

Summary of stakeholder and community council responses to consultation on possible retention of Spaces for People measures

Since introducing Spaces for People (SfP) measures, we have engaged with a range of stakeholders to keep them informed and invite their feedback. This has allowed stakeholders to give us their views on each scheme as they were developed and implemented.

As part of the recent consultation exercise, we invited a range of groups and organisations to attend briefings led by the Convenor and Vice Convenor of Transport and senior officers. This allowed a range of voices to discuss shared concerns and ambitions. The briefings held covered the following areas:

- Accessibility advocacy
- Community councils and residents' associations
- Emergency Services
- Business organisations
- Heritage groups
- Transport and mobility advocacy

Following on from these briefings, stakeholders were encouraged to submit a response either via Consultation Hub or in longer format via email. In total we received over 20 responses, each of which are summarised below. You can [view and download full stakeholder responses here](#).

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Stakeholder responses

Better Edinburgh for Sustainable Travel

All members of the coalition feel strongly that all successful schemes Spaces for People (SfP) schemes should be retained but modified, based on experience.

Suggestions/comments:

- SfP has played a significant role in highlighting what can be achieved as well as pointing to improvements that should be made when the schemes are made permanent
- schemes be designed to fit within the area they are installed in, with a strong element of placemaking
- consider all groups that will be affected locally by each of the interventions, especially those with mobility challenges and visual impairment
- fully engage with the residents of Edinburgh using a range of communications channels

Car Free Holyrood

In principle, Car Free Holyrood are “strongly in favour of retaining schemes that help reduce the car dominance of the city”.

Main concerns:

- Belief that Holyrood Park should have been included in the Spaces for Exercise programme alongside Leith Links and Silverknowes Road and that the 99 comments and 2,000. agreements during the Commonplace exercise showed greater public support than for many of the SfP schemes taken forward
- Additionally, belied that scheme was mothballed due to preference for South Bridge scheme.

Suggestions/comments:

- Close Holyrood Park to all motor vehicles.

Cockburn Association

It is the Cockburn's View that the Council has an opportunity, in terms of transport and travel, to make sure that residents and business owners can move about the city more safely and more efficiently, with a reduced impact on the local environment, than was the case before the pandemic.

Main concerns:

- loss of parking provision for blue badge holders
- quality and type of materials used
- disappointed that the consultation did not provide an opportunity to discuss and comment on wider transport, planning and place policy issues.

Suggestions/comments:

- focus should be place led, not transport led
- initiatives must be in the right place and be consistent with the needs and wishes of residents and local businesses
- each scheme should be acceptable to residents and businesses, improve the streetscape, be safe for all users, improve accessibility for all users, be efficient and effective and be environmentally acceptable and conform to the transport hierarchy
- need to engage effectively with local businesses and their representatives
- acknowledge that traffic interventions are excluded from Conservation Area Management but argue there is a duty of care to ensure the highest design standards in a conservation area.

Edinburgh Access Panel

Edinburgh Access Panel are generally supportive of efforts to make more space for people walking and mobility aids. They have a number of concerns on the application of Spaces for People measures, specifically in relation to effects felt by blue badge holders.

Main concerns:

- loss of parking provision for blue badge holders
- safety issues associated with having to cross cycle lanes to get to and from a car
- dislike of floating car parking spaces 'where pedestrian/cyclist priorities are unclear and there is a risk of cyclists being "doored"'
- concern that some blue badge holders are reluctant to go out because they don't know whether they'll be able to reach their destination and park there because (a) the road closures and alternative routes aren't fully documented and (b) the rules around blue badge parking are unclear
- risk of increased congestion and pollution, potentially with a severe impact on people with respiratory because of closures and partial closures of some roads, causing traffic to be displaced.

Suggestions/comments:

- would like to see measures outside schools retained, provided they meet the conditions set out responses in response made to SfP's notification emails
- In general, they do not wish to see any schemes removed and suggested a 'rebalancing' in Portobello High Street, the southbound reopening of Braid Road and the reopening of Warriston Road reversed.

Edinburgh Bus Users Group

Main concerns:

- the schemes implemented to date have substantial disadvantages for bus users
- belief that there is no evidence to be able to discern whether less traffic as a direct result of Covid-19 restrictions or Spaces for People schemes have reduced congestion for bus users.

Suggestions/comments:

- stronger signage at the east end of Princes Street
- support the introduction of new bus lanes
- would like to see the removal of all schemes that disadvantage bus users, such as the east end of Princes Street and Waverley Bridge.

Federation of Small Business (FSB)

FSB received representations from members in Edinburgh regarding Spaces for People. Some have been broadly positive about individual schemes and have been seeking to find ways to exploit the changes for the benefit of the business. Others have been sceptical of schemes in their area and have expressed concerns about the impact on their business and on issues of public safety.

The FSB is broadly supportive of measures designed to make our public places safer and more attractive but believe this needs to be undertaken with the full involvement and consent of local businesses.

Main concerns:

- more could have been done to engage local businesses in the plans at an earlier stage
- too much reliance on Commonplace tool, such as the closure of Cockburn Street, with impacts on local businesses overlooked
- some retailers on Cockburn Street concerned that the closure to traffic is causing a drop in footfall
- measures being installed, such as double yellow lines outside premises, without notification to businesses
- some businesses have expressed concern at the structure of the consultation, believing that insufficient weight has been given to business opinion

Suggestions/comments:

- engage more with each of the businesses in streets where Spaces for People measures are to be retained or modified, resulting in better designed schemes and happier and more prosperous businesses
- carefully consider what schemes are necessary for public safety, whether each scheme has achieved its intended aims, and whether it will impact local businesses.

Handicabs

Handicabs shares the 'Council's vision' of a transport system that is environmentally friendly, and which works for everyone. They are generally supportive of measures that encourage modal shift from private motor vehicle to active travel.

Main concerns:

- installation of bollards has impeded access, making it more difficult to gain kerbside access for entry and exit for people with disabilities
- increased safety risk to staff and passengers and considerable disruption to traffic caused by need to stop in running lanes
- LTNs and road closures, that physically stops traffic from running through residential streets could 'make Handicabs unviable', as their vehicles would no longer be able to go directly from address A, to address B and to address C etc, but would have to return to the main roads bordering the LTN to go from address A to reach address B, then return again to the boundary road to reach address C etc.

Suggestions/comments:

- to keep roads open to some and stop 'rat running' in LTNs, make use of technology, such as ANPR to restrict access.

Guide Dogs Scotland

Guide Dogs Scotland initially welcomed the initiative which promised to make social distancing easier.

Main concerns:

- changes to the roads, pavements and parking all have a disproportionate impact of people with disabilities and, therefore, require a full and detailed impact assessment
- people with sight loss do not appear to have benefited from the schemes for example pavement extensions have created a hazard by extending into roads without the inclusion of dropped kerbs
- there was little or no meaningful engagement to ensure changes made were safe
- some measures have made things more pick up and drop off more challenging, such as cycle lanes, that deny disabled person access to the kerb.

Suggestions/comments:

- engage meaningful consultation and seek input from local sight loss organisations and blind and partially sighted road users on proposed changes to road layouts at the design stage
- local sight loss organisations and blind and partially sighted road users should be consulted on how to communicate changes effectively
- consultation and engagement must be carried out in an accessible way, for example online maps which meet web accessibility standards should be made available to show changes across a neighbourhood
- priority should be given to changes to existing schemes where people with sight loss cannot navigate them independently
- introduce additional temporary tactile paving to enable people to use new spaces safely
- Temporary features, such as planters or barriers, must feature colour contrast, avoid any trip hazards and be easy for people with sight loss to navigate around.

Living Streets Edinburgh

Living Streets Edinburgh Group supports the principle of 'Spaces for People' schemes continuing in the future. They recognize that many of the measures have been helpful for people to walk and cycle and agree with the principle of retaining Spaces for people schemes and reducing the dominance of motor traffic on city streets.

Main concerns:

- measures which adversely affect bus passengers, unless there are compelling reasons why these are necessary to achieve other important objectives
- retaining automatic phases on pedestrian crossings permanent.

Suggestions/comments:

- retain cycle lanes, residential street closures and Low Traffic Neighbourhoods.
- permanent, wider pavements on busy streets, especially 'town centres'
- streets at schools improved to encourage active travel and especially walking
- traffic signals and pedestrian crossings changed to give pedestrians more priority
- retention and enforcement of city centre traffic management schemes.

Lothian Buses

Lothian Buses were familiar with all of the current and planned schemes. While supportive of measures outside schools and neutral on city and town centre measures there is opposition to cycle lanes on main roads, connecting spaces for exercise and new signed quiet connections.

Along with regular observations Lothian Buses engaged with their driver workforce to understand how the schemes worked in practice.

Main concerns:

- some areas of the bus network have seen increased congestion as a result of the schemes diverting traffic on to bus routes, with Comiston Road cited as an example
- city centre schemes have reduced access to bus stops by means of bus stop removal (The Mound and George IV Bridge), widened pavement with increased angle of boarding making wheelchair access extremely difficult (Princes Street at Waverley Steps) or floating bus stops/bus stop bypasses (George IV Bridge).
- the closure of Waverley Bridge has involved relocating bus services to other city centre locations with less visibility, poorer passenger facilities with additional staffing costs.
- a reduction in bus stop areas or reduced kerb space has made it more difficult for drivers to start and finish their shift or take a meal break. This has been caused by a reduction in the amount of space available to serve stops close to the Longstone bus garage.

Suggestions/comments:

- suggestion that reduced traffic congestion cannot be attributed to Spaces for People Schemes, given that day to day life has been significantly altered
- any reduction in congestion is significantly more likely to be a result of these changes in people's daily routine rather than Spaces for People measures
- schemes that have potential to be retained must be reviewed to ensure that people on foot and bike are prioritised when making the shift to public transport.
- belief that deciding now which schemes stay and which are removed is premature
- further monitoring and operational experience should be gained before deciding which schemes to make permanent.

Low Traffic Corstorphine

LTC 'strongly support interventions to improve provision for people walking, wheeling and cycling' and broadly of SfP interventions being made permanent.

Main concerns:

- caveat their support for each measure being assessed for accessibility purposes
- against bus stop bypasses
- belief that negative voices are drowning out people that want to support safer streets for active travel.

Suggestions/comments:

- junction tightening has much improved crossing the road for families, and wider pavements have been welcoming for families travelling to school
- pavement widening should be accessible with dropped kerbs, smooth and tactile paving
- waiting times at crossing should be reprioritised for pedestrians
- would like to see wider pavements alongside protected cycling provision as part of a wider A8 cycle route and changes to Clermiston Road, Kirk Loan, Manse Road, Featherhall Avenue, Corstorphine Bank Drive and other streets to make them more pedestrian-friendly
- support permanent retention of Drum Brae North but should be more joined up
- support permanent retention of Meadow Place Road/Ladywell Road
- support school streets at Corstorphine, Gylemuir and Carrick Knowe primary schools being made permanent.

RNIB

RNIB Scotland collaborated with other organisations, including the Edinburgh Access Panel and Guide Dogs Scotland, to raise general concerns about the implementation of SfP measures.

Main concerns:

- schemes introduced at speed and with minimal consultation, with a letter sent to Cabinet Secretary Michael Matheson to request a third-party review of Spaces for People before changes are made permanent
- new street layout arrangements could be confusing for blind and partially sighted people, with 66 per cent of people surveyed said that they feel less independent than they did before the COVID-19 pandemic
- cycle lanes that incorporate floating bus stops do not take account of disabled people getting on and off buses
- pavement extensions have created a hazard by extending into roads without the inclusion of dropped kerbs
- the Equality Impact Assessment undertaken at the start of the Spaces for People programme was not adequate
- blind and partially sighted people are experiencing difficulties in accessing accurate and up to date information about changes
- unable to comment on measures yet to be installed as it isn't possible to know what schemes would look and feel like without experiencing it
- implications of closing off vehicle access within town centres for loading and pedestrian access, along with removal of parking bays including blue badge spaces
- pavement clutter and pavement café sprawl.

Suggestions/comments:

- consultation with disabled people and Access Panels should be proactive and meaningful engagement going forward
- access to the kerb is crucial for disabled people when travelling by bus, taxi, or community transport
- successful consultation documents highly dependent ensuring consultation material are readily available in accessible formats.

Spokes Lothian

Spokes has 'always given a warm and enthusiastic welcome to the Spaces for People (SfP) interventions and is pleased to continue to do so'. The semi-protected cycle routes have made commuting and travel to local shops much safer and more attractive.

Main concerns:

- loss of parking provision for blue badge holders
- disappointed to see the reopening of Braid Road and Warriston Road.

Suggestions/comments:

- strongly supports making all SfP schemes permanent, unless clearly unsuccessful
- believe it is an opportunity to rebalance Edinburgh's travel hierarchy in the direction of walking, wheeling and cycling
- imperative that the Council provides a network of cycle infrastructure that feels safe for everyone, including women cycling alone at night

- the cycle network must meet the needs of disabled cyclists - by being step-free, barrier-free and spacious
- welcome the Council's preparedness to use bus gates
- Supportive of LTNs.
- Spaces for Exercise closures have effectively connected previously subdivided public green spaces
- to a limited extent, the SfP projects are helping to divert cyclists away from the "hotspots", such as the Union Canal towpath and other parts of the National Cycle Network routes
- support measures at schools that have separated pupils from motor traffic, however, most interventions have been at the school gate and not on the route to school.

University of Edinburgh

The university offer their 'full support to the City of Edinburgh Council to retain, and indeed where possible, to improve and extend 'Spaces for People' measures'.

Suggestions/comments:

- welcomes the implementation of measures to support walking and cycling between university campuses
- belief that they have provided safer cycling routes for staff and students
- grateful for the opportunity to review and comment on the proposals for the Potterrow to King's Buildings route
- expectation that there will be a modal shift from bus/tram to active travel, with the ongoing provision of safer walking and cycling routes essential to enable and support this.

Preston Street Primary Parent Council

Parents strongly support the segregated space created by SfP measures.

Main concerns:

- bus stop opposite Parkside Terrace in relation to Spaces for People provision means that live traffic can back up across the pedestrian crossing
- Lack of enforcement of measures

Suggestions/comments:

- make permanent widening of the pavement adjacent to the school on East Preston Street and Dalkeith Road with widened area extended to the pedestrian crossing
- continuous widened pavements should be built into all junctions in the vicinity of the school
- calm the road and reprioritise traffic lights during schools hours to give priority to pupils
- East Preston Street should be shut to traffic at the east end, removing the left turn filter lane on Dalkeith road, and the road space outside should be given over to additional greenery and playground.
- divert bus traffic to Bernard's Terrace or introduce a bus lane use
- Dalkeith Road/St Leonards should become one-way (, Minto St/South Clark St one-way (and in the other direction, with no room for parking. The extra road space should be given over to wide pavements, continuous protected bike lanes, bike parking, street greenery and parklets
- Create a green active travel corridor sweep from Holyrood Park to the Meadows via down East Preston Street.

Community councils/residents' associations

Corstorphine Community Council

Corstorphine CC is 'entirely supportive' of the health and safety rationale behind SfP Measures in addressing the challenges of the pandemic. The introduction of measures around local schools has been positively commented on within the council and are widely appreciated.

Main concerns:

- residents often conflate SfP Measures with the proposed Controlled Parking Zone, and the proposed Low Traffic Neighborhoods
- the current infrastructure in place around the schools means some parents are ignoring the road closure, with people are parking on corners/double yellow lines and is also resulting in an increase of 3 point turns in areas where children are crossing
- Belief that the five day notification period was too short.

Suggestions/comments:

- The closure at Gylemuir and Carrick Knowe primaries has been helpful for families cycling to Corstorphine Primary through the Gyle Park as this is on their safer route to school
- the extra pavement space on Corstorphine High Street, particularly to the east between the school gates and Manse Road has been 'transformative' and should be kept permanently
- the junction narrowing should be made permanent with appropriate tactile treatment and pavement/road level adjustments to allow those with mobility issues to travel unimpeded
- the addition of double yellow lines has improved sight lines for pedestrians crossing at junctions and should remain
- the pavement at the crossing at Cammo Walk should be widened to allow for use by bikes and pedestrians
- pedestrian crossing point timings should be adjusted to prioritise pedestrians over vehicles.

Davidson Mains & Silverknowes Association

The Association is generally supportive of the principle of encouraging active travel in situations where there is a justification for investment and where there is likely to be sufficient demand.

Main concerns:

- opposed to the closure of the north end of Silverknowes Road which has affected people with disabilities and older people's ability to access the foreshore
- closure has also had an adverse impact on the traffic and parking situation at Cramond Grebe Road
- carriageway narrowing on Silverknowes Road at the junction of Silverknowes East is slowing drivers down, but the road markings and carriageway alignment seem to direct vehicles into the opposite carriageway
- risk from having to cross the cycle route when exiting driveways
- tradesmen and service companies are refusing to make deliveries because of the absence of any parking availability.

Suggestions/comments:

- broadly supportive of the measures outside Davidson Mains PS and Royal HS.

Fairmilehead Community Council

Fairmilehead CC believe that none of the measures above have improved matters, rather they have made things worse. The person who completed the entry on behalf of Fairmilehead CC has mobility issues but does not hold a blue badge. They highlighted difficulties shopping locally 'due to all the obstructions on the road and withdrawal of parking spaces'.

Grange Prestonfield Community Council

Grange Prestonfield community Council is supportive of Council's Spaces for People measures as an initial response to the pandemic with an acceptance that measures were necessary, but is it now time to 'reflect and adapt'.

Main concerns:

- potential for congestion is likely to see traffic and commercial vehicles seeking to use side streets and residential areas as 'rat runs'.

Suggestions/comments:

- rationale for retention must be made clear and show evidence of 'proper and fair' consultation
- pedestrians, especially those with an impairment in mobility, must be made to feel secure in the road and pathway environment. Access should also be maintained for blue badge drivers and for deliveries to businesses
- replace some of the extended footways with realigned, segregated cycleways
- release some car access and parking space in town centres to support local businesses
- belief that floating bus stops and car parking spaces introduce new risk, made worse by a lack of road safety and road-use information available to people.

Grassmarket Residents' Association (GRASS)

GRASS are of the view that SfP measures are 'discriminatory and not fit for purpose'.

Main concerns:

- negative impacts on people walking, wheelchair users and those with other mobility difficulties and sight loss and on people using buses and bus services
- confusion about which lanes are for which users, e.g. pedestrians or cyclists
- level changes where sections of road allocated to pedestrians create trip hazards
- has created a hostile pedestrian environment caused by proximity of fast-moving cycles
- belief that traffic has increased due to diversions caused by road closures
- negative impact on streetscape caused by signage and temporary barriers.

Suggestions/comments:

- reinstate original layout with two vehicle lanes and bus stops at the kerb side; reinstate bus stop at Chambers Street
- reinstated the bus stops on Mound and replace bollards with more robust ones set the directly into the road or remove them altogether
- With the prime purpose of introducing cycle lanes, the SfP measures generally favour the needs of cyclists over pedestrians and disabled road users
- reinstate original layout with two vehicle lanes and bus stops at the kerb side; reinstate bus stop at Chambers Street
- Victoria Street: Reinstated resident and disabled parking bays; review access arrangements for deliveries, uplifts, etc and make them workable. Candlemaker Row: Restrict use to service buses only; ban tourist buses and tour coaches Cowgatehead/Cowgate: Provide pedestrian crossing
- Preserve all existing bus routes east/west and north/south through the Old Town. Stop the operation of tour buses and tourist coaches through the Grassmarket and along the West Port and the Cowgate.

Liberton Association

The Liberton Association is 'generally in favour' of SfP measures that seek to calm traffic.

Main concerns:

- perceived logistical difficulties with the proposed cycle lanes
- the state of the road and pavements in the area.

Votes that took place among members:

- Are you in favour of any road safety measures on Braid Hills Drive, Braid Hills Road and Liberton Drive? Yes 113, No 43
- The Council is proposing a 30mph speed limit on Braid Hills Drive. Do you agree with this proposal? Yes 102, No 58
- The council proposes to add a 2-way cycle lane along Braid Hills Drive. Do you agree with this proposal? Yes 91, No 67.

Merchiston Community Council

Merchiston Community Council cited displacement of traffic from Bruntsfield/Tollcross onto side streets such as Merchiston Avenue, Polwarth Crescent and Yeaman Place, particularly commercial traffic. This has led to a 'higher proportion of through traffic on these streets than before the lockdown'.

If the measures are to remain in place in the Bruntsfield/Tollcross there was a suggestion of closing Merchiston Avenue at its south end, and Merchiston Place at its east end to discourage through traffic Merchiston Avenue, Polwarth Crescent and Yeaman Place.

Morningside Community Council

Suggestions/comments:

- increase pavement space around bus stops
- create sufficient waiting space at the pedestrian crossings and remove unnecessary railings, particularly where pavements are narrow outside shops
- retain the automatic pedestrian crossing at Belhaven Terrace /Morningside Road /Comiston Road junction
- retain the cycle space from Morningside Place up to Churchill
- Introduce a permanent pedestrian and cyclist crossing at Hermitage of the Braid.

New Town and Broughton Community Council

Main concerns:

- considers the consultation to be deeply flawed and that the inclusion of questions about measures not implemented is questionable
- survey is designed to encourage simple yes/no answers to questions about whether measures should be retained and does too little to obtain any insight into the consequences both favourable and otherwise from the implementation of the measures.

Suggestions/comments:

- in favour of retaining The Mound and Princes Street East with some changes
- opposed to the measures on Waverley Bridge and London Road being retained
- do not agree that any of the measures yet to be introduced such as Broughton Street to Canonmills should be considered for retention until there has been an opportunity to better assess their effectiveness under an ETRO.

[View and download full stakeholder responses](#)