

Transport and Environment Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 17 August 2023

Response to motion by Councillor Macinnes - Travelling Safely – Braid Road and Comiston Road

Executive/routine
Wards

Routine
10 – Meadows/Morningside

1. Recommendations

- 1.1. It is recommended that Transport and Environment Committee notes:
 - 1.1.1. The outcome of the monitoring carried out to understand the impact of changes to the active travel and public transport environment across the area around Braid Road and Comiston Road, as requested by the Committee on 11 November 2021;
 - 1.1.2. The response to comments received from Lothian Buses as part of the non-statutory engagement undertaken in May/June 2022 for the Travelling Safely Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders (ETROs) (Appendix 5);
 - 1.1.3. That the decision taken by Committee on 15 June 2023 on Travelling Safely schemes could result in changes being made to the schemes in this area which could change the monitored impacts, as presented in this report; and
 - 1.1.4. That an extensive monitoring and evaluation plan is in place as part of the ETRO process for the Travelling Safely programme and that this will include further monitoring of this area.

Paul Lawrence

Executive Director of Place

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Response to motion by Councillor Macinnes - Travelling Safely – Braid Road and Comiston Road

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report responds to an adjusted motion which was approved by Committee on 11 November 2021 and provides details of the findings from monitoring the impact of changes to the active travel and public transport environment across the area around Braid Road and Comiston Road. It also provides responses to comments made by Lothian Buses as part of the non-statutory engagement undertaken in May/June 2022 for the Travelling Safely Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders (ETROs).

3. Background

- 3.1 The following schemes to improve facilities for people walking, wheeling and cycling were amongst those introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic, as part of the Spaces for People programme. These schemes have subsequently been retained on a trial basis under the Travelling Safely programme:
- 3.1.1 Braid Road – introduced May 2020;
 - 3.1.2 Comiston Road – introduced August 2020; and
 - 3.1.3 Greenbank to Meadows Quiet Connection – introduced February 2021.
- 3.2 Braid Road was initially closed to motor vehicles travelling in both directions, between Hermitage Drive and the Braid Hills Hotel. The road was subsequently re-opened to southbound motor vehicles in May 2021, to mitigate adverse impacts on public transport journey times on Comiston Road due to displaced traffic.
- 3.3 On [11 November 2021](#), Committee approved making the following changes to the Braid Road and Comiston Road schemes:
- 3.3.1 Re-opening Braid Road to two-way traffic and introducing a modal filter immediately north of the Braidburn Terrace junction;
 - 3.3.2 Removing loading restrictions throughout the Comiston Road scheme (except at junctions); and

- 3.3.3 Replacing a northbound cycleway on Comiston Road, on the approach to Comiston Springs Avenue, with a full time bus lane to improve public transport journey times.
- 3.4 Committee also approved an adjusted [motion](#) by Councillor Macinnes. This called for officers to monitor the impact of these changes to the active travel and public transport environment across the area and to report these back to the Committee. The full text of the motion is provided in Appendix 1.
- 3.5 On [18 August 2022](#), it was reported to Committee that it was no longer proposed to install the northbound bus lane on Comiston Road, as the planned re-opening of Braid Road to two-way traffic was expected to reduce queuing here.
- 3.6 Braid Road was subsequently re-opened to two-way traffic and the modal filter was introduced in December 2022. Following subsequent discussions with Lothian Buses, the decision not to install the bus lane was taken.
- 3.7 The report in August 2022 also provided details of the non-statutory engagement undertaken in May/June 2022 for the Travelling Safely ETROs and the feedback arising from this, including comments received from Lothian Buses. Committee approved an [amendment](#) to the report, requesting officers note the points made by Lothian Buses and asking that each be considered in the Travelling Safely Update Report, and that solutions be proposed where possible. This was also to consider Waverley Bridge and Comiston Road. The full text of the amendment is provided in Appendix 2.
- 3.8 In addition, the August 2022 report provided a summary of the monitoring and evaluation plan for the ETRO process. This included:
- 3.8.1 Mobility counts for each scheme;
 - 3.8.2 Market research;
 - 3.8.3 On-street user experience surveys; and
 - 3.8.4 Monitoring of traffic patterns, congestion and journey time impacts.
- 3.9 On 15 June 2023, Committee agreed to set aside the Braid Road, Comiston Road and Greenbank to Meadows Quiet Connection schemes from the general Travelling Safely ETRO process and to work with local councillors to:
- 3.9.1 Redesign the Braid Road and Greenbank to Meadows Quiet Connection schemes and to present options to residents living on or near the schemes; and
 - 3.9.2 Consider adjustments to the Comiston Road scheme.
- 3.10 The full text of the actions agreed by Committee are provided in Appendix 3.
- 3.11 Changes to these schemes arising from this process could result in changes to the monitored impacts across the area which are presented within this report.

4. Main report

Monitoring of Impacts of Changes

- 4.1 Monitoring of the following impacts in the area has been undertaken:
 - 4.1.1 General cycle movements across the Greenbank to Meadows Quiet Connection, including routeing through the Braid Estate, and the increase at Whitehouse Loan;
 - 4.1.2 Traffic re-routeing at road closures, including at Hermitage Gardens and Midmar Gardens;
 - 4.1.3 Traffic volume comparisons with 2018 levels; and
 - 4.1.4 Monitoring cycling levels on Comiston Road since the cycle lanes were installed.
- 4.2 Further details are provided in Appendices 4 and 6.
- 4.3 Lothian Buses has confirmed that the reopening of Braid Road has significantly reduced the delays to bus services on Comiston Road.
- 4.4 Further monitoring and evaluation will be carried out in this area, as part of the ETRO process for the Travelling Safely programme.

Comments from Lothian Buses

- 4.5 The comments received from Lothian Buses in response to the non-statutory engagement undertaken in May/June 2022 for the Travelling Safely ETROs, as reported to the Committee on 18 August 2022, and the Council's responses are provided in Appendix 5.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 As instructed by Committee in June 2023, these three schemes will be removed from the general Travelling Safely ETRO process and will instead be taken forward under scheme specific ETROs.
- 5.2 Further engagement will be undertaken with residents/local stakeholders for the Braid Road and Greenbank to Meadows Quiet Connection schemes. This is scheduled to commence in September 2023.
- 5.3 Officers will work with local councillors to redesign the Braid Road and Greenbank to Meadows schemes and to consider adjustments to the Comiston Road scheme to inform the new ETROs.
- 5.4 Any representations received already in response to the original advertising of the ETROs in November 2022 will also be considered as part of this process.
- 5.5 If this engagement/redesign process is not completed prior to the planned re-advertising of the general Travelling Safely ETROs, then these schemes will have

to be re-advertised in their current forms as a temporary measure, to allow them to be retained until new ETROs can be promoted for the modified proposals.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The Travelling Safely programme is funded by the Scottish Government's Places for Everyone Fund, which is administered by Sustrans.
- 6.2 There is no direct financial impact arising from this report.
- 6.3 The decision to remove these three schemes from the general Travelling Safely ETRO process and instead take them forward under scheme specific ETROs will increase the associated costs of promoting and advertising the Orders, due to the additional work needed to create and advertise separate Orders. The estimated additional cost is approximately £0.025m.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) for the Travelling Safely programme can be viewed via the [IIA directory](#) on the Council's website.
- 7.2 The previous Spaces for People engagement process was approved by Councillors at the Policy and Sustainability Committee on 14 May 2020. Due to the emergency nature of the project implementation no public consultation undertaken, however a process of notification was adopted to let Councillors and stakeholders know about and comment on each scheme proposal.
- 7.3 In June 2021, engagement was undertaken with local residents and Community Councils on the Braid Road and Comiston Road schemes. The outcomes of this engagement were reported to the Committee on 11 November 2021.
- 7.4 In May/June 2022 a non-statutory public engagement exercise for the Travelling Safely programme was undertaken for three weeks to replicate the requirements of the previous ETRO process. The purpose of this engagement was to seek informal representations regarding the restrictions and prohibitions that augment or facilitate the individual measures.
- 7.5 The outcomes of this engagement were reported to the Committee on 18 August 2022 and approval was sought to progress with the formal ETRO process. Approval was granted and on 21 November 2022 five ETROs were made to commence the trial (for a maximum 18-month period).
- 7.6 During the first six months of the trial, the Authority is required to formally allow individuals or organisations to offer comment, objection or support for the relevant traffic orders.

- 7.7 As reported to the Committee on 15 June 2023, there is a need to re-advertise the ETROs. The regulations require the six-month consultation period to start again from the new date of advertising.
- 7.8 Any representations received already in response to the original advertising of the ETROs in November 2022 will be retained and considered as part of the final assessment of whether or not to retain or modify the measures.
- 7.9 Further engagement will be undertaken with residents/local stakeholders for the Braid Road and Greenbank to Meadows Quiet Connection schemes. This is scheduled to commence in September 2023.
- 7.10 As instructed by the Committee on 15 June 2023, Officers will work with local councillors to redesign the Braid Road and Greenbank to Meadows schemes and to consider adjustments to the Comiston Road scheme to inform the new ETROs.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 Active Travel Measures – Travelling Safely Update [Report](#) – 11 November 2021
- 8.2 Active Travel Measures – Travelling Safely Update [Report](#) – 18 August 2022
- 8.3 Travelling Safely – Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders [Business Bulletin](#) – 15 June 2023

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 - Approved Motion – 11 November 2021
- 9.2 Appendix 2 - Approved Amendment – 18 August 2022
- 9.3 Appendix 3 - Approved Actions – 15 June 2023
- 9.4 Appendix 4 - Monitoring of Impacts of Changes
- 9.5 Appendix 5 - Comments Received from Lothian Buses and the Council's Responses
- 9.6 Appendix 6 – Monitoring of Cycling Levels on Comiston Road

Appendix 1 – Approved Motion by Councillor Macinnes – 11 November 2021

Decision

To approve the following adjusted motion by Councillor Macinnes:

1. To note the updates in the report, including details on existing measures.
2. To consider feedback received on the Comiston Road and Braid Road schemes and agreed:
 - To implement Option 2 for Braid Road as per officers' recommendations, however further noted the staged implementation of the improvements to Braidburn Terrace, 'Braidburn Valley Park to Hermitage of Braid', including the toucan crossing on Braid Road. To agree that to support residents to continue walking, wheeling and cycling, Braid Road should not be opened to traffic in both directions until the toucan crossing was operational.
 - To alter the measures on Comiston Road as per officers' recommendations, however retaining the maximum amount of 'cycle lane defenders' and to provide a full-time bus lane with double yellow lines, in order to prioritise bus and bike users as per the sustainable transport hierarchy.
3. To note the outcome of the review of disabled parking measures at the Arboretum Road crossing point in paragraph 4.8 of the report.
4. To note and to approve the approach described in paragraph 5.4 of the consultation, advertising and making of ETROs for Travelling Safely measures.
5. To recognise that a complete Active Travel Network was necessary for safe journeys for those who chose to travel by bike in the city and that the reintroduction of alternative road features such as loading facilities could effectively reduce the safety aspects of an active travel network and impact on its continuity and potentially on levels of use.
6. To request a particular focus from officers to monitor the impact of the proposed changes to the active travel and public transport environment across the area that includes Braid Road and Comiston Road and to report back to the Transport and Environment Committee within one year.

Appendix 2 – Approved Amendment – 18 August 2022

Amendment 3

1. To note the project background and updates included in this report.
2. To note the feedback received during the recent public engagement relating to the proposed ETROs in Appendix 1 of the report.
3. To approve the recommendations in Appendix 2 of the report to make ETROs for the proposed 18-month scheme trials.
4. To note feedback from stakeholders following the public engagement in Appendix 3.
5. To note that if Travelling Safely schemes are made permanent, many have the potential to contribute to Edinburgh's Net Zero and traffic reduction targets.
6. To asks that programme for progressing the Braid Road proposals is circulated to Ward Councillors and Transport and Environment Committee members within 2 weeks.
7. Notes the points made by Lothian Buses in 4.14 and asks that each is considered in the Traveling Safely Update Report, and that solutions are proposed where possible. This should also consider Waverly Bridge and Comiston Road.

Appendix 3 Approved Actions – 15 June 2023

Motion

Committee

- I. Notes the majority decision of committee on 1 September 2022 to approve the recommendations of report 7.7 on “Active Travel Measures - Travelling Safely Update”, including progressing the listed projects to experimental traffic regulation orders (ETROs).
- II. notes that, almost 10 months on, these ETROs are still to be correctly advertised or legally commenced due to highly regrettable errors within both the original orders and the revised orders most recently received from the external consultant.
- III. recognises how these delays have only added to the public concern expressed during the consultation period which led to the 2022 report.

Committee therefore agrees to revisit the decision of 1 September 2022 and, in recognition of the challenges seen, agrees to set apart from the ETRO process the following schemes which elicited the most negative feedback in the original consultation, namely:

- a) Braid Road and the Greenbank to Meadows Quiet Route schemes; where officers are asked to work with local councillors to re-design the schemes, taking into account improvements suggested by local residents during the consultation process, with a view to presenting options to residents living on or near the schemes and thereafter to report back to committee.
- b) Comiston Road; where committee agrees to ask officers to work with local councillors to consider adjustments to the scheme to address road safety concerns, taking into account feedback received from road users and local residents, and to present an adjusted scheme to committee.
- c) Silverknowes Road North; where committee requests that officers return with a more detailed report on options to reopen the road between the Silverknowes roundabout and the promenade and install segregated cycling infrastructure.
- d) Silverknowes Road South, where committee agrees that officers should return to committee with a report on options to a) amend the current arrangement to address ongoing residents’ concerns and b) upgrade the path between Silverknowes and Cramond Road South into a full cycle way, recognising this as a pressing priority for improving cyclist safety in Silverknowes.”

Addendum

Adds:

1. Agrees that the aims of the individual schemes noted should not be diluted.
2. Agrees that no unforced changes should be made to these schemes in the interim.
3. Agrees that each of the listed schemes should be subject to their own ETRO, but greater connectivity should be sought between (a) and (b).
4. Agrees that a report on this work should be provided to Committee no later than November 2023.

TECHNICAL NOTE

Job Name: Travelling Safely

Job No.: 330610712

Note No.: 001

Prepared By: Thomas Hochkins

Reviewed By: Jordan Dunn

Date: July 23

Subject: Meadows to Greenbank Quiet Connection Summary of Monitoring Data

1. Introduction

1.1. The Meadows to Greenbank quiet connection was introduced in late 2020 as part of the City of Edinburgh Council's (CEC) Spaces for People project which aimed to make it easier for people to walk and cycle during the COVID-19 pandemic. The project initially included the following measures:

- Closure of Braid Road to northbound traffic
- Modal filters introduced at the following locations:
 - Braid Road at the junction with Hermitage Drive
 - Hermitage Gardens at the junction with Cluny Drive
 - Braid Avenue at the junction with Cluny Drive
 - Canaan Lane south of Newbattle Terrace
 - Whitehouse Loan south of Strathearn Road
 - Whitehouse Loan south of Warrender Park Road

1.2. In November 2022, Braid Road reopened to two-way traffic south of Hermitage Drive and the modal filter on Braid Road was moved north of the junction with Hermitage Drive. All other modal filters remain in place.

1.3. Since the introduction of the quiet connection, volumetric data on vehicular traffic and cycling has been collected at various locations within the project area on the following dates:

- April 2021
 - May 2021
 - July 2021
 - September 2021
 - February 2022
-

TECHNICAL NOTE

- May 2022
- February 2023
- March 2023

1.4. Historic vehicular traffic data is also available at a number of the same junctions from January 2018 to enable comparison with the pre-COVID period. Data collected during 2021 has not been included within the analysis due to the significant differences in COVID-19 restrictions during each of the data collection periods.

2. Vehicular Traffic

2.1. **Figure 2-1** illustrates the observed two-way vehicular traffic flows (12 hours, 07:00 to 19:00) at five locations on the main routes in the vicinity of the Braid Estate. The data is based on junction turning counts undertaken on midweek days in January 2018, May 2022, and March 2023.

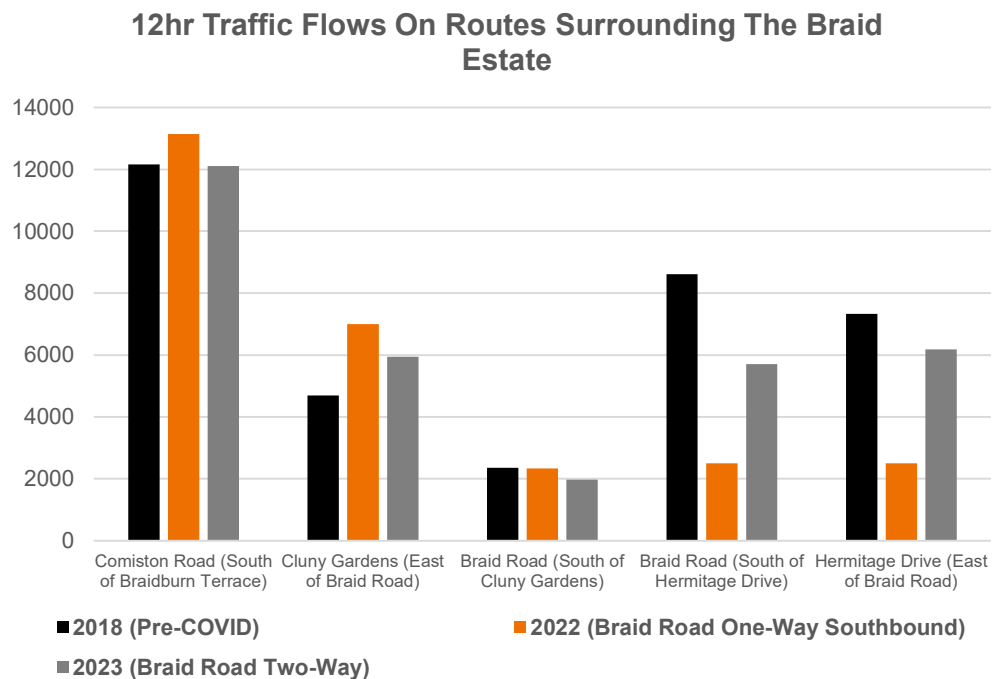


Figure 2-1: 12hr Traffic Flows on Main Routes Surrounding the Braid Estate (07:00 to 19:00)

2.2. While comparisons can be made between data sets, as the data was collected in different months and working patterns have continued to change since COVID-19, caution is recommended when reviewing the data.

2.3. The data in **Figure 2-1** indicates the following:

- Traffic flows on Comiston Road in 2023 are broadly similar to 2018; the higher flows in 2022 are likely to be due to the northbound restriction in place on Braid Road.

- Traffic on Braid Road is higher in 2023 than in 2022 although less than 2018. The increase between 2022 and 2023 is a result of the re-opening of Braid Road to northbound traffic. The higher numbers in 2018 could be due to increased levels of background traffic avoiding congestion on Comiston Road although there is no evidence to support this conclusively.
- Traffic on Cluny Gardens is lower in 2023 than in 2022 although higher than 2018. The difference between 2018 and 2022 is likely to be due to the restrictions on Braid Road combined with model filters restricting traffic routing options within the braid estate. Following the re-opening of Braid Road traffic likely decreases due to alternative routing options.
- Traffic on Hermitage Drive is lower in 2023 compared with 2018 although substantially higher than in 2022. The increase in 2023 is likely to be due to the re-opening of Braid Road to northbound vehicles.
- Traffic on Comiston Road has not decreased in proportion to the increases observed on Braid Road and Hermitage Drive following the reopening of Braid Road to northbound traffic. This potentially suggests that traffic was re-routing across a wider area to avoid Comiston Road during the northbound closure of Braid Road although there is no evidence to support this conclusively.

2.4. **Figure 2-2** shows the change in two-way vehicular traffic flows (12 hours, 07:00 to 19:00) at three locations within the Braid Estate comparing before and after the re-opening of Braid Road to two-way traffic. **Figure 2-2** indicates that traffic has increased on each of the three roads following the re-opening of Braid Road.

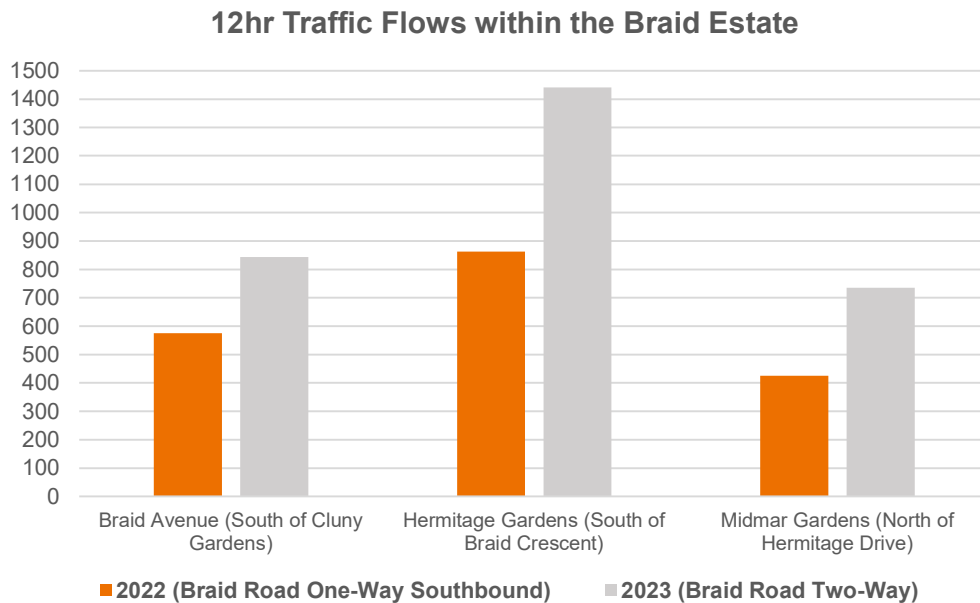


Figure 2-2: 12 Hour Traffic Flows within the Braid Estate (07:00 to 19:00)

2.5. **Figure 2-3** illustrates the distribution of traffic throughout the day in March 2023 at the same three locations which indicates significant increases in traffic during the morning and evening

peak periods. These patterns indicate that each of the routes are being utilised by through traffic during the peak periods.

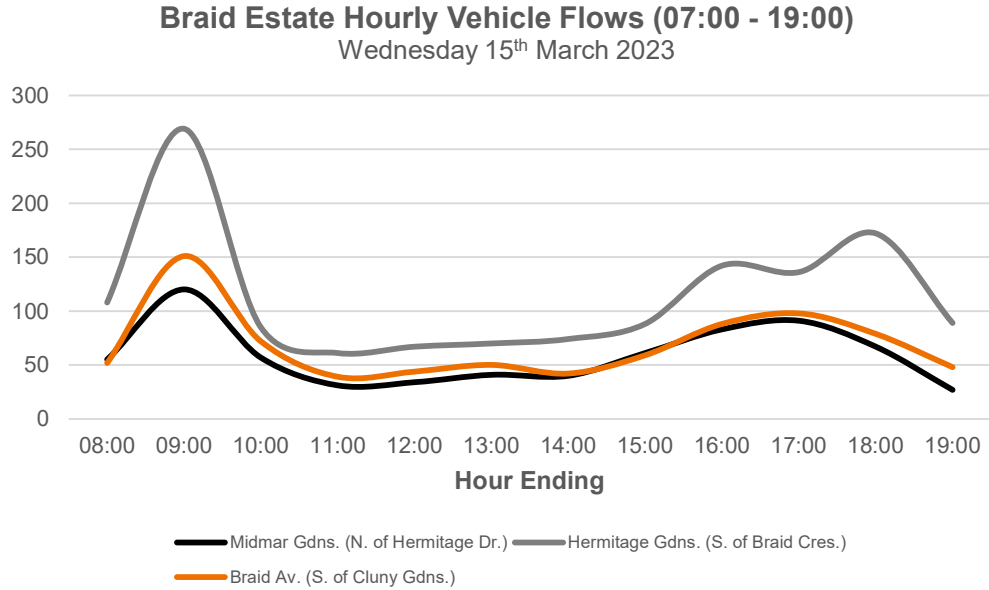


Figure 2-3: Braid Estate Hourly Vehicle Flows (07:00 - 19:00)

2.6. **Figure 2-4** illustrates the current layout of the Greenbank to Meadows quiet connection scheme within the Braid Estate including the assumed routing of through traffic on Hermitage Gardens and Midmar Drive.

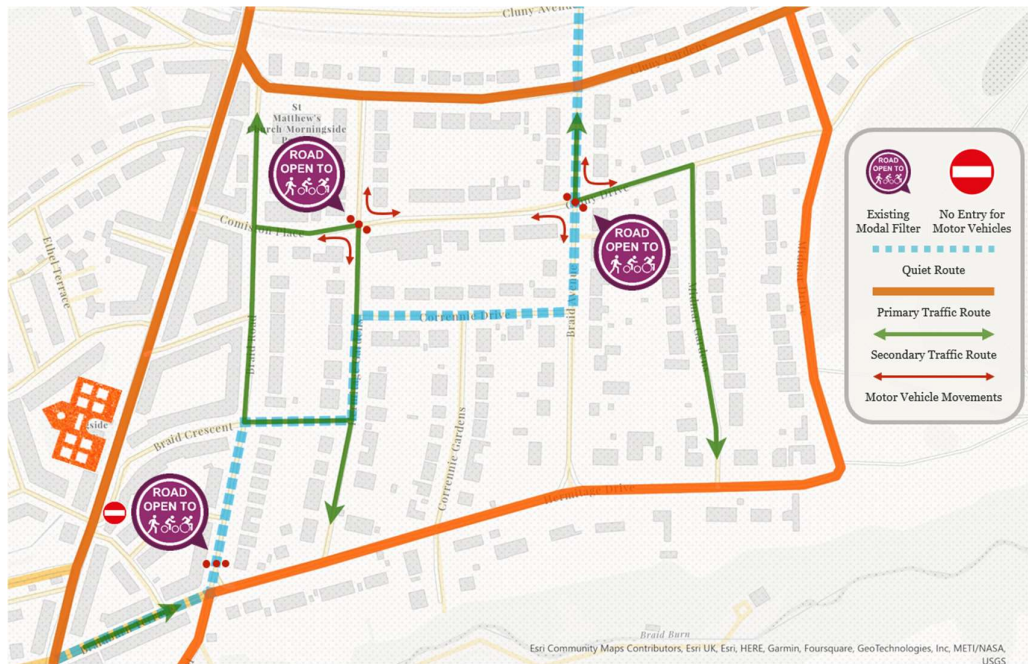


Figure 2-4: Current Layout of the Greenbank to Meadows Quiet Connection Scheme within the Braid Estate

TECHNICAL NOTE

3. Cycle Flows

- 3.1. **Figure 3-1** shows the observed two-way cycle flows (12 hours, 07:00 to 19:00) at six locations along the Greenbank to Meadows quiet connection during 2022 and 2023. The data is based on junction turning counts undertaken on midweek days in February and May 2022, and February and March 2023.
- 3.2. Levels of cycling activity are generally considered to be more heavily impacted by seasonal variation than vehicular traffic. The weather on each of the survey days was dry with limited rainfall and temperatures generally consistent with seasonal averages.

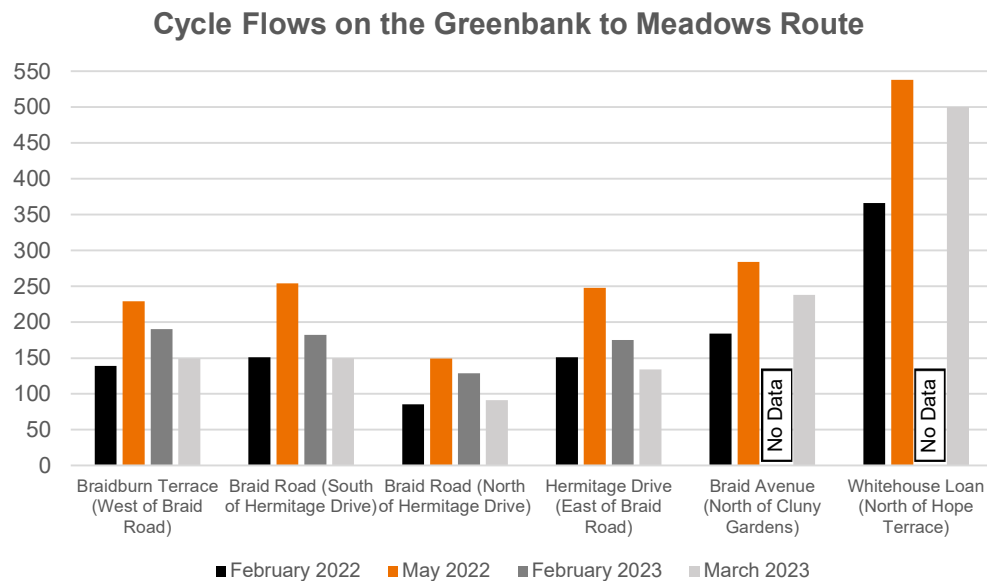


Figure 3-1: Daily Cycle Flows on the Greenbank to Meadows Quiet Connection

- 3.3. The data in **Figure 3-1** indicates the following:
- The level of cycling activity along the quiet connection increases in proximity to the city centre with the highest numbers observed at the northern extent of the route.
 - A higher number of cyclists are observed to use Hermitage Drive rather than the quiet connection along Braid Road and this pattern was consistent prior to the re-opening of Braid Road to two-way traffic.
 - There is a relatively even split of cyclists entering the Braid Estate from Braidburn Terrace and south from Braid Road and this pattern was consistent prior to the re-opening of Braid Road to two-way traffic.
 - While further data collection is required, the observed data indicates a reduced pattern of cycling activity along the route with this pattern being more pronounced in the southern section of the scheme in the vicinity of the Braid Estate.

Appendix 5 - Comments received from Lothian Buses and the Council's response

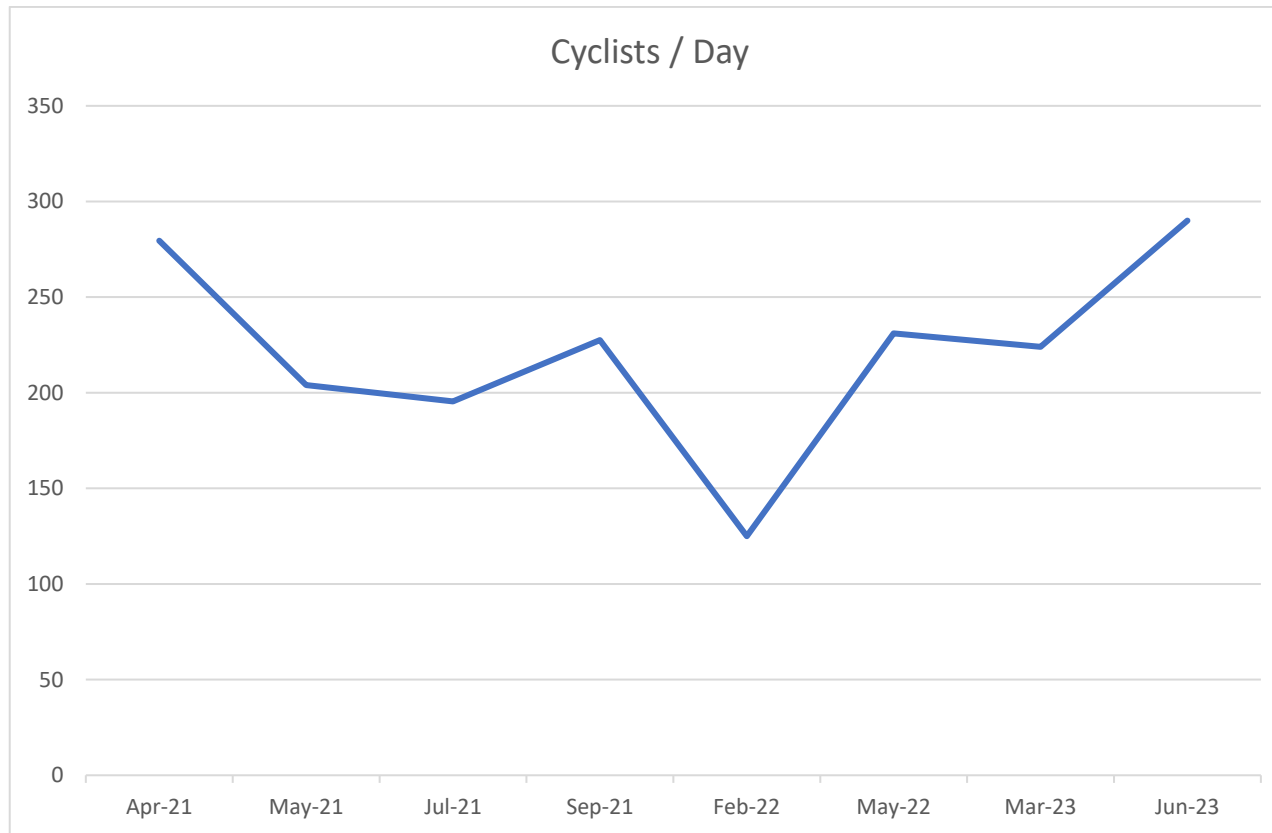
Ref	Lothian Buses' Comment	Council's Response
4.14.1	Disappointed that the ETRO proposals only show the loading and waiting restrictions that apply under the ETRO. Lothian Buses believe that indicative drawings showing cycle segregation/physical distancing measures would have provided a clearer understanding of the whole project and what will physically remain on the ground.	<p>The purpose of an ETRO or TRO is to introduce or amend restrictions on the way that traffic can use a road. Including measures that do not form part of the Order on the Order plans could lead to confusion and to objections being submitted in relation to the detail of these measures, rather than to the measures which do form part of the Order.</p> <p>It is, however, recognised that sometimes providing additional detail could assist people to better understand proposed changes and the reasons why they are being pursued. Officers are therefore investigating ways in which additional detail could be provided, either on the Order plans or on supplementary plans, in a way that minimises the risk of confusion.</p>
4.14.2	With traffic levels having returned to a level similar to pre 2019, yet with bus passenger recovery remaining under 80%, Lothian Buses would like to see the remaining Travelling Safely schemes reviewed to take into account increased bus journey times. Lothian Buses remain open to discussing these issues with council officers.	Officers have continued to maintain a positive dialogue with representatives of Lothian Buses (LB) to consider any significant impacts on bus journey times. Following the initial concerns raised by LB, no further information has been passed to the project team suggesting delays to services. Officers will continue to have discussions with LB to understand and mitigate any negative impacts resulting from the Travelling Safely schemes as part of the ETRO process.
4.14.3	With regard to specific restrictions as discussed with council officers Lothian Buses continue to oppose the closure of Waverley Bridge (ERTO/21/26) to vehicular traffic.	The closure of Waverley Bridge is a critical element to delivering the Waverley/Calton Catalyst Area as identified in the Edinburgh City Centre Transformation (ECCT) strategy. ECCT highlights the important role Waverley Bridge has in providing a unique location from within the valley that takes in both the Old and New Towns. The removal of traffic, including buses, will enable the creation of a new world-class space and gateway to the city, and

		<p>will transform the entrance to Waverley Station in line with the emerging station masterplan.</p> <p>Following the closure of Waverley Bridge, the main departure point for tour buses was originally relocated to St Andrew Square. This has subsequently been relocated to Waterloo Place on a trial basis. Regular update meetings are being held with tour bus operators to gather feedback regarding the viability of Waterloo Place as a departure point in the longer term.</p>
4.14.4	The introduction of bus stop lay-bys has increased the time a bus takes to depart a stop and re-join traffic flow, for example on Crewe Road South, Ferry Road, Minto Street to Craigmillar Park, Old Dalkeith Road.	Refer to response to 4.14.2 above.
4.14.5	Lothian Bus drivers have also observed a reduction in vehicle speeds in areas where segregation measures are present. Their feedback has noted increased scheduled journey times, between one and two minutes, on routes between - Crewe Toll to Dean Bridge, Cameron Toll to the Royal Infirmary Edinburgh (RIE) and Ferry Road.	Refer to response to 4.14.2 above.

Appendix 6: Monitoring of Cycling Levels on Comiston Road

Surveys were conducted on Buckstone Terrace, south of its junction with Braid Road, on two weekdays between 7am and 7pm. Surveys were conducted in each of the months listed in the table below, with the mean weekday number of cycles per day shown.

Daily Cyclists - Buckstone Terrace								
Survey Period	Apr-21	May-21	Jul-21	Sep-21	Feb-22	May-22	Mar-23	Jun-23
Cyclists / Day	279.5	204	195.5	227.5	125	231	224	290



The difference between weekday and weekend values for the most recent survey period shows clear commuting patterns, with cycling levels far higher during peak periods on a weekday.

User Count Surveys – Buckstone Terrace

