

Leith Connections Hawthornvale to Seafield; Edinburgh Bus Users Group comments

Edinburgh Bus Users Group submits these comments in this format, instead of the Consultation Hub, as the Hub is not appropriate for our Feedback.

It is regrettable that, as in previous schemes elsewhere, we have to return to the themes we have criticised before:

- The removal of bus priority measures.
- The removal or relocation of bus stops.
- The deployment of floating bus stops as a default measure.

1. It appears that these bus lanes would be removed:

Lindsay Rd eastbound

Ocean Drive southbound

Commercial St east of Prince Regent St westbound (albeit replaced by one eastbound)

Commercial St east of Dock St (westbound and eastbound)

The Consultation website notes 'Concerns about removal and relocation of bus stops and...bus lanes', then states 'Updated designs have reintroduced some sections of bus lane on Commercial Street.' This is almost laughable. The scheme removes five bus lanes and introduces one. Total estimated length of removed lanes approximately 700m; reintroduced lane at best half that.

As noted by Lothian Buses in the Engagement Report, Lindsay Rd and Salamander St are key sections of orbital bus routes in north Edinburgh. Therefore, increased bus journey times will affect both passengers in the immediate and wider north Edinburgh area.

The Engagement Report notes that EBUG had previously argued that where a pre-existing bus lane or section thereof would be removed, it should not be.

There are currently 23 bus movements/peak hour each way on Commercial St/North Junction St/Lindsay Rd . On Commercial St up to Dock St and the pedestrian route to the Scottish Government building, the bus lane east to the Shore junction is removed, as is the right-turn lane for buses 16, 35, 36 onto the Shore. The westbound bus lane is entirely removed; it currently allows buses to avoid queuing back from the North Junction St/ Ocean Terminal junction.

The Council's own Street Design Guidance

<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/download/13723/edinburgh-street-design-guidance> states (Factsheet PT 1):

'There will be a presumption in favour of buses and their passengers through:

- providing and enabling bus services and their use by appropriate street pattern, layout and geometry
- improving provision for stops and interchanges
- giving buses priority over other motor vehicles

...

Minimum clear carriageway width for two-way bus operation on a 20mph network is 6.50m, increasing to 7.0m minimum in ≥ 30 mph areas.'

It appears this has not been followed.

In summary, the proposals not only remove bus lanes on streets with a high density of bus use (both vehicles and passengers), but buses are left fighting for space with general traffic on road layouts that are sub-optimal for bus operation.

2. We have previously noted, in various fora, the issues involved in removing or relocating bus stops. We note that Lothian Buses is concerned about the removal or merger of bus stops.

For now, we highlight just two examples in this project. At the Citadel Youth Centre, youth leaders can ensure young people safely board their buses when leaving evening activities. Many older people also use the facilities.

The proposed new stop on Lindsay Road is 140m after the previous stop and more than 500m from the next one.

Furthermore, the drawings suggest that a number of bus stops do not comply with the Council's own guidance (PT2 - Bus Stops). Such a cavalier attitude is further grounds for serious concern.

3. Deployment of floating bus stops as a default measure; we have previously remarked how floating bus stops are being installed almost automatically in schemes like these (e.g. the Dalry project). Living Streets Edinburgh also observe this phenomenon

<https://www.livingstreetsedinburgh.org.uk/2024/11/01/leith-connections-hawthornvale-salamander-street-comments-from-lse-on-draft-proposals/>

Given the history of the tram project on Leith Walk, where the bus stops are so narrow that bespoke shelters were required, it is astonishing that there has been, apparently, no reflection on the issues that have emerged. This gives us no confidence that they will not be repeated.

Given the level of bus traffic on the corridor there is an argument that bus stops on boarders should be long enough to allow two buses to board/alight in tandem.

Furthermore, parallel approaches to bus stops are critical so that buses can correctly approach and stop. They need to be designed to ensure accessibility for all passengers boarding or alighting.