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Dear Sirs

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these proposals.

Introduction, & drawbacks

We welcome the proposed measures. We give some detailed comments on individual sections below. There are however a few fundamental difficulties with this as an active travel corridor.

- As an active travel route from Bridge of Don to the city centre, the detour via the beach is significant in both time and distance. According to google maps, it is 55% slower and 37% further compared with King St. For a significant proportion of commuters, King St may remain the preferred route.
- The beach is also more exposed in terms of its weather (especially wind) and this can be significant for cyclists, particularly commuters who may be out in all weathers.
- A high proportion of cycle traffic using the King St corridor is travelling to or from the University. A route via the beach is of no benefit to them. For commuters it is only likely to have any appeal for those travelling end to end and so does not deliver for those who may be taking a shorter journey using part of King St.
- At the west end of beach boulevard, the proposed route stops just short of a major and busy roundabout. With few obvious alternatives, the volume and type of traffic using this roundabout is likely to be significantly off-putting for many cyclists, especially less experienced ones.

Nevertheless, a segregated cycle lane along the beach is likely to appeal to some, particularly recreational cyclists and therefore offers certain - albeit different - benefits. It may have more appeal to those who are new to cycling and are less comfortable with the 'direct' route given how much busier it is.

Ellon Rd

The existing road here is very difficult for cycling and so improvements by way of a segregated lane would be very welcome. We welcome the fact that it is a mandatory lane provided that it is physically separate from vehicular traffic - not merely a painted line. We understand 'traffic cylinders' are to be used, similar to those used at other locations recently e.g. Thistle St

Noting that there is an existing off-road shared-use path to the west of Ellon Rd, north of the junction with N Donside Road, and possibly south of that to the junction with Balgownie Crescent, presumably some cyclists will continue to use that and so some thought needs to be given to how that connects to the new route, particular for south-bound cyclists who will need to cross the carriage-way.

No lane dimensions are provided so we assume these will meet minimum national standards.

Esplanade Bridge of Don to beyond Beach Ballroom

The drawing appears to show the cycle lane moving off the road onto the footway/shared use path past the radius of the junction, before re-joining the road. We presume there is some safety reason for this although as a layout it is not ideal. If implemented, dropped kerbs would be needed to prevent this being a barrier to safe cycling. We wonder if an alternative design is possible e.g. solid physical barriers in the road to protect cyclists around the curve?

At this junction it is not obvious that there is a good way for north-bound cyclists to get across to the east side of the carriageway. We note crossing points are marked but with no detail given.

No dimensions are shown for the bi-directional cycle lane but from discussion we understand it to be 4m. As the lane is to be on the inside of parked cars, a safety zone is also needed to prevent cyclists from being endangered in the 'car door zone'. We understand from discussion that this is to be a minimum of 0.5m

Noting that the camber of the road is quite severe in places, and also the road surface is broken and there are many gullies, it is important that an appropriate lane width is provided to allow safe cycling.

Beach Ballroom to Burger King

The layout here looks good. On this section where there is likely to be a higher level of pedestrian traffic adjacent to the various cafés and other businesses, it is important that the cycle lane is well marked to be visible to pedestrians and so reduce the potential for conflict between cycles and pedestrians.

Again no dimensions are marked but we assume the lanes will meet national standards.

Similarly we assume that the cycle lane will be physically separated with some barrier to prevent vehicular traffic from using it.

Burger King to Foot Dee

No drawing has been provided beyond No8 (Highlander catering) but we assume similar arrangements to above are proposed. We assume the cycle lane provision ends somewhere in the vicinity of Footdee although we would prefer if it went further (a route via York St, York Place, Waterloo Quay and Regents Quay has the potential to connect to the city centre either via Marischal St or Shiprow (cycle contra-flow required on one-way part of Regent's Quay).

Beach Boulevard

The arrangements look good, subject to similar comments as above regarding how the lane is segregated, lane width, and the need to provide a safety zone when passing any car parking. The only other difficulty, as mentioned at the outset is the obstacle of the roundabout at the junction with Commerce St, Park St and East North Street. This is a significant problem and although we appreciate there are engineering or traffic challenges in coming up with a solution, we fear that the full benefits of the route will not be realised unless a solution can be found. At the minimum, we would want to see a safe and cyclist-friendly connection to Union St via Justice St and Castlegate. This would begin to create a coherent network of connected routes, which is something we have campaigned for over a long period of time.

We look forward to seeing the route implemented soon and hope it is the first of many.

Yours faithfully,

Gavin Clark, Chair

Aberdeen Cycle Forum