

This submission is on behalf of Spokes South as part of a deputation for the Transport and Environment Committee on Thursday 11th November 21
Agenda item 7.1 Active Travel Measures with regard to
Recommendations in item in 1.1.2. on the Comiston Road and Braid Road schemes

The recommendations for the committee to consider are
Comiston Road

4.1.1 'Targeted removal of a small number of cycle lane defenders' in order to 'make deliveries easier and provide residents with better access for picking up or dropping off passengers'

4.1.2 'Removal of the Northbound cycle at on the approach to Comiston Springs Avenue to be replaced with a peak time Bus Lane ' in order to 'Improve public transport journey times along the corridor.

Braid Road

4.4.3 Option 2 is recommended to open Braid Road in both directions and to introduce a model filter immediately North of Braidburn Terrace. Suggested (by officers) as a 'balance between improving resident connectivity and protecting vulnerable Road users at this historically busy junction' and the option also 'protects the Meadows to Greenbank Quiet Route and partially mitigates the impact of intrusive traffic in the local community' .

SUMMARY

This committee is meeting in the middle of the COP 26 Glasgow conference. TV and Radio stations have given enormous coverage to the Climate emergency and its causes and victims. We are encouraged that the Scottish Government and City of Edinburgh Council have challenging targets and are developing plans for significant changes to reach those targets, including a significant switch from private cars to sustainable travel, but we want to see those targets reflected in the decisions council makes in this committee.

It takes time for individuals and families to switch to sustainable travel. Family lives are complicated, but over the last 18 months or so we have seen many more people walking and cycling in South Edinburgh as a result of temporary infrastructure measures. It is ironic then, that councillors are being asked to consider changes that will reduce the safety and comfort for cyclists on both Braid and Comiston Road, and especially at the South end of the Quiet Route, making families doubt that they will have a safe route to school or work.

DETAILS

Braid Road

Proposed ostensibly for the convenience of local residents, re-opening a historically busy rat-run will inevitably bring in traffic from a much wider area of South Edinburgh and Midlothian. None of the options on offer would help to keep the changes for local access

only. Prior to closure the junction of Braid Road at Braidburn Terrace recorded 9000 cars per day on average, according to council officers. Now that same junction is a key to the South end of the Quiet Route to the Meadows. Cyclists use the junction throughout the day and the morning 'rush hour' sees a constant stream of walkers and cyclists on the way to schools, nurseries and work.

However ugly the current temporary arrangement of barriers, it provides reasonably safe passage for cycling by keeping cyclists and vehicles apart as much as possible. It also provides access for cyclists and pedestrians to cross to The Hermitage. Options 1-3 in the consultation all create additional streams of traffic from the South heading North and introduce additional traffic streams to the junction,

This makes it difficult for cyclists and pedestrians to cross the road to the Hermitage. This was previously thought to warrant a toucan crossing, but no such arrangement is on offer here.

In Option 2, in spite of a modal filter stopping vehicles from accessing the area immediately North of the junction, cyclists will often have to be in the flow of traffic through the junction, and the right turn into Braidburn Terrace will be especially difficult because the cyclist has to sit sandwiched between traffic flows waiting to turn. Officers described this turn as 'challenging' at a meeting with community councillors and it is entirely unsuitable for children, anyone with children on board, or new, less confident cyclists.

Access to and from this junction via Braid Road will be much more dangerous for cyclists because of the loss of a long stretch of segregation on both sides of the road to provide space for 2 way traffic. Recent studies in London showed that segregation results in 40% less accidents to cyclists than normal roadspace or painted lanes.

Whilst Option 2 steers cars away from the section of Braid Road immediately North of the junction, those drivers who want to head towards Morningside Station will merely work their way back through the Braid estate to achieve that, creating more traffic along the other roads on the Quiet Route.

Comiston Road

We are told more gaps need to be created in the segregation to allow for deliveries and dropping off passengers at parts of the route. Currently gaps in the segregation are exploited not just for short periods but for long-time parking, with vans and lorries belonging to construction, gardening and landscaping vehicles being regular offenders. Any gap means cyclists need to overtake, and this is difficult to judge safely in both directions, but particularly difficult heading uphill. We believe all options should be explored to avoid this.

We are very supportive of the need to keep busses moving and we acknowledge that traffic queues do sometimes delay busses in the area where the bus lane extension is proposed. This occurs not just at peak times but also at the weekend.

If the decision is made to reopen Braid Road with the justification in part to reduce queuing traffic on Comiston Road, there should be no need for the extension of the bus lane.

A part time bus lane, which removes the segregated lane will mean that for most of the day there will be a long segregated lane with kerb side parking, which is a big loss of safety for the cyclist for most of the day. We would consider a Full Time enforced bus lane to be a better alternative if busses continue to be delayed. However we note that this too will make cycling less safe than at present and will stop some cyclists from using it.

As part of a longer term, permanent solution we believe it must be possible to achieve avoid delays for busses AND provide safe passage for cyclists and we would be happy to be part of that discussion.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Reconsider the decision to re-open Braid Road Northbound, and only do so if you can be sure to contain its use to local residents.**
- 2. Delay changes to Braid Road until you have a design that will look and feel safe for cyclists and pedestrians**
- 3. If Braid Road is to be reopened, there should be no need at this stage to extend the bus lane.**