and ensure a full understanding of any potential impacts on the area's OUV and identify how any potential impacts might be mitigated or managed. The HIA is to be developed during the next stage of the project.

- 4.18.4 Business and resident engagement sessions were undertaken with support from Essential Edinburgh (EE) and George Street Association (GSA). Invites were issued on an area-wide basis (including Hanover Street, Frederick Street, Castle Street, Rose Street, Rose Street Lanes and Thistle Street) and the sessions took place over a six-week period between October and November 2019. Structured 'deep dive' sessions updated businesses and residents on the proposed design concepts, discussing the operational elements (such as parking, servicing and loading) and how this may impact their daily life, business and access. A collective picture of parking/loading/servicing requirements has been gathered and subsequently helped shape an emerging Operational Statement of the area. Highlight findings of the business and resident sessions, are appended to this report, and include:
- 4.18.4.1 opinions from disparate types of businesses were overwhelmingly positive and feedback was consistent when discussing the rejuvenation of the street;
 - 4.18.4.2 more analysis is required with regards to loading provisions, particularly any part-time loading bays situated on the carriageway (south side of the street only);
 - 4.18.4.3 any servicing window will need to consider businesses that do not open until 10am;
 - 4.18.4.4 notes that a pressure on loading facilities during the late morning period may occur; and
 - 4.18.4.5 consideration should be given to the inclusion of any servicing and loading restrictions covering the entire First New Town area to avoid knock-on impacts and increased usage in neighbouring streets.
- 4.18.5 The Draft Operational Statement for GNT (appended to this report) establishes existing baseline conditions and provides a description of current servicing, loading and operational patterns. Once completed, the Final Operational Statement will assist in assessing potential operational and access impacts and further work will identify how any potential impacts might be mitigated or managed. The Operational Statement (and subsequent operational impact assessment to be undertaken) will underpin

the development and conclusion of the final Operational Plan during the next stage of the project.

Awards

- 4.19 The GNT project has been nominated for two national awards.
 - 4.19.1 In June 2019, at the Association for Consultancy and Engineering national awards, the George Street project successfully won the first-place award in the Strategic Planning and Placemaking Champion category.
 - 4.19.2 In October 2019, at the Healthy Streets national awards (where projects are selected for placing people at the centre of decisions on street design, access, active travel choices, safety, improved air quality and liveability) the George Street project was awarded first-place in the Healthy Streets Proposal of the Year category.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The immediate next steps of the GNT project is to complete the competitive procurement process securing the necessary technical consultancy support that enables the next stages of design and development to commence as soon as feasibility achievable. Progress on the procurement exercise will be reported to the next meeting of Transport and Environment Committee.
- 5.2 Establish a fully dedicated Council project management and delivery team as previously outlined in paragraph 4.16.
- 5.3 On the appointment of the technical consultants, and in partnership with the client team, develop and agree a detailed project delivery plan (PDP) as outlined in paragraph 4.7. The PDP will be reported to Transport and Environment Committee at the earliest opportunity.
- 5.4 A key action of the PDP will be the execution of further consultation and engagement. An important component of the consultation and engagement programme is to raise the public profile of the scheme through a marketing strategy (which will include the development of the project's branding and webpage similar to the dedicated webpage for Meadows to George Street scheme in terms of style, function and context).
- 5.5 Early promotion of the required statutory consents (and the consequent management of the associated process). Most critical of which are Traffic Regulation and Redetermination Orders which provide the necessary powers to construct the final scheme (promotion of these Orders is expected in January 2021).
- 5.6 A high level notional project timeline for the GNT project is appended to this report. An early task for the incoming technical consultant, will be to undertake a full and detailed review of the programme, with a view of accelerating delivery where possible. The production of a detailed and robust programme, will be developed in

close liaison with Sustrans Scotland and Transport Scotland, and will be reported to Transport and Environment Committee as part of the PDP. The programme will continue to be monitored and regularly refined as more detail emerges, but it is expected that construction would be delivered in several continuous phases. The construction phases will be coordinated with the delivery of adjacent projects and is being managed and synchronized through the City Centre Programme Delivery Board.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The GNT project will make a strong early contribution to the way the First New Town function and represents a significant and positive capital investment in the city during a period of rapid population expansion and change.
- 6.2 George Street footways and carriageways are currently in a generally poor condition and somewhat distract from the special quality of the surrounding built environment. Therefore, the implementation of the capital funded scheme, will not only address the current unattractive condition of the streetscape but it will also reduce the short and medium term burden on Council budgets associated with maintaining road infrastructure assets in the design area.
- 6.3 As reported to [Transport and Environment Committee on 12 September 2019](#), the George Street and First New Town Design Project will receive a multi-year funding of up to £20 million through Sustrans Scotland Places for Everyone programme; with 100% of the design and preconstruction costs being funded by the programme.
- 6.4 It is anticipated that multi-disciplinary consultancy fees for this next stage of the project will total c£500K (excluding VAT) and will be 100% funded from the Sustrans Scotland Places for Everyone programme. The exact cost of consultancy fees associated with the delivery of the next stage will be confirmed after the competitive tender process has concluded, with the final tender value being reported to Finance and Resources Committee in due course.
- 6.5 However, after this immediate next stage of the project (Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Stage 3 - Developed Design), further consultancy support will be necessary for the completion of RIBA Stage 4 (Technical Design). Consultancy support for RIBA Stage 4 could total a further cost in the region of £450K. The project team, in liaison with Commercial and Procurement Service, will consider opportunities to include the delivery of RIBA Stage 4 as an option within the Stage 3 consultancy contract. RIBA Stage 4 will also be 100% funded from the Places for Everyone programme.
- 6.6 The required consultancy support will be secured through the Scotland Excel Engineering and Technical Consultancy Services Framework Agreement 06-16, which runs from 18 March 2017 to 17 March 2021. This Framework Agreement has been adopted by the City of Edinburgh Council in 2017 (CT2216). This Framework Agreement also ensures that consultancy rates remain competitive.

- 6.7 On completion of the competitive tender processes, a report to Finance and Resources Committee, as required by Council Standing Orders, will seek approval to appoint the preferred bidder.
- 6.8 Council staff costs associated with the project management team dedicated to the GNT project will be 100% funded from the Sustrans Scotland Places for Everyone programme (as agreed in principle with Sustrans Scotland and to be confirmed through the terms of the final Legal Agreement currently being developed).

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 The input of stakeholders, including local residents and groups, businesses, interest groups, people with protected characteristics and the general public, has been gathered at each stage of the development of the project. The project seeks to ensure that the First New Town streets maximise their exceptionally high quality and are accessible to all.
- 7.2 The principle of reallocating space away from cars to create more pedestrian space, allows for more versatile, accessible, welcoming and prioritised walking environments.
- 7.3 This reallocation of space will also provide an opportunity to introduce seating, resting and relaxation places within a safe and accessible street environment.
- 7.4 The current high quality public realm concepts proposed are entirely consistent with the core principles of the CCT strategy. The ambition of the project will not only make George Street safer, more accessible and welcoming for pedestrians, it will also create an attractive place for business and residents to operate and live in.
- 7.5 An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process is underway (and will be maintained throughout the design process) and a copy is available [online](#). This identifies a majority of positive impacts for people with protected characteristics, and notes where some potential negative impacts require further detailed development.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 [George Street and First New Town Project Update](#) – Business Bulletin to 11 October 2019 Transport and Environment Committee.
- 8.2 [George Street and First New Town Project Update](#) - Business Bulletin to 12 September 2019 Transport and Environment Committee.
- 8.3 [George Street and First New Town – Consultation and Design Development Update](#) Report to 16 May 2019 Transport and Environment Committee
- 8.4 [George Street and First New Town Design Project Update](#) Report to 5 October 2017 Transport and Environment Committee.
- 8.5 [George Street Experimental Traffic Regulation Order, Concluding Report and Design Principles](#) report to 7 June 2016 Transport and Environment Committee.

8.6 [Project Objectives and Design Considerations.](#)

8.7 [Edinburgh Revisited Public Spaces Public Life Study 2010](#) - Gehl Architects

9. Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1 – Business Session Summary

9.2 Appendix 2 – Workshops Executive Summary

9.3 Appendix 3 – Draft Operational Statement

9.4 Appendix 4 – Notational Project Timeline

George Street and First New Town

Business and Resident Consultation Summary

1. Introduction

The led project consultant, WYG Ltd, undertook a series of business and resident engagement sessions across October and November of 2019 in support of the development and refinement of the George Street and First New Town (GNT) Public Realm Design study.

The engagement sessions were undertaken in small groups with a one-to-one interview style. These were held at the McRoberts Suite of The Royal Society of Edinburgh building on George Street. The event was advertised via an invitation flyer distributed to local business and residents and a number of emails bulletins issued by Essential Edinburgh (EE) and The George Street Association (GSA) giving details of the project, scheduling information and a contact email address. Flyers were delivered to each residence and business within the area by CEC staff, WYG Ltd, Sustrans Scotland and members of GSA. Due to an initially poor uptake in RSVPs received, it was agreed to undertake a second more focused leaflet distribution to support event attendance. A further review of RSVPs resulted in CEC also issuing a letter invitation to local businesses not yet signed up with support via emails also issued from GSA and EE to their respective members.

The overall event's purpose was to assist in refining the emerging Operational Statement which supports the development of the George Street redesign by introducing businesses and residents to the proposed design and holding a facilitated discussion on operational elements such as parking, servicing and loading and how this may impact their business and/or general access.

The proposed consultation approach was intended to provide a 'deep dive' with considerable effort made to provide numerous opportunities with the design team to meet face to face with businesses and discuss their concerns and clarify any misconceptions surrounding the design or its intended operation.

As part of the conversation business representatives were asked to discuss their typical daily operation and servicing requirements such as delivery frequency and scheduling. This feedback and collective picture of parking/loading/servicing requirements is to be used to shape future design measures such as the size, number and duration of loading restrictions and the detail of proposed Traffic Regulation Orders which will determine loading, waiting and access restrictions for the area. The above elements require much further consideration at the next stages of project.

2. Methodology and Scheduling

The engagement sessions were conducted in an informal manner using an open discussion style with consultees who had responded to the flyer or email invitation after arranging to attend their preferred time slot with WYG. It is noted that despite adopting a RSVP booking approach, some sessions were attended by consultees who had not provided prior notification, and mop-up sessions were also conducted for those who missed or were not available to make any of the proposed slots below.

The session timetable was developed to cater for each street within the study area, this supported three full days of consultation available for businesses on the east and west of George Street and two days associated with business on Rose Street, Hanover Street and Other Streets (Castle Street, Frederick Street, Thistle Street, Hill Street and Young Street). The session timetable is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Session Timetable (as distributed in GNT Flyer 7th-18th October 2019)

GEORGE STREET {EAST}				
(Fredrick Street Junction to St Andrew Square Junction)				
DATE	TIME			
Monday 21st October	9:00-10:30	11:00-12:30	13:00-14:30	15:00-16:30
Tuesday 5th November	9:00-10:30	11:00-12:30	13:00-14:30	15:00-16:30
Wednesday 13th November	9:00-10:30	11:00-12:30	13:00-14:30	15:00-16:30
GEORGE STREET {WEST}				
(Charlotte Square Junction to Fredrick Street Junction)				
DATE	TIME			
Tuesday 22nd October	9:00-10:30	11:00-12:30	13:00-14:30	15:00-16:30
Monday 28th October	9:00-10:30	11:00-12:30	13:00-14:30	15:00-16:30
Wednesday 6th November	9:00-10:30	11:00-12:30	13:00-14:30	15:00-16:30
ROSE STREET				
DATE	TIME			
Tuesday 29th October	9:00-10:30	11:00-12:30	13:00-14:30	15:00-16:30
Monday 4th November	9:00-10:30	11:00-12:30	13:00-14:30	15:00-16:30
HANOVER STREET				
(Links with the Meadows to George Street Streets for People Project)				
DATE	TIME			
Wednesday 23rd October	9:00-10:30	11:00-12:30	13:00-14:30	15:00-16:30
Monday 11th November	9:00-10:30	11:00-12:30	13:00-14:30	15:00-16:30
ALL OTHER STREETS				
(Castle Street, Frederick Street, Thistle Street, Young Street)				
DATE	TIME			
Wednesday 30th October	9:00-10:30	11:00-12:30	13:00-14:30	15:00-16:30
Tuesday 12th November	9:00-10:30	11:00-12:30	13:00-14:30	15:00-16:30

Residents and Business were coordinated to form small groups (no more than 6 people) per session. Often members of EE and GSA arranged to attend the same session giving some commonality to the discussions. During each session, 2 members of the WYG team were present to give an overview of the design and discuss proposed future operations. Each session lasted between 1 and 2 hours.

Whilst the format of the events was similar for each session, the scope of discussion varied significantly, this allowed greater focus on the elements of the design that were specifically relevant to each business or resident.

Following low initial attendance for the first three days of consultation, a letter was issued by CEC to all businesses and residents to advise them of the remaining event and opportunity to meet. To maximise the number of sessions available, the session timetable for the remaining events was modified as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 – Revised Session Timetable (as distributed in CEC Letter 25th October 2019)

Date	Session 1 9:00 – 10:00	Session 2 13:00 – 14:30	Session 3 15:00 – 16:30
Mon 4 Nov 2019	Spaces Available	Spaces Available	Spaces Available
Tues 5 Nov 2019	Spaces Available		
Wed 6 Nov 2019	Spaces Available	Spaces Available	Spaces Available
Mon 11 Nov 2019	Spaces Available	Spaces Available	Spaces Available
Tues 12 Nov 2019		Spaces Available	Spaces Available
Wed 13 Nov 2019			Spaces Available

Initially 1,500 invitation flyers were distributed across the study area between 7 to 11 of October 2019, these were distributed to all streets within the study area. WYG in communication with members of CEC maintained a detailed area-based register of businesses and residences of the First New Town Area. This was updated as the flyer-drop took place.

A further 1,000 flyers were distributed between 18 to 25 of October 2019. This also included redistributing flyers to a number of key business places on George Street and Hanover Street.

A total of 83 RSVPs was received, with an expected attendance of 90 people across all sessions. 62 people attended, with 28 (31%) failing to attend. In these instances, email updates were sent to these businesses to inform them of the remaining sessions to provide an opportunity to confirm an alternative session and a number of further unscheduled sessions did take place.

Across all sessions a total of 39 separate businesses and 4 residents met to discuss the design. To understand each attendees perspective on the project, each organisation or resident was categorised into Tables 1 and 2 as below. From Tables 1 and 2 it can be seen that the sessions were primarily attended by office-based businesses and retailers predominantly from George Street.

Table 1: Business Locations

George Street	23
Hanover Street	2
Frederick Street	3
Rose Street	5
Others (Castle Street, Thistle Street, Hill Street)	10

Table 2: Business Use

Office based Business	11
Events based Business (including Church)	6
Retailer	16
Food & Beverage	6
Residents	4

3. Consultation Feedback

Consultation feedback on the proposed design gathered for all consultee groups and collated to assess the common points of agreement, conflict or suggestions for improvement within the scheme has been summarised into key point below;

General Comments

- Across the sessions, around 50% of consultees had no prior knowledge of the George Street and First New Town Design or the overarching City Centre Transformation Study.
- Of those consultees who were aware of the GNT scheme knowledge of the design and associated key elements was generally limited, other than those who are members off organisations such as Essential Edinburgh (EE) or the George Street Association (GSA).
- Based on the current design, consultee opinions were overwhelmingly positive when discussing the potential to rejuvenate the street although there were concerns relating to the construction period and likely disruption.
- Some felt the pressure of the St James Centre Development on their business and thought that some form of change in the types of business operating on George Street would be an inevitable result.

Vehicle Access

- The potential for a ban on general traffic access during peak pedestrian times was frequently discussed and often raised by consultees as something to implement going forward. There were mixed opinions on the feasibility of this restriction. Most understood that traffic on George Street is largely attributed to the levels of parking available, by removing parking, background traffic levels would likely reduce hence some believed that this remove the necessity for a ban on general traffic.
- Some consultees requested full pedestrianisation of the street, suggesting allowing only buses, loading vehicles and blue badge holders to turn from side streets into George Street.
- Coherence of signs and how restrictions would be managed was a concern for some consultees, they understood that the design aimed to be as cohesive with the environment as possible.

- Concerns were raised by residents and businesses of the streets/lanes north of George Street that traffic flows could increase within these streets due to the shift in focus of general parking and any access/loading restrictions on George Street.

Parking

- The vast majority of consultees were supportive of the removal of general parking. They thought it was a way to make the space more attractive, tackle air quality issues and give more space to pedestrians.
- Food and beverage business noted that the availability of parking is becoming less important due to drink/drive legislation and the desire to promote non car-based travel as alcohol sales are an important margin area.
- There was a general feeling that the existing charging/enforcement regime does not currently provide a sufficient barrier to parking inappropriately and obtaining a parking ticket.
- Most were open to the idea of changing pay and display times, the possibility of 7-day charging and providing shared use parking within the regime. Most thought 2 hours maximum stay would be appropriate, some boutique retail owners and patrons of places of worship (includes churches on George Street) felt a minimum of 3 hours was required to support their operation.
- Most business owners and operators were concerned about the level of provision elsewhere in the First New Town Area and the potential ramifications of the 1,800 proposed spaces of the new St James Centre opening 2020. Some thought the removal of parking would detract people from shopping on the street particularly during winter months.
- Some consultees were concerned about the accessibility of the area, in particular business patrons may not want to park in areas like Queen Street and beyond to then walk uphill for from their car to shop or eat etc.
- Consultees often asked for permitting systems to be reconsidered in future. Most felt there is an excessive presence of trader's vehicles in the area, although some felt that this was essential to allow refurbishment of buildings and queried how this activity would be managed in future.
- Residents noted that evening parking and Sunday parking is an issue, vehicles often park inappropriately in resident spaces and in ways which contravene the current restrictions. Some residents suggested increasing Pay and Display times to around 07:00-07:30pm in future to accommodate residents returning in the evening.
- Most consultees were in favour of including more blue-badge parking within the design particularly St Andrew's and St George's West church who have previously asked for additional blue badge provision in the vicinity of the church.
- Residents noted that should the First New Town move towards more residential based development whether changes to the wider parking zones should be considered with one resident noting that shared use bays were unattractive due to high turnover of bays and potential damage to resident vehicles.

Loading and Servicing

General

- The majority of businesses consulted have little or no control on their loading and servicing activities and are reliant on 3rd party logistics or key supplier (brewery/major food distributor). There is a mix of vehicle types although generally deliveries are provided through medium sized (7.5t vehicles) although some

business's (are served by larger HGV's) with waste collection also being undertaken by larger vehicles.

- The majority of businesses consulted accept the concept of managed servicing and deliveries through loading windows as being beneficial to the environment of the city centre although are particularly concerned about additional costs that may be levied on their business by 3rd party logistics or key suppliers.
- There was generally no pattern associated with the timings of deliveries although some businesses are restricted by business hours (after 10am).
- There are concerns that the introduction of loading windows may result in capacity constraints on the proposed loading areas which could lead to inappropriate loading activity and whether how this would be managed/enforced.
- There are concerns that the introduction of loading windows may result in additional vehicle movements relating to servicing activity in the Rose St / Hill St lanes and these areas should be considered in any restrictions.
- There was a concern that the on-carriageway part-time bays proposal (serving the south side of the street) would have limited use for business deliveries due to time restrictions.
- From the consultees which attended, it is clear that each business in the area has unique requirements with the frequency and size of vehicle used varying significantly from business to business.
- Most business operators were in favour of the idea of scheduled/managed servicing and deliveries and other methods to reduce the number of large vehicles regularly operating in the area particularly in relation to the number of competing waste collection operators.
- Only one example of business coordination in terms of loading and servicing was noted, businesses around the junction of Castle Street/George Street are already arranging communal waste collection (glass and mixed recyclables etc).

Retail

- In relation to retail, business the majority of operators are served by 3rd party logistics providers with a mixture of front and rear servicing depending on the availability of access. There are a number of retailers where front servicing is the only viable option due to a lack of rear access and there is no distinct pattern of access across the project area.
- Two George Street retail businesses confirmed that loading activity is undertaken overnight by the companies own vehicles. It is likely that this pattern is repeated by other national retailers on the street who do not rely on 3rd party logistics providers.
- There was an understanding that due to the cycleway, on-street loading along the southern kerb line would need to be heavily restricted. There was limited attendance by businesses on the south-side of George Street that would be directly impacted by these bays. The proposed operation of these bays would impact deliveries after 10am although not overnight. Smaller deliveries could be serviced from the northern carriageway.
- In terms of delivery frequency, larger national/chain retailers tend to rely on a single delivery per week although this rises during peak periods. Smaller retailers are reliant on more frequent ad-hoc daily deliveries from 3rd party logistics providers.
- A number of retailers also operate a click-and-collect or online delivery service which rely on 3rd party logistics pick-up and drop-off and this forms a key part of their business.

- Of the retailers served by 3rd party logistics providers, there seemed to be little control over the time of deliveries and a concern regarding the cost implications associated with a servicing window. It was explained that large 3rd party logistics providers would easily adapt to servicing windows through planning of vehicle allocations and delivery schedules.
- Businesses that trade in high value items were also concerned about the positioning of loading facilities relative to their business.
- Specific concerns were raised in relation to the lack of loading bays on Hanover Street and whether specific loading provision can be made on Rose Street.

Food and Beverage

- Food and beverage businesses also varied in the frequency and timing of deliveries with larger businesses again relying on lower frequency larger deliveries with smaller businesses more reliant on daily deliveries from smaller suppliers.
- A number of businesses are reliant on small specialist suppliers (such as fish deliveries) of which they have little control on arrival due to the distance from the supplier.
- Food and beverage businesses are more likely to take servicing from the rear than other types of retail although they are also more likely to receive deliveries in the late morning and would be impacted by a daytime servicing restriction due to the need to provide staff in the morning period.

Other

- Businesses that accommodate events and conferences were concerned about how restrictions would impact on specific delivery activities such as hot food lunchtime deliveries.
- Offices are generally serviced by 3rd party couriers a varying frequencies and times of day
- There were concerns regarding loading and servicing associated with emergency building maintenance and how this would be impacted by a servicing window.
- A specific query was raised on Rose Street by a logistics company, who rely on all day access to Rose Street lane for ongoing deliveries throughout the day.
- A specific query was raised by St Andrew's and St George's West Church regarding the need for parking for funeral/wedding parties with 4-6 vehicles and the need to park these outside the church for periods around 1 hour.

Events

- Most working in events, Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh Book Festival etc accepted the design provided a restriction to the available space for events. The need to provide emergency access would constrain this further although the potential use of the cycleway for dual emergency access should be considered.
- The Book Festival felt they could adjust their operation to suit the design although Assembly Festival raised concerns that the size of area would restrict operations to a smaller scale focussed on food and beverage offering.
- Assembly Festival queried whether it would be feasible to move the cycleway to the northern carriageway during the Fringe in order to prevent conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists.
- The Book Festival asked for embedded facilities to be considered within the next stage of the design. They noted that external power supplies are one of the largest

spatial constraints for their operation and they have undertaken a detailed appraisal of facilities requirements which could be shared.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 Due to the limited attendance by retail/food and beverage businesses on the south side of George Street (3) and usage of front loading it is unclear whether the proposed on-street bays will adequately serve the needs of business particularly those with larger deliveries. Based on the issues associated with businesses located on the south side of the street, further engagement is required in this area to fully understand business need. Consideration should also be given to the operational times of loading bays and whether there may be flexibility to extend any proposed operational period.
- 4.2 It is likely that any servicing window will need to take account of business's that currently do not open until 10am (It is unclear how many businesses this includes within the First New Town area) and the likely pressure on loading facilities during the late morning period. Consideration should be given to the available capacity of loading bays and timing of any servicing window to accommodate this.
- 4.3 The timing of any servicing window will also need to take account of the late afternoon courier pick-up activity that has been raised during previously consultations.
- 4.4 Further consideration should be given to the availability of servicing facilities on Hanover Street / adjacent sections of Rose Street once the Meadows to George Street cycle design has been finalised.
- 4.5 Consideration should be given to the inclusion of any servicing and loading restrictions covering the full First New Town area to avoid knock-on impacts and increased usage of the lanes for loading/servicing activity.
- 4.6 Specific consideration is required in relation to the essential operational needs of St Andrew's and St George's West Church in order to accommodate funerals.
- 4.7 Considerable further engagement with local stakeholders, both residents and businesses, will form as a core part of the next stages of the project.

George Street and First New Town – Stakeholder Workshops

Executive Summary

1. Stakeholder Workshops

- 1.1 Stakeholder workshops, specifically focused on progressing unresolved design concept issues, were delivered in July and November 2019. Attendees at the workshops were invited from a broad range of bodies and interested parties including Edinburgh World Heritage, New Town and Broughton Community Council and the Royal Society of Edinburgh. Both workshops were delivered and led by the project consultants (WYG Ltd and LDA Design) and were positive and constructive in progressing project design considerations.
- 1.2 A range of key project concept and principles were discussed at the workshops which included:
- introduction of Dwell Zones;
 - repurposing of the proposed introduction of Plazas spaces mid-block;
 - options for the James Clerk Maxwell Statue, including relocation; and
 - coordination of Street Greenery.
- 1.3 The first Workshop, held on 25 July 2019 at the City Chambers, was delivered and led by the project consultant (WYG Ltd). A broad range of stakeholders were in attendance including:-
- Spokes
 - Living Streets
 - Historic Environment Scotland
 - Edinburgh World Heritage Trust
 - The Cockburn Association
 - New Town and Broughton Community Council
 - Essential Edinburgh
 - Edinburgh Archaeological Association
 - Heriot Watt University
 - Police Scotland
 - Royal Society of Edinburgh
 - George Street Association
 - Landscape Institute Scotland
 - Sustrans

- 1.4 The main purpose of the session was to present and debate a range of options and concepts relating to key project design challenges. Each topic matter was presented and introduced by the consultants and followed by a facilitated discussion to elicit constructive feedback from the broad range of attendees.
- 1.5 The facilitated discussion and feedback gathered at the first workshop helped progress and refine options on each topic matter presented. The outputs of the first workshop, and the resulting sifting and refinement of options, helped inform the basis of a follow-up and second Workshop held at the City Chambers on 7 November 2019.
- 1.6 This second Workshop was again led by the project consultants (WYG Ltd and LDA design).
- 1.7 For consistency purposes, the same stakeholders that attended the first workshop were re-invited to the second session and a high turnout rate was similarly achieved.
- 1.8 The second workshop followed a similar format to the first, enabling the project design team to present a refinement of the main design issues from the initial workshop. This stimulated deeper and more focused debate and discussion, and elicited informed feedback on each matter presented.
- 1.9 The outcomes of the two workshops delivered will help inform the further development work to be undertaken during the next stages of the project (to commence once the new project consultant has been appointed – in Spring 2020) and will ultimately assist in the production of a final design layout for George Street.
- 1.10 Minutes from both workshops have been circulated to attendees.
- 1.11 A summary of the key decisions and considerations made in respect of the Workshops are highlighted below;

General Street Block Design

- General discussion around the level of vehicle use expected on George Street following the implementation of the new design. Multiple factors will see vehicle volumes drop (such as; vehicles that currently circulate looking for Pay and Display parking on George Street will disappear as result of a much reduced parking offer, and on a city level, delivery of City Centre Transformation Strategy will bring forward rapid change to the way people access and move around the city centre in a more sustainable way, which is likely to deliver car free streets and restriction on general traffic where appropriate).
- Loading restrictions will be established and operating proposals for loading, servicing and access is currently being developed through structured “deep dive” sessions with local business and residents delivered by WYG Ltd with support from the George Street Association and Essential Edinburgh.
- A review of events and their function within the Street will be undertaken as it is not possible to curate a design that could provide total flexibility and accommodate all scale of events.

- Future decision required on scale of public events on the street and operation of these.
- The introduction of proposed Plaza spaces mid-block providing a focal point outside key buildings, such as the Assembly Rooms, did not receive wide support, and therefore, the repurposing or the entire removal of the Plaza concept is to be reviewed during the next stages of the project.
- Waste management strategy for the street, exploring technologies and opportunities such as single suppliers, will be considered and reviewed in consultation with local businesses/residents to see if they are appropriate for George Street.

Cycleway Segregation

- The rationale behind the cycling proposition as currently developed was presented along with the various types of segregation on offer. Exact design details, including vertical segregation, will be considered and explored further during detailed design stages.
- Segregated cycleway will be located on the south side of the street, with dedicated recessed loading bays on the north. Part-time on carriageway loading bays, adjacent to the cycleway (with appropriate segregation and support measures to be determined during the detailed design stages to follow) are being considered to meet service demands of business located on the south side of the street.
- Final decisions on loading bay locations will form part of a loading restrictions review and will be further informed by the business and resident deep dive sessions.
- The principle that there will be segregation between the cycleway and the footway was agreed. Appropriate levels of segregation and the detail in which it will be achieved is to be investigated further as part of the next stages of the project but ultimately the segregation will align with Edinburgh Street Design Guidance and aim to be consistent with neighbouring city centre cycling schemes.
- Given the UNESCO status and special historic qualities and importance of George Street, materials proposed on the footway should be similar in pallet to the cycleway, possibly the same material with different sizes being used to differentiate between the areas.

Counter Terrorism Measures

- Government guidance requires the assessment of appropriate measures to protect the public in busy and/or high risk city centre public spaces. The assessment determining whether there will be a requirement for hostile vehicle measures will form part of the next stages of the project and if measures are deemed to be required, they will be an integral element of the redesign (potentially in a future proofing form) rather than being added as an afterthought later on in the process.
- Any permanent static measures will compliment and be sculpturally sympathetic to the New Town neoclassical style e.g. square not circular and it was agreed that every effort should be made to minimise any required hostile vehicle measure impacting on the overall character of the street.

- Consensus is to provide measures within the design to restrict entry to each block individually, with the restriction measures located at the ends of each block (acting as a plug) rather than providing measures throughout the entire length of the four blocks, lining each footway adjacent to carriageway.

Junction Layout

- The three central junctions on George Street have to accommodate a selection of statues, public transport, general traffic, pedestrians and cyclists. However, each junction has differing dynamics. This means that different solutions for each junction to reflect a change in demands and operational requirements could be appropriate i.e. Hanover Street is very different in function to Castle Street.
- The proposal to potentially convert Frederick Street junction to offer enhancements to cycling and pedestrian facilities was discussed. Further technical evaluation of this junction in detail is required.
- Ensure that CCWEL and Meadows to George Street schemes will be fully integrated within the final agreed junction design.

Street Greening

- Dwell zones will be introduced at key points on each block and will each measure approximately 20 metres long x 4 metres wide and they are only proposed to be introduced where appropriate.
- The form of the zones proposed mirror the symmetry of the street.
- Group stressed that maintenance is important. For the dwell zones to be welcoming, attractive and well used, they must be pristine at all times.
- The zones are considered individually in each block to reflect the differing dynamic with each section of the street, but a rhythmic pattern reference between across blocks should be further considered.
- Size/scale/function/form and content of dwell zones was generally agreed within the group, however, appropriate levels and types of greenery and materials to be used within each dwell zone is to be investigated further.
- Consideration should also be given to the design of the dwell zones and how the design could be made less generic and more GNT specific.
- The proposal to introduce some greenery on the south side of the street, offering increased symmetry, was in response to comments made at the July workshop and will be further developed and consulted during the next stages.

James Clerk Maxwell Statue

- A range of options were presented in respect of the evaluation of the statue's location (to support the design concept) and elicited broad consensus for a proposal to move the statue to a position towards St Andrew Square (adjacent to gardens entrance) yet retaining its strong anchor with George Street.
- The Royal Society of Edinburgh (who commissioned the statue) are supportive of the overall concept and content with the proposal to relocate the statue to a new position closer to St Andrew Square, although they queried who would be liable for the costs associated with any move. CEC confirmed that all costs related to a potential repositioning would be covered by the project.

- There was general acceptability of the relocation proposal to strengthen symmetry and address an inconsistency issue between the position of this statue and its relationship with the other three statues on George Street (which can be viewed from the Old Town and form part of the iconic skyline). In addition, the design team will investigate the statue's orientation and interface with the gardens as part of the proposed relocation and continue to work extremely closely with the RSE, and others as appropriate, on this matter.
- There was some concern over the location of the cycle lane at St Andrews Square and an interface with the stepped entrance to the gardens, both will be reviewed during the next stages of the project.

2. Stakeholder Workshops and Consultation - Next steps

- 2.1 Ensuring citizens have the opportunity to influence and shape the future of the city centre is essential and therefore further substantial consultation and engagement is key in the development and production of a final design for George Street.
- 2.2 These two workshops have been key in moving forward design considerations. However, before final design decisions can be made, much further development and engagement is still required. Continued debate and consideration in respect of the above key elements, with input from appropriate stakeholders, will be a core part of the next stages of the project.
- 2.3 A detailed consultation and engagement programme for the remainder of the project is to be agreed with the new consultant on their appointment, but it is likely to include, at the very least, a third Workshop building on the feedback and outputs of the previous two workshops. This third workshop will also provide the opportunity to discuss with key stakeholder any new design matters and challenges.
- 2.4 The next series of consultation and engagement will also be brought forward in the context of the existing project, target City Centre Transformation outcomes and take cognisance of new and emerging local/national policies and strategies, including those related to the Climate Emergency and the Council's City Mobility Plan (and other relevant Council consultation outcomes).



The City of Edinburgh Council

George Street and First New Town, Edinburgh

Operational Statement

09th September 2019

Prepared on behalf of WYG Environment Planning Transport Limited.



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Contents

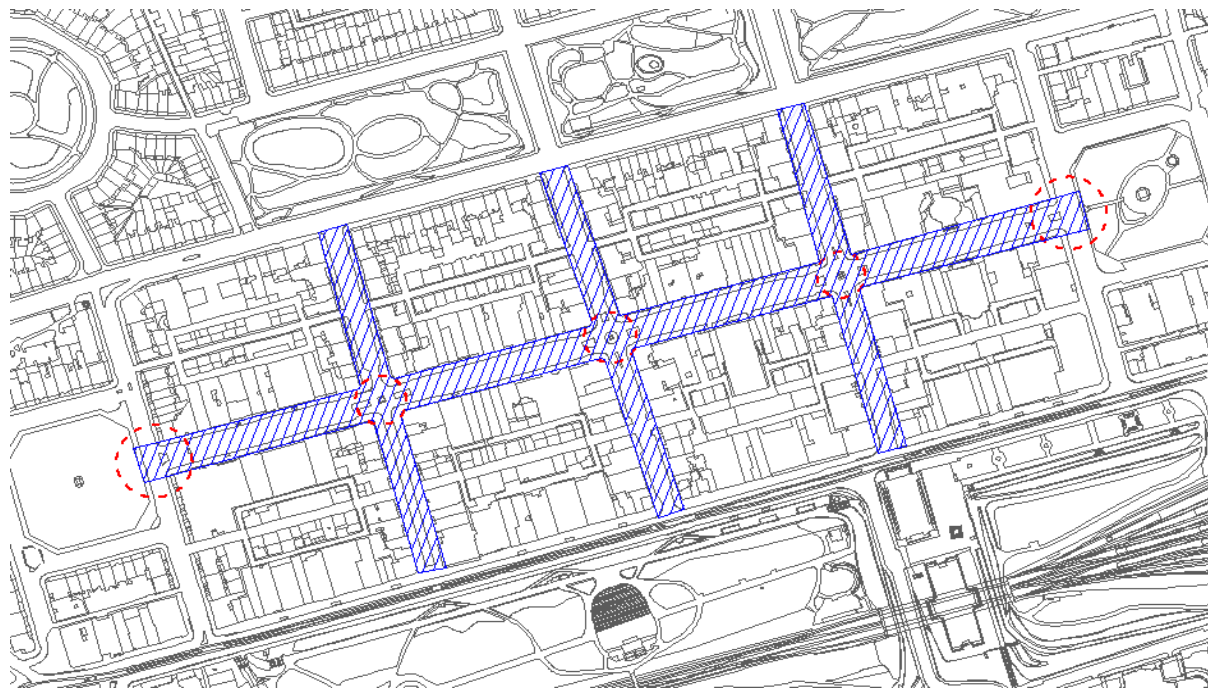
1. Introduction	2
1.1 Introduction	2
2. Baseline Operational Conditions	2
2.1 Introduction	2
2.2 Study Area	2
George Street	2
Castle Street/North Castle Street	3
Frederick Street	3
Hanover Street	3
St Andrew's Square	3

Charlotte Square	3
2.3 Pedestrians	4
2.4 Cyclists	8
2.5 Buses	11
2.6 Tourist Buses	13
2.7 Parking	15
2.8 Loading, Servicing and Access	20
2.9 Taxis	22
2.10 Traffic	24
2.11 Junctions	27
2.12 Events	28

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this George Street and First New Town (GNT) Operational Statement (OS) is to support the concept design proposal for improvements to the quality and operation of Edinburgh's First New Town as part of the GNT Preliminary Design Study. This report's purpose is to provide a summary of current (baseline) operation for all modes of travel which currently operate within the study area. This report should be read in conjunction with the GNT Operational Plan which sets out the future intended operation of the study area for all travel modes and the GNT Operational Impact Assessment which sets out a comparison of current and future (proposed) operation along with mitigation measures where these are considered practicable to implement.



George Street and First New Town Study Area

The design as part of the wider City Centre Transformation (CCT), aims to create a vibrant area with a world class street environment that is safe for all users. It will enhance its use for pedestrians while prioritising active travel for everyone creating a welcoming space and 'destination' that encourages 'trips to' and 'not through'.

The study area is currently dominated by vehicle traffic to which the majority of road space is allocated. This results in a conflict of use between various non-motorised user groups where the road space allocation does not represent existing travel demand. This design presents a significant opportunity to enhance a world-renowned vibrant street environment that will be welcoming for all users: one which significantly enhances its use for pedestrians while prioritising active travel and accessibility for all through the removal of 'non-essential' motorised traffic.

City Centre Transformation (CCT) and role of George Street

The Central Edinburgh Transformation Project (CCT) is intended to radically reform the future operation of the City Centre, improving access for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport through examination of future requirements of the City Centre. The study aims to place issues such as congestion, air quality and street clutter at the highest priority, trying to 'unlock the potential of historic streets and promoting innovative and ambitious change to support the city's climate adaptation ambitions. The GNT Design is a key design which will contribute towards delivering the CCT, Mobility Plan strategic vision and low carbon agenda.

The current GNT concept design builds on over a decade of historic design conversations and interrelated studies, cumulating in a set of study design principles agreed in 2016. The design was first presented to the public in November 2018 and has been developed during 2019 into a Preliminary through a programme of continuous consultation and engagement with local residents, transport operators and local stakeholder groups.

2. Baseline Operational Conditions

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides details of the existing conditions within the study area, current access arrangements, pedestrian constraints, cycling routes and behaviours, public transport, loading and servicing arrangements, parking.

2.2 Study Area

The George Street and New Town study area is split into a series of interconnected streets. These are recognised to each have their own characteristics, aesthetic and travel dynamics. Individually, each street forms a key part of the overall study area.

George Street currently serves as a key strategic route within the First New Town for passenger car and bus travel. The route is well trafficked, this often results in delays at junctions and increases journey times. The entire study area is subject to a 20mph city centre speed zone restriction.

There are a number of traffic restrictions in place in the study area. On George Street to the east, left turning movements to St Andrews Square are not permitted; while to the west no right turns entering George Street from Charlotte Square are not permitted and exiting right turns to Charlotte Square are not permitted. Similarly, traffic travelling on Frederick Street cannot turn onto Hill Street or Thistle Street, this forms four distinct one-way sections. Traffic on Young Street/Hill Street/Thistle Street wishing to exit the study area is effectively filtered towards North Charlotte Street, Frederick Street and North St David's Street.

The GNT study area forms a critical intersection for motorised travel within the city centre with a number of primary road routes intersecting within the area. The area is bound to the south by Princess Street which is currently prioritised for use by bus and tram travel. To the north, Queen Street now acts as a primary traffic distributor for vehicles wishing to travel east / west across the city centre. Within the centre of the study area, Hanover Street forms a key part of the north / south route linking driver to the mound and beyond.

In terms of use, the GNT study area forms a key retail, commercial, business and residential part of the city adding to the night-time and weekend economy of the city. The study area is never 'quiet' being used for significant portions of the year to host events including the fringe and Christmas markets.

George Street

George Street currently supports a wide range of uses including retail, office, restaurant/leisure whilst also being a residential street and a key route within the city centre travel network that supports pedestrian and cycle travel. It is an important destination in terms of experiencing the City and has critical economic, cultural, historical and functional roles that shape Edinburgh's national and international profile.

The streetscape is characterised by its statues and historic vistas although is also dominated by vehicle-based transport due to the provision of parking within the centre of the street and kerbside. Footway widths and quality vary by location, with street furniture clutter and other physical barriers which limit pedestrian accessibility in certain areas.

A variety of junction and crossing styles are also present, at busier junctions such as St Andrews Square, Hanover Street and at Charlotte Square, traffic signals with advanced cycle stop lines and multi-stage pedestrian crossings are provided. Where traffic volumes are lower such as at the Frederick Street and Castle Street junctions, zebra crossings are provided, affording greater priority to pedestrians.



Existing layout of George Street with centrally located parking

Castle Street/North Castle Street

Castle Street is fully pedestrianised allowing flexibility for pedestrians and cyclists, this space also provides a functional public realm space used for local markets and events. It offers a pedestrian route linking George Street to Princes Street and Rose Street. North Castle Street is provided with a carriageway of approximately 7.7m with permit holder only parking incorporated on either side. To the north, the road forms a signalised T-junction with Queen Street.

Frederick Street

Frederick Street serves as one of two north/south through routes for traffic within the study area, linking George Street to Princes Street and Queen Street although general traffic is prohibited from accessing Princess Street from Frederick Street. The street is a key bus corridor with stops located in both the northern and southern sections.

Hanover Street

Hanover Street serves as the other arterial road travelling north to south, it also links Princes Street to Queen Street and serves as the study area's link to Edinburgh's Old Town via The Mound and the Royal Mile. The current layout is dominated by vehicle infrastructure and on-street markings. A number of bus bays and their shelters are present, these compress the road itself to a single carriageway constricting flows. Bus shelters and other on-street clutter causes disruption for pedestrians.

Hanover Street connects with George Street at a 4-way signalised crossing, island refuges are provided for pedestrians while advanced cycle stop lines are used on all approaches to junctions. Traveling north at the junction the road expands to a 4-lane carriageway linking to Queen Street.

St Andrew's Square

St Andrew Square is located at the East End of George Street, it is characterised by its public garden and the Melville monument at its centre. Following the investment to upgrade in the square, the gardens re-opened with two new entrances at the south-west and northeast corners with curved footpaths linking the new entrances and newly created public realm space. These significantly improved the attractiveness and pedestrian utilisation of the area. St Andrews Street, to the east of the square is also provided with a stop on the Edinburgh Tram link.

At present George Street links to the square at a 3-way signalised priority junction to the east of the study area, two stage pedestrian crossings are present on the north and west arms while advanced cycle stop lines are used to guide cyclists.

Charlotte Square

Charlotte Square another focal point in the study area, located at the west end of The First New Town. In its current layout and organisation, Charlotte Square is 'overwhelmed by street furniture', car parking and other road infrastructure. The layout is generally confusing and has poor connectivity for pedestrians. Aside from the footways, there is very little public space available, most of the area is dedicated to roads.

Similar to St Andrews Square, George Street links to Charlotte square at a 3-way signalised priority junction. Two stage pedestrian crossings are present on the north and east arms while advanced cycle stop lines are used to guide cyclists.

2.3 Pedestrians

Overview

General Pedestrians

Infrastructure provision for people walking within the GNT study area is of varying quality with a variety of constraints observed throughout. These include delays due to limited green time at key junctions or 'pinch points' at areas of high pedestrian activity where street clutter or physical constraints combined with limited road space to funnel pedestrians and cyclists together.

Along George Street multi-stage crossings at junctions result in less than desirable waiting times for pedestrians, this often results in pedestrian choosing to exhibit unsafe crossing behaviour such as crossing between temporarily stopped traffic or while signals stages are at 'red'. In particular at the intersection of George Street and Hanover Street and close to St Andrews Square, large areas of streetscape utilised by road infrastructure, this then 'pushes' pedestrians further away from their desire lines.

The three main junctions located within Castle Street, Frederick Street and Hanover Street all experience high levels of pedestrian footfall throughout the day, with the daily peak times observed to generally be between 12pm-2pm. Within each George Street block, diagonal desire lines are observed and tend to be located from the north to south and west to east footways. Pedestrians have also been observed to walk 'outside' of protective railings as part of a 'short cut'.

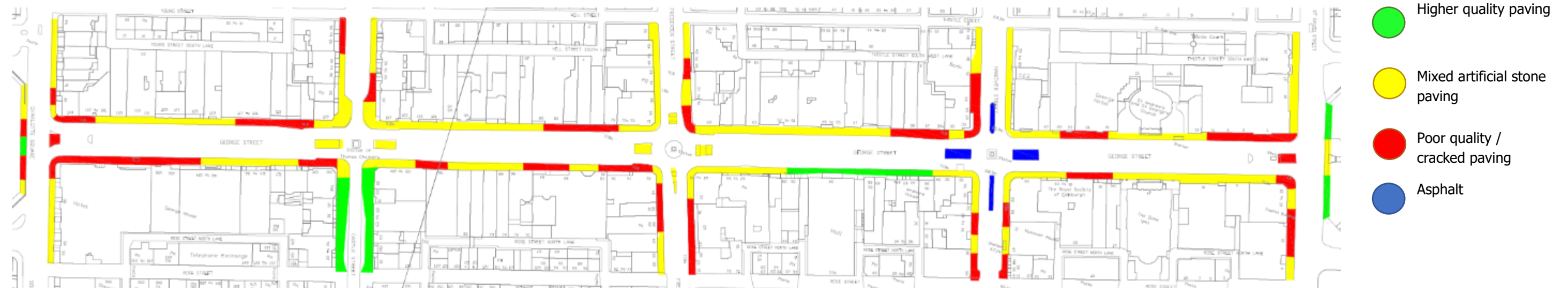
At the interchanges with Princes Street, Castle Street, Frederick Street and Hanover Street, footfall is observed to be at its greatest. On these streets' limited footway widths combined with high pedestrian demand generally leads to congestion. There are a diverse number of desire lines in this area, there are also significant east-west movements towards Rose Street; where pedestrians are observed to cross whenever an opportunity to do so is presented and without using the provided signalised crossings.

Within the current layout of the street there are no areas which actively encourage pedestrians to dwell within the space. Restaurants and other businesses on George Street are allocated 2m of footway space to accommodate seating though this is not typically accessible to all users and not enforced or managed. There is limited provision for pedestrians such as local amenities, water dispensers and seating (not offered by local business).



Examples of George Street footways and their condition

A number of physical obstacles are observed within the study area which serve as barriers to pedestrian movement. Planters, street furniture at business frontages, phone boxes and bus-stops effectively reduce the width of footways creating 'pinch points' which further restrict pedestrian flow. As shown (photos inset), the quality of the existing footway surfaces is also of variable quality. Limited effective maintenance of the surface has left this in a general state of disrepair and includes a mismatch of surface finishes. This creates a sense of incoherence and forms an uneven footway surface which further reduces accessibility, especially for those with mobility impairments or those less mobile. The figure below provides a summary of the existing materials used and quality of footways across the study area.



Facilitating 'Desire Lines'

Tracing studies undertaken as part of the Here + Now, George Street Public Life Street Assessment undertaken in 2018 show the interaction between pedestrians and the existing junction layouts along George Street and linkages to the First New Town (inset image), each line represents the path chosen by pedestrians as they travelled. In particular, the placement of the guard railings and pedestrian refuge island at the crossing of George Street/Hanover Street creates a barrier to movement. Due to a restriction in available walking space throughout the area many pedestrians (particularly to the south where footfall is highest) were forced to the edges of the footway or chose to walk temporarily on the road. The diagonal scattering of these lines also shows the east-west desire lines which are not being accommodated within the current layout.

A summary of pedestrian congregation points and physical on-street barriers is shown in the images overleaf.

Impaired Mobility and Vulnerable Users

It is also important within any public space design to accommodate the requirements of those with impaired mobility, such as wheelchair users or those with a physical or sensory impairment and other protected characteristics such as age or pregnancy/maternity. Generally, wheelchair users tend to have difficulties in negotiating changes in level while visually impaired/blind people need audible and touch-based information with level and well-maintained footways.

As part of the baseline investigation of the area, a series of user video surveys were prepared to assist in understanding the challenges experienced by these user groups in comparison to other users; this included able bodied pedestrians, cyclists, wheelchair users and users with pushchairs. The video survey allowed identification of the barriers to movement at crossings and footways in the area. From review it was identified that a lack of space for non-motorised users to queue at junctions and within the crossing central islands was a concern. The limited footway width combined with street clutter and high pedestrian demand created challenges for some users, introducing the potential for indirect discrimination.

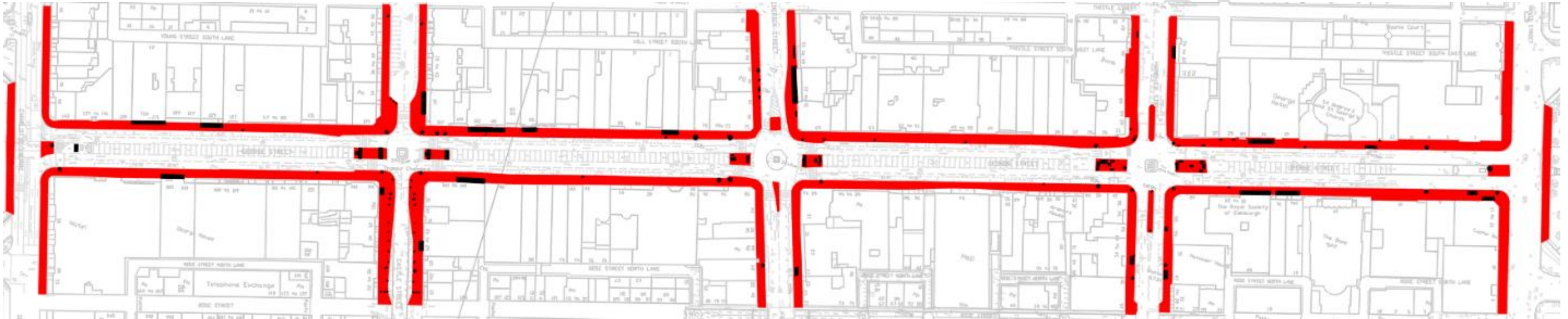
In terms of street infrastructure within the study area, dropped kerbs are provided to support crossing activity at junctions although these are noted to be located a short distance away from crossings. This arrangement providing additional and unnecessary challenge to a blind or partial sighted person. Tactile materials used throughout the streetscape are a similar grey colour to the surrounding footway paving slabs, this could also be visibly confusing for someone with a sight impairment. Use of a contrasting colour such as red or yellow is used in order to be more visually conspicuous although the historic and cultural significance of the study area does and will affect the choice of colour and material palate.

The following figures provide a visual summary of desire lines observed through the Here + Now Study in relation to the physical constraints and key congregation points.



Pedestrian desire line tracing at the junction of George Street / Hanover Street. Here + Now 2017

Summary of Physical Constraints



Summary of Pedestrian Congregation points



Opportunities

The GNT Design provides a fantastic opportunity to readdress road space provision to reduce car dominance and promote active travel for non-motorised users' pedestrians.

Considering the requirements of pedestrians, the design should ideally include:

Provide more coherent crossing facilities: all five junctions linking George Street and the side streets of the first new town employ multi-stage crossing incorporating the use of refuge islands, this promotes increased priority for vehicles and results in pedestrians having to divert from their desire lines and wait for traffic signals to provide an opportunity to cross. By widening the existing footways and readdressing pedestrian priority, it would be possible to reduce crossing widths and create more opportunities to cross which would better align with the desire lines.

Decluttering the existing layout: There are frequent constraints such as waste bins, phone boxes or outdoor private seating used by restaurants and bars which serve to further reduce the effective width of footways. The design should seek to rationalise the number and location of existing street furniture or allocate within designated areas to reduce obstacles and assist in navigation of the space.

Creating public seating and dwell zones: There are no public seating or spaces presented to support pedestrians wishing to dwell within the study area. Functionally the environment of the GNT study area serves to transfer pedestrians to their destination rather than become its own attractive destination.

Creating footways assessable to all users: A variety of materials are used throughout the area; this is the result of wear and tear and ineffective maintenance. Footway widths and levels are inconsistent along George Street, this creates a less accessible environment for all users. Those with wheelchairs and other mobility impairments are known to struggle when attempting to cross at junctions. Creating a consistent level and wide footway would significantly increase accessibility and reduce the risk of indirect discrimination that exists within the current layout.

Enhance pedestrian experience making facilities and vistas more accessible: Seeking to support the unique asset of the GNT architecture, the provision of spaces to dwell combined with reprioritisation of space away from cars and parking would support GNT as a destination and not a through route.

Reduce traffic and support the safety of pedestrians throughout the area: The layout of George Street and the First New Town is dominated by wide carriageway and central reservation car parking and as a result caters more towards vehicle travel than sustainable modes like walking or cycling. This creates an environment which has a number of high conflict areas with pedestrians and cyclists. It is noted that in the last 5 years over 62% of all road traffic incidents in the First New Town involved a pedestrian or cyclist. A majority of vehicles traveling in and out of the area are linked to the ability to park, by removing non-essential parking and non-essential vehicles would considerably reduce levels of background traffic and decrease the risk collisions whilst also supporting views of the building and historical assets, enhancing the street as a destination whilst encouraging increased dwell times.

Key Considerations

Maintaining access for essential traffic and public transport: The First New Town serves as an important location for transport across all modes. While it is important to focus on reprioritising the streetscape to be more accessible to active travel users, George Street and Hanover Street currently serve as two of the main through routes for traffic in Edinburgh City Centre. Vehicle access of some level should be retained, and bus routing maintained through the area to allow connectivity to all modes of transport.

Safely facilitating movement along all pedestrian desire lines: The George Street Public Life Street Assessment highlights that there is significant unmet demand for pedestrians to cross north-south along George Street and east-west on Frederick Street and Hanover Street. This is largely down to the excessive carriageway widths required to cross the carriageway forcing pedestrians to queue before safety proceeding. By reducing carriageway widths and removing barriers such as guard railings, crossings in the area would better facilitate pedestrian movements.

Ensuring facilities are appropriate to cater for the needs of all user groups: People with young children, people carrying heavy shopping or luggage and older people can all benefit from good design of the pedestrian and transport environment. Proportionally Edinburgh also has the 2nd highest number of people living with a long-term condition or disability of all council areas in Scotland. Footways, crossings and junctions within the area should be accessible to all users with limited mobility or other forms of impairment.

Implications of events in the area: Commonly as part of The Fringe Festival, Christmas Market and sporting events sections of George Street between Charlotte Street-Castle Street and Castle Street-Frederick Street, traffic access is often restricted using through barrier control. This allows these areas to become fully pedestrianised and temporarily promotes increased pedestrian movement. The decision to limit the number, scale and location of events within the GNT area will depend upon The City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) although the design should continue to support flexibility and adaptability and support all user requirements.

Challenges

Maintaining a unique and historic setting within Edinburgh's First New Town: George Street is the home to historically significant Georgian Era architecture and vistas a part of UNESCO World Heritage Site. Each of the 5 main junctions along George Street also feature statues as their prominent focal features. Place-setting and maintaining this image is of critical importance, how the surrounding environment interacts with the urban realm will require careful consideration.

Linking the First New Town (FNT) to the other key attractors in Edinburgh City Centre: George Street and the First New Town is one of many attractions within the City Centre, to promote pedestrian accessibility to the area and generally increase activity it is necessary to consider the connections to Princes Street and other key destinations nearby. Footways within the study area should provide quality connections to existing facilities and provide continuous links from east-west and north-south.

Future proofing, accommodating growth in pedestrian demand: The First New Town, and much of Edinburgh, struggles to accommodate the peak periods of pedestrian demand during the summer months. The design will require to accommodate higher levels of footfall across the area in order to prevent the risk of discrimination or conflicts with other road users which exist within the existing layout.

2.4 Cyclists

National Cycle Network

There are currently two National Cycle Routes (NCRs) within the study area NCR 75 utilises George Street via Melville Street and Charlotte Square before continuing south towards The Mound and NCR 76 traveling west from Leith via Broughton Road and an off-road route through King George Park. It connects to the First New Town using the carriageway and footway to the northeast of St Andrews Square (see image overleaf).

Core Path Network and local routes

George Street and much of the First New Town including Hanover Street, Rose Street and St Andrews Square are also part of the core path network. These link to the dominant travel routes such as Princes Street, North Bridge and King George IV Bridge in the area to form a continuous network of predominantly road-based routes for cyclists around the city centre. Edinburgh City Council are obligated under the Land Reform Act to appropriately maintain and provide non-motorised access to these routes and ensure users of all abilities can safely navigate them.

These routes vary from busy main roads (with and without cycle lanes) to quieter traffic restricted streets. The First New Town also serves the important purpose of linking to other key local cycle links including the Union Canal, The Meadows, Leith Walk and Easter Road.

Cycle Facilities

In terms of infrastructure for cyclists, the study area does not currently include any segregated cycle lanes or facilities which manage the conflicts between cyclists and motorists. Cyclists are expected to travel along the carriageway, which can potentially discourage less confident cyclists. 1-1.5m wide advisory cycle lanes are provided on the north and south side of George Street between St Andrews Square and Castle Street aiding cycling in both east and west directions. The five central junctions on George Street with Charlotte Street, Castle Street, Frederick Street, Hanover Street and St Andrews Square are provided with advanced cycle stop lines and feeder lanes on all approaches, granting enhanced road safety for cyclists when waiting to emerge.

Cycle Parking in the First New Town

22 cycle parking spaces are provided throughout the area. 20 of these are placed within the central islands located on George Street adjacent to parking bays and pedestrian crossings (see inset image). These are concentrated between Frederick Street and Hanover Street, linking closely with the dominant north-south routes.

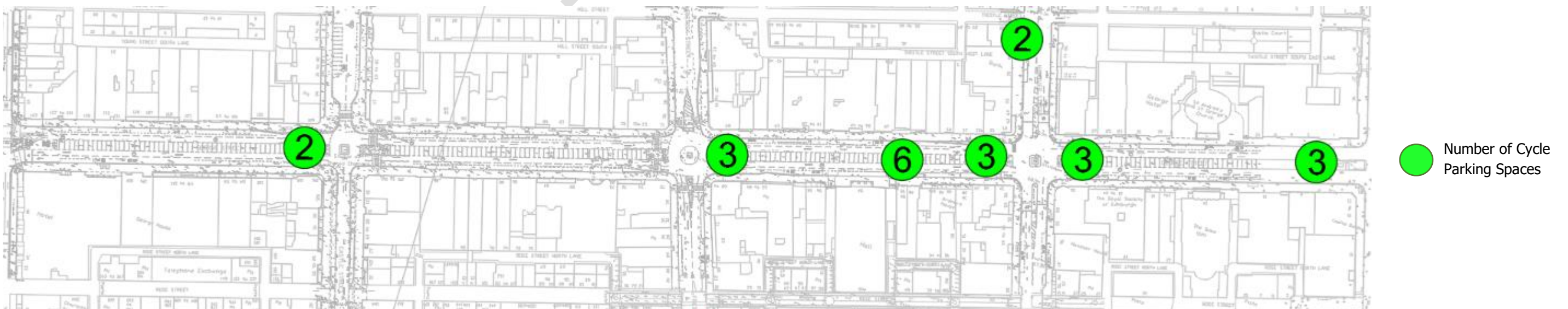
A number of barriers to cycling are observed to be present within the study area, particularly:

- **A lack of dedicated infrastructure:** Cycle facilities within the First New Town are primarily provided on the carriageway in the form of advisory and mandatory cycle lanes with advanced cycle stop lines commonly provided at junctions. Whilst this is adequate for confident road cyclists, this is unlikely to attract less confident cyclists.
- **Managing Traffic Conflicts and Promoting Road Safety:** George Street and the First New Town experiences vehicle congestion during much of the day, with this comes the increased risk of collisions with motorists or larger vehicles.
- **Poorly Maintained Carriageway Surfacing:** The carriageway quality and surfacing varies by location, frequent maintenance in the area has led to a poor-quality uneven surface with many flaws.
- **Challenging Approach Gradients:** Accessing George Street from north south requires traversing extended uphill gradients.
- **Unattractive Cycling Environment:** The current dis-continuous infrastructure provision combined with the volume of pedestrians and car dominance of the GNT area does not support the route as attractive to cycle, especially for those less able or confident.

CCWEL AND MEADOWS TO GEORGE STREET

Edinburgh's City Centre West to East Link (CCWEL) proposes a segregated cycle route between Roseburn and York Place. The scheme aims to vastly improve cycling and walking infrastructure through the city centre and see a behaviour shift in terms of transport choices, improving air quality as a result. In addition, a segregated cycle route between George Street and Edinburgh will help to "create a capital fit for the future". The Meadows to George Street route covers Hanover Street, The Mound, Bank Street, George IV Bridge, Candlemaker Row, Forrest Road, Bristol Place and Teviot Place. Plans include wider pavements, new public spaces and pedestrian priority on Forrest Road and Candlemaker Row. The proposals demonstrate the kind of accessible, people focussed city that Edinburgh want to develop.

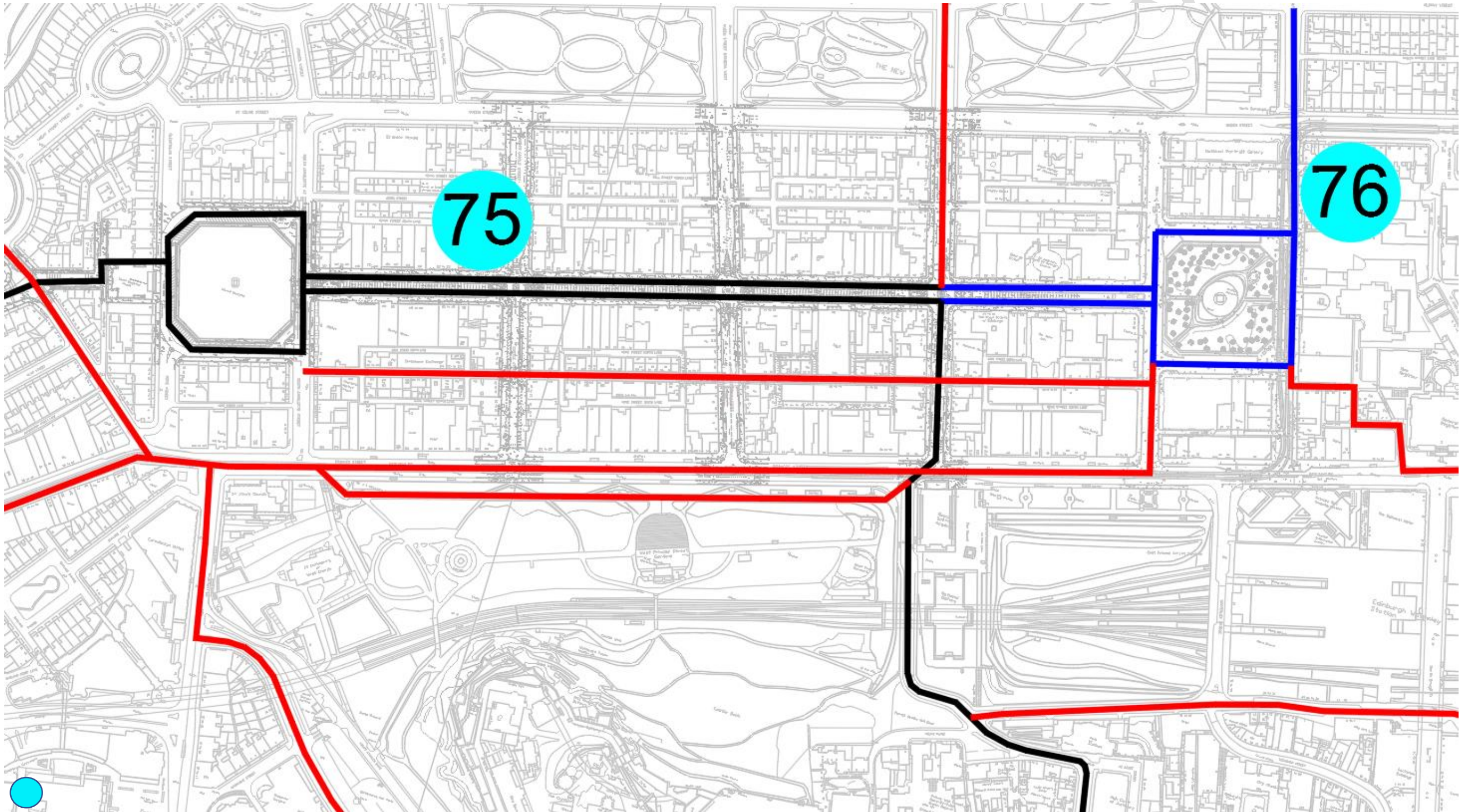
Both routes will connect with the GNT design whilst the resulting indirect impacts of relocated traffic flows, servicing and delivery impacts will require careful and collaborative consideration. As such should be included within the GNT design to provide a coherent and attractive cycling network within the heart of the city.



Core Paths and National Cycle Routes

National Cycle Route number

Core Path Network Routes



Opportunities

Promoting George Street as a 'quiet route' through the First New Town: Princes Street currently serves as the primary east-west route travelling through the centre of Edinburgh. For cyclists this requires travelling on-road merging with other vehicles including buses, taxis and trams as part of the flow of regular traffic. This comes with the inherent increase in conflicts at junctions and increased perception of risk for riders. By limiting the traffic capacity on George Street and providing a segregated cycling facility, the journey time and safety benefit would likely attract existing less experienced cyclists to use this route and encourage other road users to consider changing travel mode.

Increasing the attractiveness of cycling: From recent surveys undertaken by Sustrans for the City of Edinburgh, 54% of households have regular access to a bicycle though only 20% of residents cycle regularly, currently 7.5% of commuter journeys are made by bicycle. There is significant untapped potential to encourage cycling as a viable mode of transport for commuters and recreational trips. Providing high quality segregated cycle facilities would increase the attractiveness of cycling and reduce the dependence of vehicle-based travel whilst meeting the environmental and health challenges of the city.

Improving the coherence and safety of George Street and the GNT for cyclists: The existing levels of vehicle congestion and carriageway-based cycle facilities in the area currently attract only confident cyclists. There is sufficient space within the streetscape to narrow the existing carriageway to provide segregated facilities for cyclists, this would increase the attractiveness of George Street in particular as an east-west link through the heart of Edinburgh City Centre and remove conflicts with both vehicles and pedestrians. As noted above, 62% of all road traffic collisions involved pedestrians and cyclists, this is close to 3 times the national average. There is also therefore a considerable safety benefit to providing a cycle lane or other dedicated facility.

Key Considerations

Linking the proposed cycle facility to other cycle routes nearby: National Cycle Routes 75 and 76 use George Street between Charlotte Square, St Andrews Square and Hanover Street. These will be required to link to adjacent routes forming part of the Core Path network and the city's strategic cycle route plan.

Ensuring facilities cater to cyclists of all abilities: As recommended by best practice, any potential cycle scheme should provide facilities which could be independently navigated by cyclists of all abilities and experience, including children and those less confident when riding. This would be achieved by providing an appropriately wide and well signed route with a coherent approach to junctions and managing conflicts with other road users.

Implications of events in the area: As discussed previously a variety of annual events occur within the area resulting in temporary road closures. Access to cycle facilities should ideally be retained during these periods in order to promote cycling and walking as primary travel modes within the city centre.

Provide public health benefits through cycling: By constructing dedicated cycling infrastructure this is likely to encourage more people to switch travel mode to travel to their place of work or study by bicycle. This comes with the benefit of improved cardiovascular fitness and decreased risk of obesity.

Environmental benefit of sustainable travel: More than half of all journeys nationally are estimated to be under 5km, though almost one third (33%) of these are made using passenger cars. By switching travel mode to bicycle this reduces the emissions associated with passenger car use. Cycling serves as a low cost, zero-carbon transport option which can positively contribute to tackling climate change and city environmental targets.

Challenges

Providing an appropriate level of segregation between pedestrians, cyclists and motorists: The existing streetscape is confined for cyclists, there are few opportunities to travel on fully segregated facilities in the area. The current routes traveling on the carriageway are less also attractive to those less confident cyclists. In order to encourage all levels cyclists to use facilities in the area an appropriate level of segregation (such as a

kerb high dividing strip or stepped height-type facility) should be provided. This involves reallocation of space in terms of the carriageway and footways, a balanced approach to redeveloping the streetscape is required in order to make the area attractive to all forms of transport.

Linking to other committed cycle schemes within Edinburgh City Centre: A part of the City Centre Transformation (CCT) and Edinburgh City Vision 2050 there are a number of ongoing cycle and active travel schemes in Edinburgh within the next 5-10 years. Facilities which form part of the GNT Study will be required to directly link infrastructure proposed as part of the Meadows to George Street Study and CCWEL (City Centre West-East Link) Study.

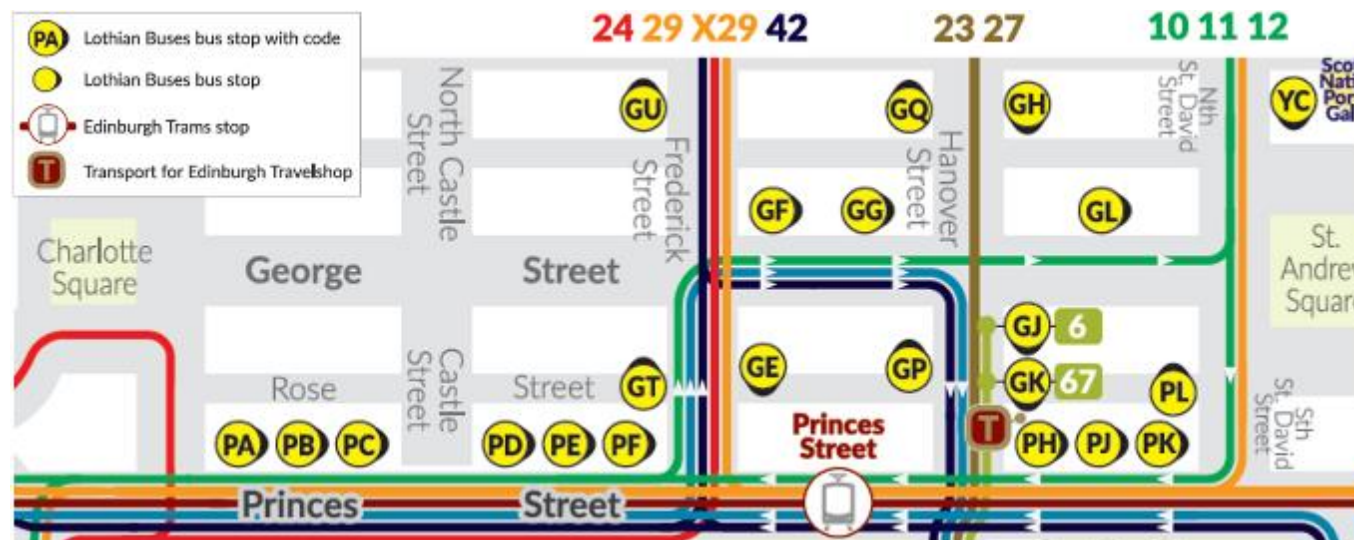


Advisory cycle lanes on George Street

2.5 Buses

The study area is well served by series of bus stops in the City Centre. There are 13 stops within the study area and a considerable number which are also located with a short walking distance. Bus stops on George Street, because of restricted carriageway widths, utilise road markings and the flag and pole style; while on Frederick Street and Hanover Street are provide with seated bus shelters.

Due to the positioning of stops on Frederick Street and Hanover Street much of the available width of footways is utilised by patrons waiting for a bus and the physical bus shelters. This introduces 'blockages' on the footway and limits pedestrian movement travelling north-south between George Street and Princes Street.



Lothian Bus Service Routing, Princes Street-George Street

In August of 2018, City of Edinburgh Council put forward plans to rationalise bus stop positions within the City Centre, with the goal of reducing the occasions that buses slow traffic and trying to achieve an optimum distance of 400m between stops. Within the First New Town bus stops the existing stops are densely concentrated to the east side of George Street while only coach drop-off facilities are provided to the west between Charlotte Square and Frederick Street.

Bus Service	Service Name	Frequency During Peak times	Bus Volume per hour (bi-directional)
6	Hanover Street- Holyrood	30 minutes	4
10	Western Harbour – Torphin	10 minutes	12
11	Ocean Terminal – Hyvots Bank	15 minutes	8
16	Silverknowes - Colinton	12 minutes	10
24	West Granton – Royal Infirmary	20 minutes	6
27	Silverknowes – Hunters Tryst	10 minutes	12
29	Silverknowes – Gorebridge	15 minutes	8
41	Cramond – King’s Buildings	15 minutes	8
42	Craigleith – Kings Road	30 minutes	4
43 / X43	Queensferry - Edinburgh	20 minutes	6
Total (per hour)			78

Emergency Planning and Diversions Access

George Street and its role as a diversionary route: George Street currently provides the ability to be utilised by public transport operators as diversionary bus route for services normally operating along Princess Street due to the parallel positioning of both streets and existing connectivity between the streets from the squares at the eastern and western ends and through the interconnecting streets (Frederick/Hanover). George Street is currently utilised as an emergency diversionary route for Princess Street bus services during periods of major road works or unplanned closures such as emergency road works, police incidents, road traffic accidents or disruption to the tram network. George Street is also utilised as a planned diversionary bus route on during the summer festival fireworks concert and Hogmanay celebrations.

Opportunities

Redesigning existing bus stops and provision: Bus stops on George Street are not currently provided with seating or shelters while stops on Frederick Street and Hanover Street are provided with shelters which form constraints on the footway. The design of bus stops could be revised to allow greater pedestrian permeability through reduction in footprint.

Providing bus stops at more visible locations with more appropriate spacing: In line with proposed rationalisation across the city, locations of bus stops within the study area could be provided at more regular intervals on-street allowing greater accessibility for all users.

Reduce the constraints caused by pedestrians alighting on footways: Particularly on Frederick Street and Hanover Street pedestrians alighting for buses significantly reduce the effective width of footways. Those waiting around bus shelters can cause congestion for other pedestrians and cyclists often forcing others to step into the carriageway to pass.

Providing additional footway width promoting increased accessibility: Widening the existing footways will provide greater space to accommodate all non-motorised related activities and reprioritise the user hierarchy within the design to support non-motorised users.

Key Considerations

Public transport developments in Edinburgh: The existing Edinburgh City tram links currently terminate at Edinburgh Airport and York Place. Proposals from March 2019 were approved to construct a further extension to Ocean Terminal and the Port of Leith, this is anticipated to be completed by 2023. Bus stops locations and their service provision will likely be revised over time to accommodate the increased frequency of trams.

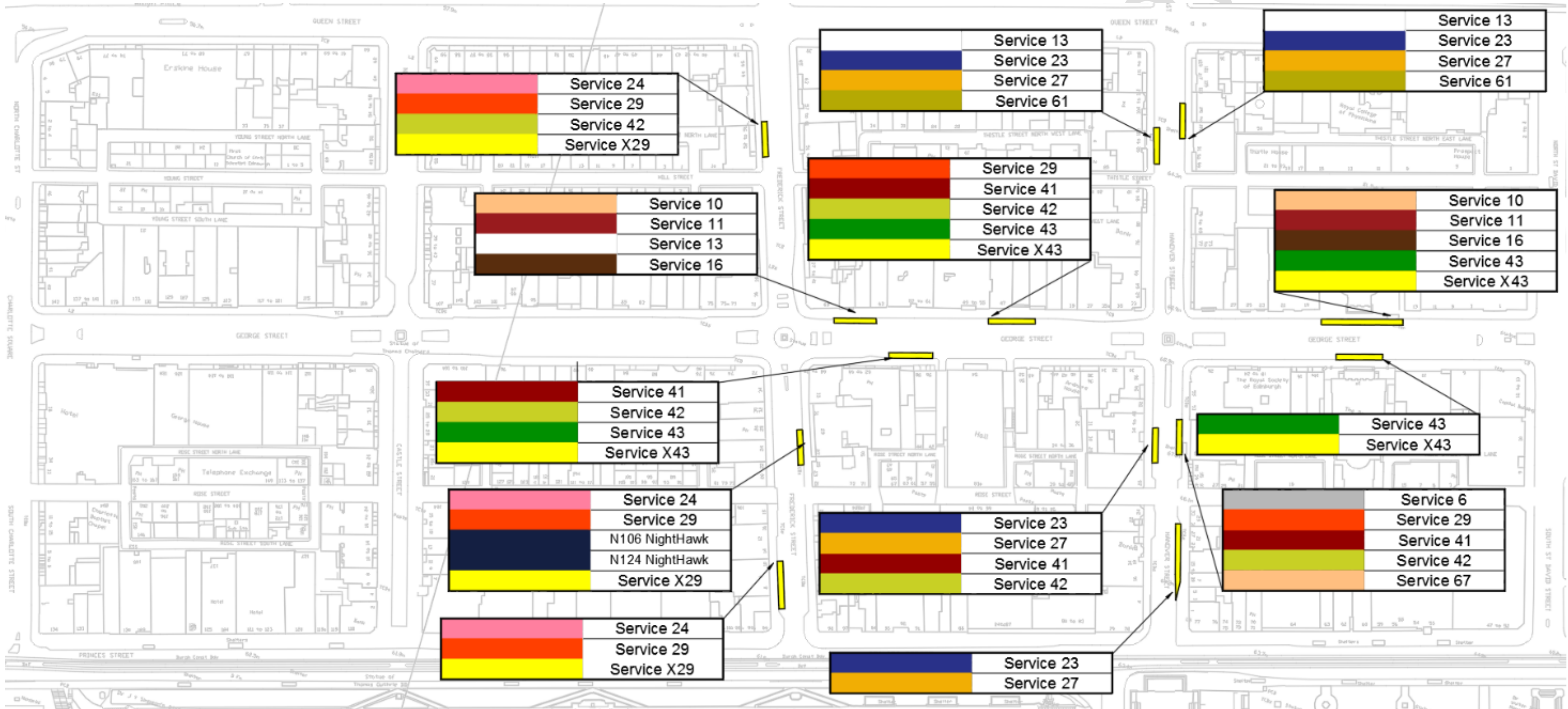
Impact of tram movements: Existing bus services within the first new town particularly those routing along Princes Street are affected by tram movements. With the development of the tram route towards the Port of Leith this will likely increase the frequency and volume of tram movements in the area, reducing the reliability of other transport modes including buses.

Maintaining George Street as a key bus route: Currently George Street is supported by the bus operators and the City Council to continue to function as a key bus route until the completion of the proposed tram extension or bus route re-organisation allows a number of bus services to be reduced through re-distribution to Princes Street. Policy proposals introduced in 2020 will examine the role of buses within the city centre and may result in a level of priority to retain George Street as a bus route.

Challenges

Known capacity issues on Princes Street: Princess Street currently has numerous bus stops on either side of the carriageway which serve a variety of frequent services routing east and west to destinations throughout the

City. Based on the existing routes and frequency of services, particularly during the peak AM and PM hours of operation between 07:00-10:00 and 16:00-18:00 there are significant delays to buses and poor journey time reliability.



Bus Bay Locations and Bus Services

Draft

2.6 Tourist Buses

In addition to the frequent Lothian Buses services discussed above the GNT area is also served by a series of hop on – hop off sightseeing bus tours along several routes to all major tourist attractions in the City such as Edinburgh Castle, National Museum of Scotland and Holyrood Palace. There are currently four bus tour routes which travel within the study area, these are;

City Sightseeing Tour

- **Summary:** A route focus on the main routes in Edinburgh’s Old Town including Princes Street, The Grassmarket and Royal Mile.
- **Route through the First New Town:** The bus enters the First New Town from the east side of Princes Street turning north along St David Street travelling west along Queen Street before turning south and exiting south via The Mound.
- **Frequency:** Spring/Summer timetable Every 10 minutes 09:00-17:20, 20 minutes 17:20-19:00
Autumn/Winter timetable Every 20 minutes 09:00-18:00

Edinburgh Tour

- **Summary:** Visits attractions around the First New Town and Old Town areas including Holyrood Palace, The Scottish Parliament and Dynamic Earth.
- **Route through the First New Town:** Beginning close to Waverley Train Station on the mound, this bus routes north along Hanover Street turning west along George Street. Continues clockwise around Charlotte Square before travelling east along Queen Street and returning south on Hanover Street.
- **Frequency:** Spring/Summer timetable Every 10 minutes 09:00-17:30
Autumn/Winter timetable Every 20 minutes 09:10-16:50

Majestic Tour

- **Summary:** A tour focused on visiting the Royal Yacht Britannia and the Royal Mile.
- **Route through the First New Town:** This route also enters the First New Town via the east side of Princes Street from Waverley Bridge, travelling north on Frederick Street and Hanover Street exiting via Queen Street Gardens East.
- **Frequency:** Spring/Summer timetable Every 15 minutes 09:05-17:50
Autumn/Winter timetable Every 30 minutes 09:05-17:05

Three Bridges Tour

- **Summary:** Route which travels out of Edinburgh City Centre towards the Forth rail and road bridges.
- **Route through the First New Town:** Departs from Princes Street continuing west.
- **Frequency:** Spring/Summer timetable Every 60 minutes 10:05-17:50

Usage and frequency

From these tours only the City Sightseeing Tour and Edinburgh Tour stop within the study area, utilising the existing bus stop on the east (southbound) side of Hanover Street. All other services route through the First New Town within stopping.

Peak tourism activity in Edinburgh City Centre is known to occur during the month of August while The Edinburgh Fringe Festival takes place. During this time there is a significant increase in pedestrian activity and increased desirability of bus tourism. In addition to the 78 Lothian Bus services, a total of 34 tourist buses per hour also travel through the study area.

Tour	Max Frequency (Summer Peak)	Bus Volume per hour (bi-directional)
City Sightseeing Tour	10 minutes	12
Edinburgh Tour	10 minutes	12
Majestic Tour	15 minutes	8
Three Bridges Tour	60 mins	2
Total (per hour)		34

Opportunities

Create a desirable attraction for future tourism: In improving the First New Town it is possible to create a world-class space which itself becomes a tourist attraction and a place to visit, this then would also promote the use of tourist buses and encourage operators to use George Street as part of the four existing routes.

Allowing tourist buses to stop at locations on George Street in Future: Only an existing stop on Hanover Street is noted to be used by tourist buses, with the proposal to relocate bus stops it is also possible to allow these services to stop at locations on George Street promoting access to local businesses, bars and restaurants.

Key Considerations

Implications of increased bus movements within the First New Town: As the city continues to develop and new policies emerge to reduce non-motorised travel within the city, the role of buses within George Street is uncertain. The design should support access by all user groups affording adaptability in the future to accommodate future policy changes.

Challenges

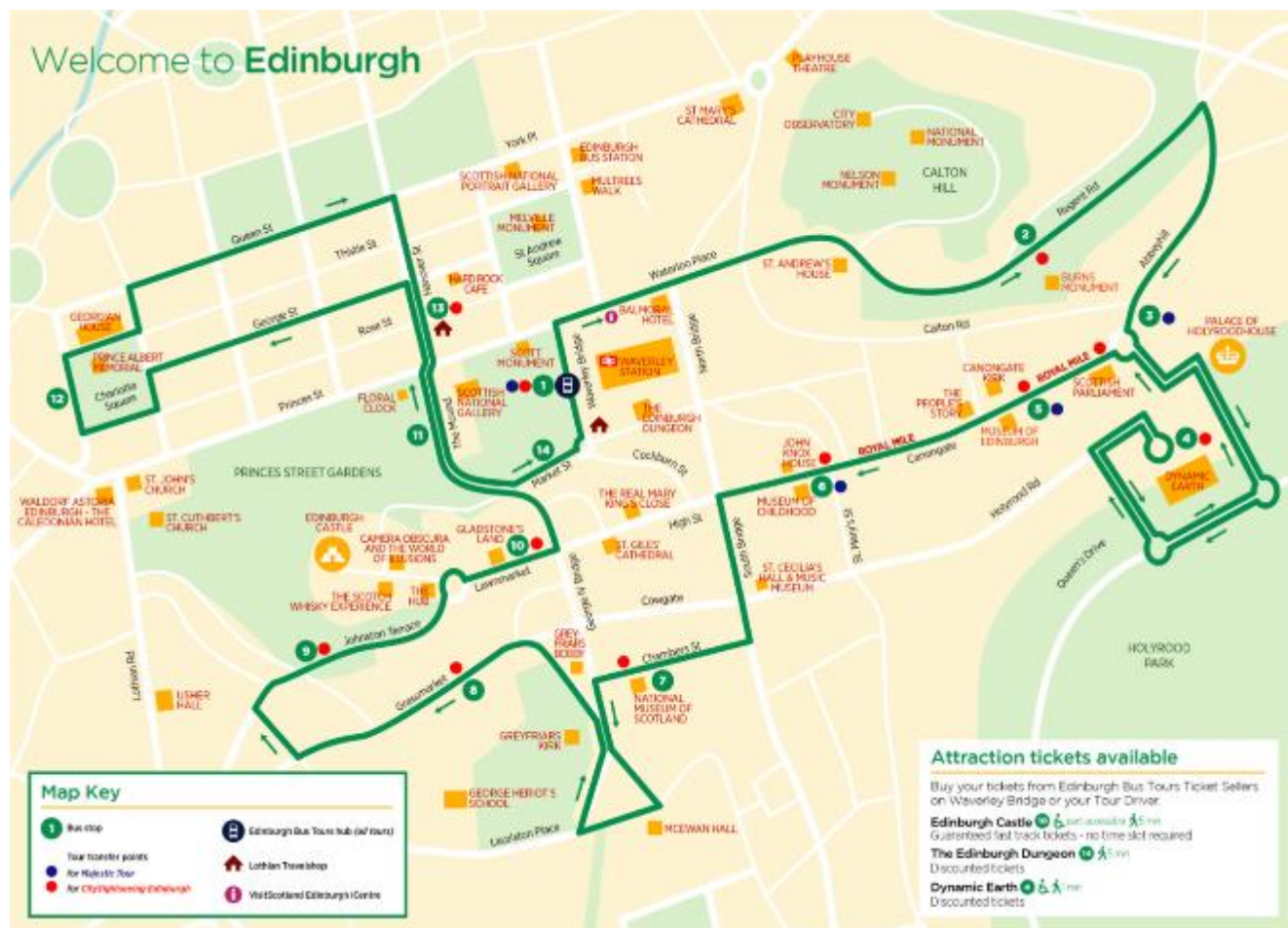
Providing a road layout and junctions which supports the movements of buses and large vehicles: In future junctions which better meet the requirements of pedestrians and active travel users are desired, this will likely result in a reallocation of spaces within the streetscape reducing the width of the carriageway, optimising footway capacity and reducing crossing widths. Careful consideration will be required regarding the configuration and geometry of the 4-way intersections linking George Street and Castle Street, Frederick Street and Hanover Street. Large vehicles including buses and heavy goods vehicles should be easily navigate the area without conflicting with other motorists or non-motorised users.



Edinburgh City Sightseeing Tour bus



Edinburgh City Sightseeing Tour, Edinburgh Tour bus routes



Majestic Tour bus route

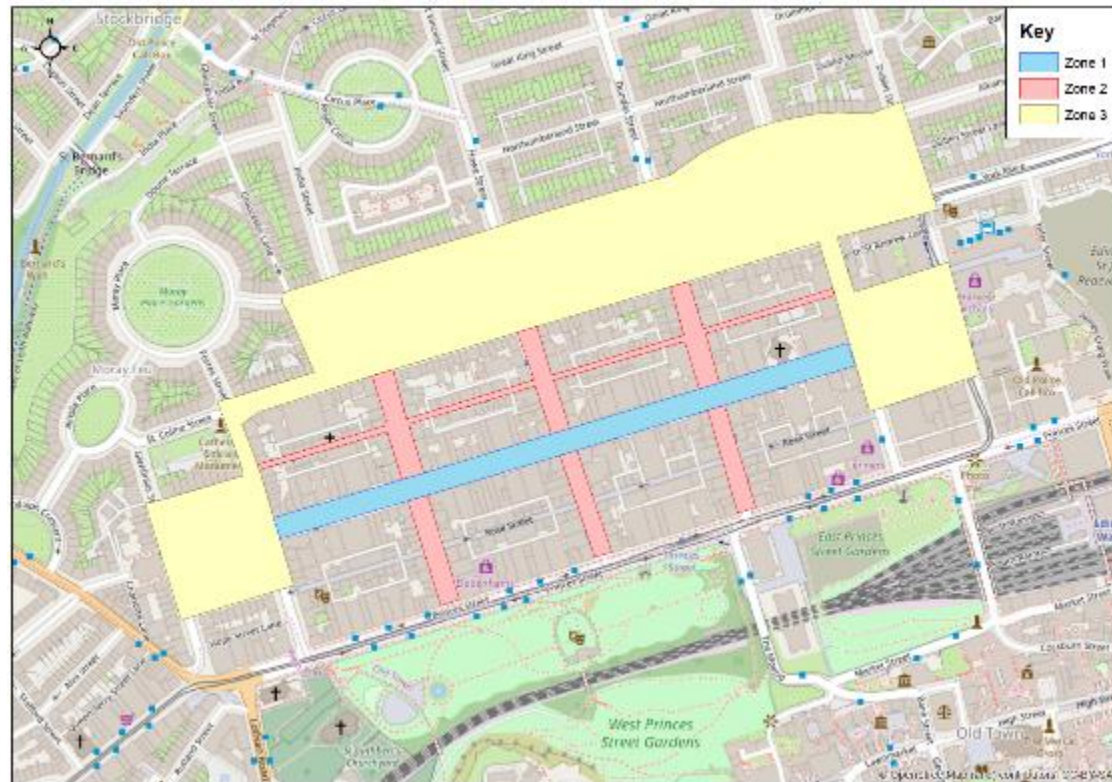


2.7 Parking

To understand parking with the First New Town parking surveys, including roadside interviews, were conducted in March of 2019. This considered one weekday and one weekend day (Tuesday 5th and Saturday 2nd March) in order to benchmark current parking behaviours, trip origins and destinations and demand for specific types of parking.

There were three zones considered:

- Zone 1:** George Street;
- Zone 2:** First New Town Side Streets (Castle Street/North Castle Street, Frederick Street, Hanover Street and Thistle Street); and
- Zone 3:** Wider First New Town Areas (St Andrews Square, Charlotte Square, Queen Street, Heriot Row, Abercrombie Place and Dublin Street).



Parking Capacities

Zone 1 George Street

Type of Provision	Number of Spaces
Pay & Display bays	127
Permit Holders only	39
Loading & Servicing Only	31
Taxi Rank	23
Blue Badge Holders	18
Motorcycles	14
Car Club	1
Total	253

Zone 2 – FNT Side Streets

Type of Provision	Number of Spaces
Pay & Display bay	81
Permit Holders only	68
Taxi Rank	14
Blue Badge Holders	8
Loading & Servicing Only	7
Car Club	3
Motorcycles	1
Total	182

Zone 3 – Wider FNT Areas

Type of Provision	Number of Spaces
Pay & Display bay	381
Permit Holders only	232
Taxi Rank	6
Blue Badge Holders	7
Loading & Servicing Only	2
Car Club	6
Motorcycles	2
Total	636

Parking Configuration across the Study Area

George Street

Parking on George Street is varied, it is most known centrally located row of parking which dominates the existing streetscape. This is provided for the full extent of street while parking is also provided along much of the north and south side of the carriageway. Bus Stops, taxi ranks, servicing and loading bays, motorcycle bays and blue badge holder spaces are also provided at regular intervals.



Examples of parking on George Street between Frederick Street and Hanover Street

Castle Street / North Castle Street

The southern half of Castle Street is pedestrianised, vehicle access is restricted all times while loading is permitted from 11:00pm to 10:30am. Parking is present on both sides continuing north on Castle Street and North Castle Street. This includes pay and display, resident permits holder bays, a taxi rank and two blue badge holder bays.

Frederick Street

Frederick Street has low levels of parking, small areas allocated for permit holder parking are provided to the north and south of the street while a loading bay and blue badge holders spaces are provided close to the junction with George Street. A large taxi rank is also present to the south. Frederick Street is one of the main through routes for buses in the First New Town, there are currently three stops which serve a number of local and regional bus services.

Hanover Street

Hanover Street serves as the dominant route for vehicle traffic traveling north-south through the First New Town. As such, functionally it has the lowest levels of parking seen within the study area. Parking is limited to two blue badge holder spaces close to the junction with George Street. Single and double yellow to denote parking restrictions. Five bus stops also provide access to a number of bus services; these are concentrated to the south on both sides of the carriageway close to the junctions with George Street and Rose Street.

Parking Demand

Designated On-street Bays

On-street Pay & Display and permit holder parking is provided in three configurations across the study area, aligned (90 degree) parking bays, parallel parking bays and echelon (45 degree) parking bays. In Parking Zones 1 and 2 in which the GNT Study considers, 208 pay and display spaces and 109 permit holder bays are provided. Parking restrictions are enforced from 8:30 to 18:00, with a maximum stay of 3 hours. This ensures a high turnover of vehicles during the day and discourages commuter parking. The area is served by a total of 34 Pay & Display ticket machines and are managed by CEC officers as part of DECRIM system. Heat Maps of all forms of parking in the area are shown in **Appendix A**.

Street Name	Pay & Display Parking Spaces	Permit Holder Spaces	Total
George Street, Section 1 (Charlotte Square – Castle Street)	35	12	47
George Street, Section 2 (Castle Street – Frederick Street)	48	6	54
George Street, Section 3 (Frederick Street – Hanover Street)	20	16	36
George Street, Section 4 (Charlotte Square – Frederick Street)	24	4	28
Castle Street / North Castle Street	29	26	55
Frederick Street	0	13	13
Hanover Street	0	0	0
Total	156	77	233

Pay and Display Parking

57% of all motorists parking in the study area, approximately 1300 vehicles per day, used pay and display facilities. This type of parking is most prominently provided within aligned parking bays located within the central refuges and along the kerbside of George Street. The daily peak period of demand for this type of parking was observed between 10:30-14:30 on weekdays and 14:30-17:30 during weekends. During these times pay and display bays see a maximum of 97% and 75% occupancy respectively. Average duration of stay across weekday and weekend surveys was seen to be 1.75 hours and 1.4 hours.

In terms of maximum demand for pay and display parking, spaces located on George Street between Frederick Street and Hanover Street see the highest volumes. Spaces between Castle Street and Frederick Street were seen to most frequently turnover at a rate of over 7 times per space per day.

Permit Holder Parking

15% of all motorists parking in the study area, approximately 330 vehicles per day, used permit holder facilities. This type of parking is provided within the central refuge of George Street and along the kerbside of Castle Street and Frederick Street. The daily peak period of demand for this type of parking was observed between 11:30-14:30

on weekdays and 16:30-19:30 during weekends. During these times pay and display bays see a maximum of 112% and 93% occupancy respectively. This shows that there are significant pressures across the area in terms of availability of spaces, this is known to result in congestion for vehicle traffic. From site observations, motorists are observed parking close together in order to maximise the available parking capacity often encroaching to other types of facility such as bus bays, taxi ranks or blue badge holder spaces. Average duration of stay across weekday and weekend surveys was seen to be 2.5 hours and 1.75 hours.

In terms of maximum demand for permit holder parking, spaces located on George Street between Charlotte Square and Castle Street saw the highest volumes. These also were observed to most frequently turnover at a rate of 5-6 times per space per day.

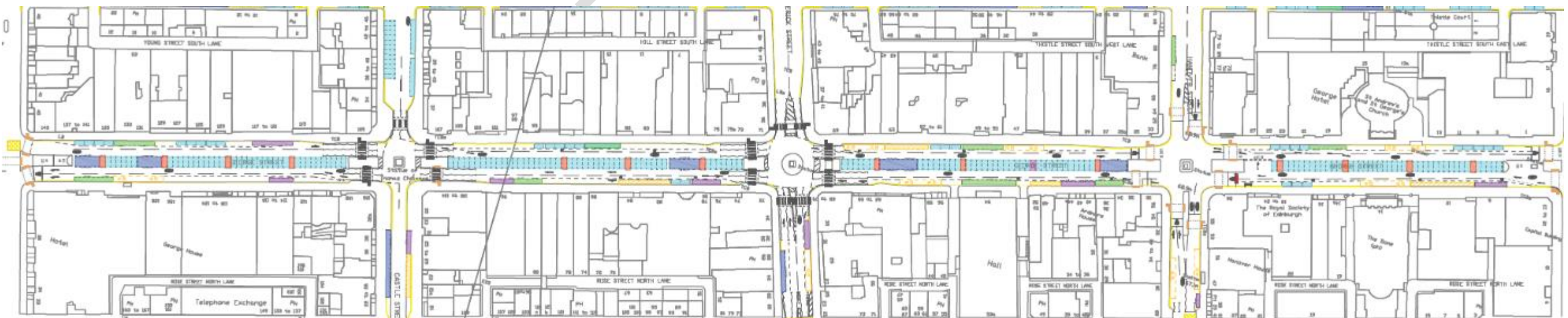
Blue Badge Provision

There are currently 26 spaces provided in the study area provided for blue badge holders. Along George Street in particular, these are located close to the north and south footways rather than the central refuge parking areas, reducing walking distances for mobility impaired users. Blue badge holder provision on Castle Street, Frederick Street and Hanover Street are concentrated towards junctions with George Street again allowing greater convenience when trying access facilities in the area.

Street Name	Blue Badge Provision
George Street, Section 1 (Charlotte Square – Castle Street)	6
George Street, Section 2 (Castle Street – Frederick Street)	4
George Street, Section 3 (Frederick Street – Hanover Street)	4
George Street, Section 4 (Charlotte Square – Frederick Street)	4
Castle Street / North Castle Street	3
Frederick Street	4
Hanover Street	1
Total	26

A total of 101 and 72 blue badge holders were seen across the study area during the course of the Tuesday and Saturday survey days. The peak periods of blue badge parking demand occurred between 09:30-11:30 and 10:30-12:30 on weekdays and weekends respectively where a maximum of 18 blue badge holders were observed. From this it can be said that peak demand is 69% of the available capacity.

The areas which had the greatest demand during the weekday survey were on the south side of George Street between Charlotte Square and Frederick Street and around the junction of George Street and Frederick Street. Similarly, during the weekend survey blue badge parking on south side of George Street close to the junctions with Castle Street, Frederick Street and Hanover Street saw the greatest demand. Average duration of stay for blue badge holders parking during the weekday survey was 2.5 hours and 2 hours during the weekend survey.



Inappropriate and Nuisance Parking

Frequent examples of inappropriate parking within blue badge holder spaces were also observed, this was noted to be worst on George Street where a maximum of 8 spaces (between the hours of 10:30-11:30 and 13:30-14:30) were occupied by other types of motorists. This has a significant impact in terms of the availability and capacity of these facilities and meant blue badge holders often chose to park within other types of parking facilities such as a pay & display or permit holder only spaces. Throughout the surveys only 25% of blue badge holders parking on George Street and 17% within the wider First New Town area parked within an allocated blue badge holder bay.

Motorcycle Parking

Across Edinburgh City Centre 'Solo Motorcycle only' spaces are provided for free. Motorcyclists also can choose to park within a Pay & Display bay after purchasing a ticket in a similar way to other vehicles or within resident permit holder bays. There are currently 14 motorcycle bays evenly distributed along George Street. These are commonly seen to hold multiple motorcycles. During the parking surveys of the area a low demand for motorcycles was observed, with most parking on George Street between Castle Street and Frederick Street within resident permit holder bays for the duration of both survey days.

Cycle Parking

There are currently 22 Sheffield style cycle racks with the study area, these are all placed at locations within the central median along George Street and Hanover Street. From site observations, it is common for the each of these stands accommodate multiple bicycles, pedestrian guard railings adjacent to junctions are also used as informal cycle parking in much of the area.



Mixed Parking types within the central reserve of George Street



Instances of inappropriate parking over double yellow line markings on Frederick Street

Parking Occupancy (By Street) Tuesday 5th March 2019

Street Name	Capacity	Peak Hourly Demand	Peak %	Average Demand	Average %
Castle Street	17	25	149%	16	93%
N Castle Street	46	48	104%	41	88%
Frederick Street	25	28	113%	20	80%
George Street	253	263	104%	186	73%
St Andrew Square	44	43	97%	32	72%
Queen Street	47	47	100%	33	70%
Hill Street	21	20	95%	15	69%
Thistle Street	47	39	83%	31	66%
Young Street	17	16	94%	11	66%
Hanover Street	9	14	149%	5	56%
Charlotte Square	85	72	85%	46	54%
Wemyss Place	43	30	70%	22	51%
Abercrombie Place	98	58	59%	46	47%
Heriot Row	194	101	52%	87	45%
Queen Street Gardens East	24	19	79%	10	43%
Dublin Street	77	37	48%	33	43%
Queen Street Gardens West	24	18	75%	8	34%
Albyn Place	0	1	100%	0	-
North Charlotte Street	0	0	-	0	-
North St David Street	0	1	100%	0	-

During the weekday survey George Street and other streets within the centre of the First New Town experienced a peak demand greater than their current capacity. During the peak period of parking demand for all types of parking, 10:30-14:30, most streets were observed to be over capacity. Castle Street in particular was observed to have demand approx. 49% greater than its capacity during this time. This indicates that there is significant demand on this street at this time which may lead to limited availability of spaces. Considering streets from wider First New Town areas such as Heriot Row and Queen Street Gardens a short distance from George Street there is availability of parking spaces throughout the day.

Parking Occupancy (By Street) Saturday 2nd March 2019

Street Name	Capacity	Peak Hourly Demand	Peak %	Average Demand	Average %
Queen Street	47	52	111%	34	73%
N Castle Street	46	40	87%	33	72%
Frederick Street	25	25	100%	18	71%
Castle Street	17	16	94%	11	67%
George Street	253	232	92%	166	66%
St Andrew Square	44	44	100%	28	63%
Hill Street	21	17	81%	13	62%
Thistle Street	47	38	81%	28	60%
Abercrombie Place	98	70	71%	58	59%
Queen Street Gardens West	24	25	104%	11	48%
Charlotte Square	85	62	73%	40	47%
Heriot Row	194	112	58%	91	47%
Hanover Street	9	12	133%	4	42%
Queen Street Gardens East	24	18	75%	10	41%
Dublin Street	77	36	47%	31	40%
Wemyss Place	43	19	44%	15	35%
Young Street	117	13	11%	10	8%
Albyn Place	0	0	-	0	-
North Charlotte Street	0	0	-	0	-
North St David Street	0	0	-	0	-

A number of streets over the course of the weekend day survey also seen a peak parking demand greater than their current capacity. The peak period of demand across all types of parking for this day was observed to be 13:30-17:30. During this time George Street and several other streets are see demand approaching or exceeding their capacity, again indicating there is little availability of spaces and parking is frequently turning over during this period. Similar to the results of the weekday survey, streets from the wider First New Town shows there is constant availability of spaces throughout the day.

Parking Interview Surveys – Why do people park in the First New Town?

Over 800 interview surveys were conducted across the two survey days, these gained valuable insight into the reasons to park in the area and how these vary between weekday and weekend use. Full analysis of the interview survey results is given in **Appendix B**.

Purpose of Visit

The First New Town serves as both a high-end retail hub, centre for employment and place to visit, this demand is reflected in the vehicles parking in the area. During the weekday survey the 45% of interviewees said that the purpose of their trip into the area was because of work/business, whilst 60% of those during the weekend said they were visiting the area to shop on George Street. The following tables provide a summary of weekday and weekend responses to this question.

Tuesday 5th March 2019

Purpose of Visit	No. of Respondents	%
Work / Employers business	186	45%
Shopping	94	23%
Personal Business	69	17%
Recreation & Leisure	57	14%
Place of Residence	5	1%
Total	411	100%

Saturday 2nd March 2019

Purpose of Visit	No. of Respondents	%
Shopping	232	60%
Recreation & Leisure	60	15%
Personal Business	51	13%
Work / Employers business	43	11%
Place of residence	3	1%
Total	389	100%

Reasons to Park in the First New Town

The reason for choosing to park within the area was also captured as part of the interview surveys. During the weekday survey, 39% of people said, 'Closeness to their final destination' and 25% said the 'availability of spaces' was the main reasons to park in the area. This indicates that those parking in the area are largely driven by the convenience of the current number of spaces. Notably 24% of people part of the weekend survey said The FNT was their first choice of parking location in Edinburgh City Centre. During the survey there was significant spare parking capacity noted elsewhere in the wider areas of the FNT such as Heriot Row or Dublin Street.

Opportunities

Reduce non-essential parking in order to reduce vehicle trips in the area: Traffic activity on George Street is linked to the attractiveness of retail stores, restaurants and their resulting demand for parking throughout the day. By removing parking spaces vehicles would be required to look within the adjacent streets of the FNT or multi storey car park provision before walking to their end destination, in the process rerouting traffic and significantly reducing congestion.

Electric Vehicle charging Points: There are currently no spaces which accommodate electric vehicles in the study area. It is noted that CEC are in the process of reviewing the City's future demand for electric vehicles and have put forward proposals to include charging stations across the City Centre. In line with the results of this review EV charging stations could be provided within the area.

Key Considerations

Providing an appropriate level of parking provision: The maximum observed demand for blue badge provision on George Street throughout the day was noted to be 15 vehicles while the current capacity for blue badge spaces is 18 vehicles. In future parking provision could be reduced to accommodate the parking requirements of essential users such as residents, blue badge holders and taxis. This provision could then be

provided within areas which see the greatest locational requirements (adjacent to storefronts or restaurants etc) in order to increase the accessibility of facilities throughout the area.

Providing upgrades to cycle parking capacity: Introducing cycle facilities to the area is likely to greatly increase the volume of cyclists within the FNT. As a result, the area will have greater demand for cycle parking. Increasing footway widths will enable cycle parking to be located throughout the study area.

Reducing the dependence of vehicle-based travel: City Centre Transformation (CCT) along with the City Mobility Plan seek to reduce dependency on car based travel to and within the city centre through the promotion of alternative modes of travel. Within the design there is an opportunity to incorporate these aims through rebalancing road space to reduce the need for non-essential motorised users to access the area and promote space for non-motorised travel modes.

Challenges

Implications of reducing parking capacity: As noted above there is a total of 253 total parking spaces currently on George Street and 182 spaces provided throughout the nearby side streets of the First New Town. Upgrading walking and cycling facilities in the area would require the removal of much of the non-essential (pay & display, permit holder only) spaces.

2.8 Loading, Servicing and Access

Servicing and loading currently undertaken within the study area are carried out both to the front and rear of premises on-street throughout the study area. Light and heavy goods vehicle business questionnaire surveys have been undertaken to understand the individual requirements in terms servicing/delivery frequency and maximum vehicle sizes. Servicing is primarily undertaken using a mixture of designated loading bays and single yellow road markings. There are loading restrictions enforced between 08:00-09:15 and 16:30-18:30 which restrict the use of single yellow lines across the area.

The figure overleaf shows the current location of yellow lines and designated loading bays.

Business Survey Questionnaire

To understand the servicing and loading requirements of the area a business survey questionnaire was undertaken throughout April of 2019. This was designed to determine the types of vehicles used, typical loading arrangements and frequency of deliveries and servicing across the many business types present on George Street. The survey was open to online responses and postal responses for 3 weeks, from 12/04/19 to 03/05/19. The survey received responses from a variety of business types such as clothing and boutique stores, bars/restaurants and other office-based businesses.

Servicing Vehicle	%	Servicing Frequency	%	Servicing Arrangements	%
Van or Light goods vehicle	43%	Multiple (>3) times per day	50%	On-Street (not using a loading bay)	71%
Box van or ordinary goods vehicle	29%	1-2 times per day	29%	On-Street Loading Bays	21%
Small van or car	21%	Once per week	7%	Pay and Display Parking / Other	8%
Articulated Lorry or HGV	7%	Occasionally	7%		



Example of Loading and Servicing using a designated loading bay on George Street

Servicing capacity

Servicing on-street can be legally performed during the day using kerbside loading bays and for short periods using single yellow line markings. Across the study area there are currently 9 loading bays with a capacity of 25 vehicles and 400 metres of single yellow lines (maximum capacity 57 vehicles which can be used for up to 30 minutes between the hours of 9:15-16:30).

Opportunities

Introducing a daily servicing and loading window, reducing congestion caused by larger vehicles during peak times: Due to the existing configuration of junctions and width of the carriageway allocated for parking considerable delays are experienced for all users when a high volume of large vehicles is present. By concentrating servicing and loading to only a period during the day through the implementation of a loading window would reduce the likelihood of conflicts with pedestrians, cyclists and other motorists (particularly buses).

Managed Services: A delivery and servicing plan could be constructed for the area to manage and reduce the number of deliveries required daily. This can be used to lower operating costs, improve the reliability of deliveries, decrease environmental impact and improve road safety for other users.

Key Considerations

Locations of servicing and loading facilities: George Street and the FNT is home to a variety of business types such as bars/restaurants, clothing stores and offices. Each of these have unique servicing requirements and locations. The location and types of servicing and loading facility (designated loading bays or loading from the carriageway) should be carefully considered as to meet the needs of all businesses in the area.

Business-specific loading requirements: From the business survey questionnaire it was noted a variety of servicing vehicle types are commonly used within the First New Town. This varies from small passenger cars to articulated heavy goods vehicles. All vehicles types should be able to safely unload as required at any point in the study area as required.

Challenges

Constraints of a servicing and loading window: Some business, particularly those which require fresh food or produce require multiple deliveries throughout the day. Proposing a loading window which restricts deliveries in the area between 10:00am and 12:00pm for example may not be feasible. Proposing too short or too long a window would likely result in heavy congestion introducing conflicts with other road users at junctions.

Meeting the requirements of light and heavy vehicle types: A variety of vehicle types will require access to the area to load and unload. The future layout of the carriageway between George Street and the First New Town should be able to accommodate the largest articulated vehicle which could be expected to service any of the businesses in the area. Junction configurations should be carefully considered.

Loading During Events: A variety of events take place along George Street which often restrict or partially restrict access to one or more 'sections' of the street for extended periods of time, particularly during the Christmas period. With frontage access removed, loading and servicing for businesses within these temporary event spaces are typically serviced using alternative locations such as a rear entrance on Hill Street Lane, Rose Street Lane or Thistle Street Lane. All businesses in the area should be able to be serviced during these times despite events taking place in the area. The distribution and locations of loading areas in future should provide convenience during normal conditions and consistent access during events.



Servicing and Loading Areas

-  Loading and Servicing bays
-  Single Yellow Line Markings (No Loading Mon-Fri 08:00-9:15 & 16:30-18:30)

Draft

2.9 Taxis

Taxi movements serve an important role within Edinburgh City Centre. A total of 7 taxi ranks are located within the study area, these accommodate up to 29 taxis: most also operating on a 24hr basis. As part of the City's Public Transport Priority Plan the Edinburgh City Council intend to carry out an audit of taxi ranks within the City Centre. This will assess their condition, appropriateness of their locations and identify potential new sites. Due to the existing levels of traffic demand, the existing layout of George Street poorly accommodates informal taxi 'pickup' behaviour at the kerbside. Often results in increased queueing and delays for other road users.

Taxi rank number and locations are shown in the following table and the figure overleaf.

Taxi Rank Location	Capacity
Castle Street, east side	5
Frederick Street, east side	4
Hanover Street, west side	3
George Street, south side (between Castle Street and Frederick Street)	5
George Street, north side (between Frederick Street and Hanover Street)	4
George Street, south side (between Frederick Street and Hanover Street)	4
George Street, south side (between Hanover Street and St Andrews Square)	4

Taxi Parking demand

The busiest times observed for taxis in the study area during weekdays and weekends occurred between 12:30-3:30pm where 20-25 taxis were recorded to park on-street, during these times several passenger pickup and drop-offs were also observed. In terms of demand throughout the day, taxis are observed to park within the taxi ranks to the south of Castle Street, Frederick Street and Hanover Street. These are observed to turnover at a rate of approximately 5-6 times per day.

During the surveys it was recorded that around 26% of all taxi parking in the study area parked for extended periods inappropriately. These users chose to park within spaces allocated for blue badge holders, loading/servicing bays and single and double yellow line markings throughout the day. Whilst ad-hoc pickup and drop-off behaviour occurs at key taxi trip attractors in the area such as bars or restaurants, taxi parking on-street in this way results in a reduced availability of key parking facilities and increased pressures on the surrounding roads during peak times.

Opportunities

Rationalisation of taxi facilities: In line with Edinburgh City Public Transport Priority Plan the quality and individual position of each existing taxi rank can be assessed against their demand to establish their requirement going forward. From this, the busiest and most desirable locations could be brought forward as future positions for taxi ranks.

Reducing the effects of inappropriate parking and pickup/drop-off in the area: A large percentage of a taxis (and other motorists which currently park in the area) often park in other types of parking facility, including blue badge holder, resident permit holder only or loading/servicing bays. In future, through the removal of non-essential parking taxis would be required to look elsewhere to appropriately stay for an extended period. Parking at the roadside also restricts the ability of passengers to alight and access taxis when required. Removal of non-essential kerbside parking increases the permeability of taxis throughout the area.

Key Considerations

Providing taxi ranks/spaces proportional to current demand: Taxi ranks on Castle Street, Frederick Street and Hanover Street generally observed the greatest activity in terms of parking demand and movement throughout the survey period. Future provision, the total number of spaces allocated, could be reduced to

appropriately reflect the maximum demand regularly observed ensuring an appropriate number of taxis can park in the area at one time.

Challenges

Taxi distribution and accommodating for events: Events on George Street often result in road closures and redistribution of traffic within the area, this results in increased pressure for taxis to temporarily alight or park. Taxi ranks are currently positioned at regular intervals on George Street and the south of Castle Street, Frederick Street and Hanover Street offering well distributed and readily available taxi facilities. Taxi provision in future will be required to be similarly distributed to enable the best accessibility and limit the impact of events.



Taxi Ranks within the study area

Draft

2.10 Traffic

Traffic Routes and Roads Hierarchy

The roads layout of the study area is split into a grid layout, with George Street forming four distinct 'sections' along a central spine. From George Street the connecting side streets of Castle Street, Frederick and Hanover Street extend north to south linking between Princes Street and Queen Street. These streets are wide single carriageways with bus stops and parking located on both sides. There are also a series of side streets to the north and south of George Street; Hill Street/Hill Street Lane, Rose Street/Rose Street Lane, Thistle Street/Thistle Street Lane and Young Street/Young Street Lane which serve only local traffic and servicing/loading access. Rose Street also has a series of pedestrianised sections which are known to have very high number of pedestrians.

There are three key north/south routes for general traffic in the city centre Charlotte Street, Hannover Street and Leith Street. As Princes Street is closed to general traffic the main east west route is to use Queen Street.

Speed limits and traffic conditions

Edinburgh's City Centre including the FNT became a permanent 20mph traffic zone in 2016. A 2018, CEC study noted there has been a 24% decrease in the rate of road traffic collisions across the City since the implementation of these restrictions, also with a notable reduction in the severity and number of people injured on the road each year.

George Street and the FNT experiences a high level of vehicle demand both associated with traffic travelling through and to the area. This results in traffic conditions which are often congested, with excessive queuing and disruption which permeates to the wider city centre traffic network.



Primary and Secondary Traffic Routes around the First New Town



Existing Traffic Accessibility within the Study Area

- General Traffic Allowed
- Access only
- Pedestrian Zone (Loading only zone)

Opportunities

Reducing congestion through the removal of parking: Promoting increased accessibility for loading/servicing, residents and blue badge holders: Removing most of the general traffic also has the added benefit of improving the journeys for essential motorist traffic.

Positive impacts to noise pollution and local amenity: Congestion and high volumes of traffic also has a significant impact in terms of the noise pollution and the visual impact within the surrounding streets, people are unlikely to dwell within a distracting environment. Reducing background traffic would improve the experience for pedestrians and cyclists and make the area generally more attractive.

Improvement to road safety: As part of the city's active travel plan and road safety vision, improved safety for pedestrians and cyclists is a key focus for the City of Edinburgh Council going forward. The layout of George Street currently results in several conflicts at junctions and prioritises vehicle travel over pedestrians or cycling. Removing the majority of through traffic, providing segregated cycle facilities and upgrading footway provision would significantly decrease the risk of collisions.

Increase the reliability of public transport: Through removing most of the non-essential traffic the journey times and reliability of bus services which route through the area will greatly increase.

Key Considerations

Improving road safety across all modes of travel: The existing layout is noted to encourage conflicts between vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians, particularly at junctions and locations where pedestrians choose to unsafely cross where facilities are not provided. A reduction in vehicle movements and congestion would promote both increased accessibility and safety for other road users.

Environmental benefits of reducing vehicle journeys: Through CCT and the wider Mobility Plan, CEC are committed to reducing the dependence of car abased travel to and through the city centre.

Challenges

Retaining access for Essential Vehicles: One of the key functions of the First New Town is to facilitate vehicle travel routing north-south between Princes Street and Queen Street and enable connections to other major routes around Edinburgh.

Implications of rerouting traffic within Edinburgh City Centre: Traffic essential to the operation of the city centre in the future is likely to route along nearby east-west alternatives such as Queen Street or Heriot Row/Abercrombie Place.

Maintaining accessibility for all vehicle types: The business survey questionnaire highlighted that the largest vehicle which would regularly access George Street was an articulated heavy goods vehicle (HGV). Until such time that CEC implement a restriction on the maximum vehicle size allowed to access the city centre, the design should enable a 16.5m articulated vehicle to navigate through all junctions in the area without conflicting pedestrians, cyclists or other motorists.



Signalised priority junction of George Street-St Andrews Square

2.11 Junctions

Junction Types

Priority Junctions

The road network of the study area is bound to the east and west by signalised junctions with Charlotte Square and St Andrews Square. These junctions are symmetrical as they both operate with three-way signal control and have two lanes on each side of the carriageway. Pedestrian crossings at these junctions rely on the centrally located islands, this requires pedestrian to first cross from the north or south side of George Street before crossing.

Four-way intersections

The junctions of George Street/Castle Street and George Street/Frederick Street are mini roundabouts. On all approaches to these junctions 10m the carriageway is divided into two equal lanes allowing vehicles proceeding left/ahead or turning right to queue separately. Zebra crossings are also provided on each approach to aid the crossings of pedestrians.

The four-way intersection of George Street/Hanover Street is fully signalised in order to manage vehicle / pedestrian demand and reduce conflict between turning vehicles. At this junction advanced cycle stop lines are provided on each approach to aid cyclists.



South facing view from the George Street/Frederick Street junction

Opportunities

Increase pedestrian accessibility and permeability: The existing layout the junctions of George Street with Castle Street, Frederick Street and Hanover Street poorly accommodate pedestrians and the needs of those with mobility or sensory impairments. Crossing often requires dwelling for an extended on central islands before safely continuing onward, particularly at the signalised junction at Hanover Street. Pedestrian barriers restrict movement and force pedestrians to divert from their desire lines. Crossing alignment, crossing types and facilities in future can be redesigned to better fit the needs of all user groups.

Updating traffic signal phasing and staging: The current staging of the George Street/Hanover Street junction signals activate only a single pedestrian crossing at any time, significantly extending pedestrian journey times and waiting times. In future is possible to reconfigure the signal stages to include an 'all pedestrian' phase to allow more optimal movement across junctions.

Key Considerations

Reducing crossing distances and removing multi-stage crossings: Wide crossing distances and the need to wait at pedestrian island crossings is the greatest barrier to pedestrian movement. By increasing footways widths on all approaches to junctions, width of the carriageway and crossing widths can also be optimised reducing the necessary time to cross and allowing greater available space for pedestrians to wait.

Interactions between cyclists and other users: Cyclists are currently expected to cycle on the carriageway as part of the flow of vehicle traffic, advanced cycle stop lines are provided at only the George Street/Hanover Street junction giving cyclists additional priority when traffic signals begin to change. Segregated cycle facilities are preferred along George Street, this requires crossing the three junctions with Castle Street, Frederick Street and Hanover Street. Cyclists at these junctions will have potential for conflicts with vehicles and pedestrians.

Challenges

Ensuring access for all vehicle types: The First New Town serves an important point of interchange of vehicle trips, this involves a variety of vehicle classes including buses, light and heavy goods vehicles. The future junction layouts should be able to accommodate the largest articulated vehicle which could be expected to enter the area. Swept path analysis can be used to determine the turning circle and geometry required to ensure larger vehicles can safely perform all necessary turning movements.

2.12 Events

George Street and the FNT frequently hosts events throughout the year. This includes events such as The Edinburgh Fringe Festival, pop-up food & drink stalls, live broadcasts of sporting events and Christmas and Hogmanay annual celebrations. To accommodate these events a 'section' or multiple sections of George Street are temporarily closed (or restrict access) to vehicles, suspending all forms of parking and fully pedestrianizing the space.

North-south traffic operation on Frederick Street and Hanover Street is maintained during events, pedestrian barriers and fencing are typically deployed close to the existing pedestrian crossings locations to segregate the carriageway and pedestrian areas. The relative size, location and configuration of on-street measures used during events are known to vary significantly. Public toilets and other welfare facilities are typically provided as part of larger events, there are noted to be no current publicly assessable facilities in the area.

Opportunities

Provide public welfare facilities: As mentioned above, there are no public welfare facilities present on George Street or within the FNT. Public toilets and other facilities could be considered at convenient locations to support the needs of all users.

Key Considerations

Maintaining access for cyclists: Consistent with existing events, east-west cycle access is maintained on the carriageway during events. Signage and barriers are used to guide cyclists and manage conflicts with pedestrians. The interaction of cycle facilities and closures associated with events will need to be carefully considered.

Maintaining access for public transport and general traffic: Vehicle access and bus travel is an important requirement within the area even while events are ongoing in the area. Access should be maintained for vehicle trips particularly traveling north-south on Hanover Street, the key north-south route through the area.

Challenges

Providing opportunities to load and unload during events: As determined by the business survey questionnaire there are retail stores, bars and restaurants within the FNT which often require multiple deliveries per day and frequent refuse collection. During events essential loading and servicing should be facilitated in the area, where possible use of rear accesses should be encouraged.



Examples of event pedestrianisation & road closure on George Street Frederick Street to Hanover Street



George Street and First New Town – Notional Timeline

Executive Summary

High-level milestones reflecting the next key stages in the delivery of the project are set out at the bottom of this appendix. A detailed and finalised programme, which will include an activity schedule, will be produced by the project consultant once appointed. This final overall delivery plan and programme will be developed in close liaison with Sustrans Scotland and Transport Scotland and reported to Transport and Environment Committee as early as possible.

Consultation

On the appointment of the project consultant a comprehensive consultation, communication and engagement strategy will also be developed. This strategy will incorporate further public consultation events at key points in the project where feedback is required (for example; towards the end of the developed design stage and prior to the promotion of the necessary statutory orders).

Statutory Process

Due to the statutory process related to the securing the necessary powers under which the scheme will be built, the promotion of Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) and Redetermination Orders (RSO) are required. The assumption, which is consistent with similar Council projects, is that the associated statutory process is expected to take around 18 months to complete.

Construction

In order to produce a robust delivery plan and achieve a high degree of confidence, a phasing strategy and resulting construction programme will need be coordinated with neighbouring city centre projects and consider a range of matters including local and city-wide factors in much detail. The duration of construction phases will be determined on the consultants detailed review of the programme.

Project Milestones

Stage	Timescale
Appointment of Project Consultants	July 2020
Finalised Project Delivery Plan	August 2020
Finalisation of Design Developed (RIBA Stage 3)	Dec 2020
Promotion of TRO/RSO Statutory Orders	Jan 2021
Finalisation of Technical Drawings (RIBA Stage 4)	Autumn 2021
Contractor Appointment	Spring 2022
Construction Start	Autumn 2022
Construction Completion	TBC*

TBC* Consultant to undertake a full and detailed review of programme. This will be developed in in partnership discussions with Sustrans Scotland and Transport Scotland. See Paragraph 5.6 of main report.