

From: Rebecca Gordon <edinburghcouncil@prgloo.com>
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To: Scott Arthur
Subject: LATEST NEWS: Seeking your views on keeping Spaces for People measures



22 Feb 2021

LATEST NEWS: Seeking your views on keeping Spaces for People measures

- Residents asked if they'd like to see schemes retained, modified or removed
- Responses will help inform any proposals to keep changes in place more permanently
- Aiming to help people get from A to B on foot, bike or wheelchair more easily

A citywide consultation launches today (2pm, Monday 22 February) seeking views on where improvements for walking, cycling and wheeling made during the COVID pandemic should be kept longer term.

In line with our wider ambitions to create a green, healthy and well-connected future for the Capital, we want to make it as easy as possible for people to get from A to B using sustainable, active modes of transport.

With these ambitions in mind, we're asking residents if they'd like to see some of the schemes introduced as part of the [Spaces for People programme](#), or elements of them, retained or removed.

In response to the COVID pandemic, we've been rolling out changes to help residents to travel by foot, bike or wheelchair while physically distancing, as well as providing alternatives to travel by bus while restrictions are in place. During lockdown we saw a surge in people walking and cycling, and we want to support that longer term, and the benefits this can bring to the environment, to people's health and to quality of life.

Responses to the Spaces for People: Moving Forward consultation will help inform any proposals to keep measures in place, either on a trial basis or more permanently. The Council's Transport and Environment Committee will consider the consultation results in April and the relevant statutory procedures would be followed before any schemes were made more permanent.

Councillor Lesley Macinnes, Transport and Environment Convener, said:

"We know from our own engagement with the public that people do want to see change happen. Our consultation on the City Mobility Plan found the vast majority of respondents supported proposals like introducing protected cycle lanes on arterial routes and creating more space for walking, while over the last year we've heard from many, many people who have gained from Spaces for People measures.

"We're working toward a more sustainable, inclusive and connected future and we want to see if we can deliver longer-term benefits by extending the life of Spaces for People projects, whether through trial schemes or by retaining projects in place more permanently. We've had encouragement from the Scottish Government to consider turning the most useful of these schemes into permanent infrastructure to help further support walking, wheeling and cycling.

"As we look beyond the pandemic, we really want to know what difference retaining, modifying, or removing schemes would make to your lives. Please help us by sharing your views."

Councillor Karen Doran, Transport and Environment Vice Convener, said:

“It’s been a particularly challenging year and we’ve been doing everything we can to help people to make essential journeys or take daily exercise safely, as well as spending time in local high streets when restrictions allowed.

“As we look to make a green recovery from the pandemic, we’re considering whether some of the temporary schemes in place could be kept longer term to help people to continue to walk, cycle and wheel, and we’d like to know what you think. Of course, we’re just beginning the process - I want to reassure people that we’ll be carefully reviewing their responses as we consider the best way forward, and that we’ll be following the statutory procedures before anything is made more permanent.”

In January, members of the Transport and Environment Committee approved [recommendations to assess Spaces for People schemes](#) by a set of criteria to determine whether it would be appropriate to keep some of them, and to commence a public consultation to seek people’s views.

Amongst the interventions to support safer walking, cycling and wheeling introduced or developed since last May are 39km of pop-up cycle lanes, widened footpaths in 11 key shopping streets and the introduction of safety measures at every Edinburgh school. We’ve also implemented several schemes based on suggestions via the Commonplace consultation and have made changes to help pedestrians get around the city, including removing street clutter and improving pedestrian crossings.

Many of the Spaces for People projects align with the Council’s broader aims, particularly those of the [City Mobility Plan](#), a ten-year strategy for transforming travel and mobility in the Capital, which was approved by [Transport and Environment Committee](#) on Friday (16 February). The Plan envisions a connected, net zero carbon future, a healthier environment and better air quality,

achieved by providing reliable, sustainable transport options, including much improved active travel links.

An enhanced environment for walking, cycling, wheeling and spending time outdoors is also central to [Edinburgh City Centre Transformation](#), the [Active Travel Action Plan](#) and several other key Council commitments. It also reflects the Scottish Government's [Strategic Transport Projects Review 2](#), which states that making successful Spaces for People schemes permanent is the next key step in creating a change to the way road space is allocated and supporting active travel.

[Find out more about the Spaces for People consultation](#) and take part on the Council website.

Please find comments from members of the public on Spaces for People schemes below.

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Notes to editors

Comments from residents who have been making use of Spaces for People schemes

Teresa Holligan said: "I understand the anxiety around an apparent lack of consultation over the Braid Road closure, but given the urgency required during the pandemic I was pleased to see swift action and I am delighted with the closure.

"I have lived at the 'top' end of the Buckstone estate for 32 years and make regular journeys to Morningside and my allotment at Midmar. At the start of the pandemic I stopped using buses and relied on my car, but with the new cycle

lanes and the closure of a section of Braid Road I now feel able, for the first time ever, to make these almost daily journeys safely by bike, and am doing so. This is obviously healthier for me, the people around me and our environment.

“I hope that the Council will find a way to make safe cycling routes from Fairmilehead and Buckstone into the city a permanent feature of our transport network.”

Dave McCraw said: “As a family with young children attending the Lanark Road nursery who also commute on the A70 we seem to be forever on this stretch of road. As it exists today it is extremely hazardous to cross on foot, such that we do not use the bus or at any time allow grandparents to handle the nursery run (unless they were driving door to door). Under the proposed scheme, we would happily allow grandparents to take our children to nursery by bus.

“We often cycle, especially in the summer months when it is dry. Unfortunately the lack of safe street lighting on the Water of Leith path combined with the horrific mud finds us doing a two mile drive to nursery more often than we'd like.

“We have considered taking our children to a different nursery because the A70 both makes it extremely difficult to access nursery except by car and detracts from the setting of the nursery in general. With the benefit of a 30mph two lane road with excellent active travel provision, the nursery will find itself in even greater demand.

“All of this is to say: the changes proposed to the Lanark Road will allow us to keep cycling through the winter instead of driving.”

Colin Fischbacher said: “I usually cycle both for travel and work and I know from speaking to colleagues that the main reason people with bikes are reluctant to cycle more in Edinburgh is concern about the safety of cycling in traffic. That's particularly true on a road like Lanark Road where as you cycle, cars may be passing close to you at 40mph. I think that better provision of cycle lanes is a vital measure to encourage more cycling. A painted line is nice, but a physical barrier is even better.”

Mike Livesley said: “The recently installed cycle lane and segregation on Duddingston Road has vastly improved the quality of life for my family travelling to and from school before the recent lockdown, and will continue to do so once the restrictions are lifted.

“We are a family with no car and currently travel from Rosefield Place in Portobello to Duddingston Primary where my eldest son (6 years old, p2) is a student. As we have to travel quite far, cycling has always been a popular option as I can also take my youngest son (2) on the back of my bicycle, however until the installation of the cycle lane, Duddingston Road was always far too dangerous to entertain cycling with my son and was scary enough at the best of times on my own, with always a block of parked cars on both sides of the road by St John's School and Nursery, with opening car doors an additional hazard.

“However this was transformed with the new cycle lane and has allowed my son and I to cycle together and to greatly improve his confidence and ability to cycle safely on the roads.”

Barbara Kerr said: “I live just off the Links and regularly cycle in the area. Before Links Gardens was closed to provide Spaces for People I avoided it a lot. It was really busy with cars, and drivers tended to ignore me at the narrow bits as I was on a bike and they thought they could squeeze through even though I had right of way. Now it is a joy to cycle along that way. It is such a short section, but provides a really important link to the shared use paths on the Links and towards the Water of Leith Cycle way. Before I would be on the road trying to keep up with traffic on East Hermitage place and Duke street, now I use Links Gardens and the shared use path instead.”

Colin McLean, Head Teacher at James Gillespie's Primary School, said: “The Greenbank to Meadows Quiet Route allows students and staff to cycle, walk and wheel more safely to James Gillespie's Primary School and Nursery. Our school community has worked hard over a number of years to encourage cycling, walking and wheeling which are known to improve life-long health and wellbeing and improve air pollution in our neighbourhood.

“Whilst we have one of the highest number of students travelling in this way, we know that many families still consider the road network too dangerous for young children to cycle. The new road safety measures are a game changer to reassure families that it is safe. The Quiet Route will allow us to run our bike- and walking-buses in greater safety and will reduce the risk of accidents involving children and vehicles. We hope that these can now run daily rather than weekly or monthly.

“We hope that the Quiet Route approach can be expanded into a Low Traffic Neighbourhood approach over time and this will allow students and staff from all parts of the city to reach our school safely and using active travel.”

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