



17 July 2020

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Dear Sirs

#### **SPACES FOR PEOPLE - HAZLEHEAD TO CITY CENTRE — PROPOSED TEMPORARY BIKE LANE**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these proposals.

#### **Introduction**

We welcome the proposed measures. In particular we support the removal of on-street parking to create space for a (more or less) continuous bike lane. This corridor is an important radial route for connecting communities (including Kingswells and Westhill) with the city centre. It is already well used by cyclists, as evidenced both by ACC's own cycle counter data and ACF's annual cycle survey, but has the potential to attract much more use if a safe and continuous route is provided. We commented recently on the Nestrans/Stantec study looking at elements of this corridor and our response to that consultation is available on our website

<https://aberdeencycleforum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/A944-stakeholder-consultation-response-June-2020..pdf>

There are however some limitations to what is currently proposed which we comment on in more detail below.

#### **Limitations & risks**

- No indication has been given whether the route is to be physically separated from traffic or just marked with a solid white line. Our preference is for the former, and if the lane is marked with paint only we feel that this would be a significant failing – indeed we would not describe it as an 'active travel corridor'. Cyclists often say "paint is not protection" and without segregation the perception of danger will to some extent remain and is likely to be most acutely felt by new or inexperienced cyclists – surely the very people that the SfP measures hope to attract. A 'paint only' lane is also unlikely to appeal to families or be used by unaccompanied children. As you

will be aware Sustrans generally promote as a standard for new cycle infrastructure that it should be safe to be used by an unaccompanied 12 year old. We also have some concerns about the bus stops (buses are known to spend time waiting at stops to stick to their schedules), and about enforcement. Although the mandatory sections of the bike lane will prohibit vehicles from entering or parking, our experience elsewhere of drivers' compliance is not encouraging. Some years ago we undertook a survey across several locations of driver compliance with the law at cycle advanced stop boxes ("ASLs"). Compliance was on average around 50%. Therefore ACC should give some thought to monitoring and enforcement (further noting that the Union St bus gate introduced earlier as part of SfP measures appears to be widely ignored).

- The other significant failing is that no cycle-friendly solution has been proposed to the 4 major roundabouts on this route. What we have said above about the attractiveness of this as a route and the dangers (both perceived and actual) for cyclists apply equally or more so to these major uncontrolled intersections. The Anderson Drive roundabout is clearly off-putting for cyclists – even experienced ones who are otherwise confident riding in traffic. Queens Cross is equally hazardous. The roundabout at Hazlehead/Kings Gate is also busy, and the roundabout at Forest Avenue / Forest Rd is little better. All of these roundabouts suffer can suffer from vehicles entering at excessive speed. For cyclists to dismount and use pedestrian crossing points may be theoretically possible, but is unlikely to be used. For example at Anderson Drive, city-bound, it would be necessary for a cyclist to cross the road 3 times, including one dual carriageway with separate crossings – a total of 4 controlled crossings. As each is set back some distance from the roundabout, the detour and delay is such that we doubt whether any cyclists would use this as a means of avoiding the roundabout. We appreciate that it may be challenging in engineering terms to provide a cycle-friendly solution, but ask that this be reconsidered as without some solution the benefits of the route as a whole are significantly undermined.
- Along this corridor some of the road surface is in very poor condition, particularly at the margins of the road where the cycle lane will be placed. Cyclists are more vulnerable than cars to potholes or raised / collapsed iron-work.
- At Rosemount Viaduct it is disappointing that the route just stops. We would prefer that it continue to connect to other SfP routes such as Schoolhill and George St. However we are aware that you are developing the SfP schemes quickly and bringing forward proposals as and when ready, so we remain hopeful that these connections can be made in subsequent schemes so that a truly connected network of cycle lanes can be achieved.

#### **Additional points**

- We trust that in encouraging an increase in cycling as a means of accessing the city centre, that additional cycle parking will be provided in due course.
- We are of course aware that the measures being proposed are temporary. We hope that in due course permanent high-quality cycle routes such as on this corridor will be provided. With that in mind we expect that use of the temporary facility will be an important indicator of demand. Our concern is that the compromises with regard to roundabouts and segregation means that the temporary facility will not be a true indicator of the potential of this route.

I hope these comments are useful. We are of course always available to discuss any points of detail. Although we feel obliged to point out some of the limitations, we remain supportive of the SfP programme and applaud ACC in bringing forward these measures.

Yours faithfully,

Gavin Clark, Chair

Aberdeen Cycle Forum