



16 February 2024

By email to:

[transportstrategy@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:transportstrategy@aberdeencity.gov.uk)

Dear Sirs,

### **South College St Phase 2 Options Appraisal**

Firstly, we are pleased to see this scheme under consideration. We think this junction in its present state is a major barrier to active travel.

We are disappointed that measures to address the other significant active travel barrier, namely the junction (roundabout) at the south end of the QE bridge, is not being considered at the same time. We note that on the numerous occasions we have been consulted on measures looking at Wellington Road as a whole, that roundabout was also excluded from them.

Of the 4 options presented, we prefer Option 3.

We consider that neither of the roundabout options (i.e. 1 & 2) are acceptable because they still fail to address pedestrian movement across the branch of the junction with South College St. Also, any roundabout where cyclists (who may still be on-road, given the incomplete nature of the segregated cycle network) are expected to share with traffic is likely to be unacceptable, given the volume of traffic likely to be experienced here and the large numbers of heavy vehicles. However, we wonder if a 'Cyclops' roundabout, or other form of protected junctions have been considered? (Cycling by Design (2021), Section 5).

See also: [UK's first 'CYCLOPS' junction opens in Manchester to boost bike safety - Cities Today \(cities-today.com\)](https://cities-today.com/uk-first-cyclops-junction-opens-in-manchester-to-boost-bike-safety/)

We consider that Option 4 (signal controlled junction with no right turn) would create an unacceptable 'barrier' for traffic and disconnect to Torry, given that Victoria Bridge also has no right turn. The alternative routing via George VI bridge is long and convoluted. It is likely that if no right turn from Riverside Drive was put in place, traffic would detour via South College St, Palmerston Place and North Esplanade West, creating an unofficial and unnecessary gyratory. No right turn from North Esplanade West into South College St is likely to be acceptable given the alternative via Palmerston Place.

It is difficult to consider all the possible routings by cyclists in and around this junction. Given that the network of segregated (or even shared use) routes for cyclists is far from complete, it is necessary to expect that some cyclists may still use the main carriageway. For example, we note that northbound on Wellington Road, on approach to the QE bridge, there is currently no cycle path or shared use path. Cyclists must therefore - by default - be expected to be on the road. In the interests of speed and directness, cyclists may therefore choose to remain on the road while crossing the QE bridge, rather than diverting onto the slower and slightly convoluted routing over the Wellington suspension bridge. The solution - probably - is to create a segregated or shared use path on Wellington Road. However in the absence of this, an element of incoherence is likely to remain. Similarly, some cyclists travelling south on South College St may opt to remain on the carriageway in preference to switching to the relatively short section of bi-directional cycle track on the opposite side.

We reiterate that the roundabout at the south end of QE bridge is itself a major barrier to active travel, with a complete lack of safe crossing points for pedestrians or cyclists, and is equally deserving of re-design alongside the junction to the north of the bridge.

We are pleased to see measures being considered to address the recently improved, but still unsatisfactory, active travel routing on Riverside Drive under Wellington Bridge. However, we expect that the narrowing of the carriageway to single lane, along with 'shuttle working' signal control, could lead to significant traffic congestion and possibly be unworkable. We wonder whether other solutions or compromises might be possible.

The narrowness of the pavement / shared use path and the close proximity to relatively fast moving traffic are the issues. Measures to protect pedestrians and cyclists could consist of either a physical barrier, or measures which would significantly slow traffic.

If none of these measures are feasible we might suggest that a second routing be looked at as an alternative. This would be to the west of the bridge via the remnant of South College St, behind the 'Neospace' office building and reconnecting with Riverside Drive at the junction approximately 70 metres south of Wellington Bridge, requiring a new Toucan crossing at that point. This route is not ideal for cyclists as it requires a change of elevation. It does however provide a relatively direct connection to Wellington Bridge, and it may be worth considering if no other suitable solution can be found for the underpass.

We hope these comments are of assistance and we are of course happy to discuss further if that would help.

Yours faithfully,

Gavin Clark

Chair – Aberdeen Cycle Forum