



# Leeds City Centre Cycle Improvements

*Comments by Leeds Civic Trust in response to the Connecting Leeds consultation from 11 January 2021 to 19 February 2021.*

## 1 General Comments

- 1.1 The Leeds Civic Trust welcomes the principle of providing better cycling facilities throughout the city, for commuters, casual users and leisure cyclists. These categories will have different requirements with regard to destinations, directness of route, extent of separation from other road traffic, etc so a range of options may be required on specific corridors.
- 1.2 The comments set out below relate to the City Centre schemes currently out for consultation but the issues raised would apply to other locations around the city, and the overall principles which have been adopted to design high quality cycle facilities.
- 1.3 The Trust would welcome an opportunity to have a wide-ranging discussion with key stakeholders to gain a greater understanding of the issues involved and contribute constructively to the debate.

## 2 General Comments

- 2.1 In the plans currently out for consultation, there is no acknowledgement of the different types of cyclist who might use the proposed lanes. A commuter is likely to be travelling faster as they know the way and they could be impeded by leisure cyclists travelling slower - if the cycle lane is 'on road', they can pull over to overtake but this is not possible when a kerb is installed. A less confident cyclist might not be happy to use a 'raised' or 'on pavement' cycle lane where he/she could slip down a kerb into the road.
- 2.2 We should not be looking at cycle schemes in isolation, particularly in the city centre. A holistic approach needs to include public realm, public transport and be part of any wider development plans. However, it is accepted that compartmentalised government funding streams with short delivery timescales are part of the problem.
- 2.3 There is little indication in the material issued for this consultation as to how these schemes tie in with a wider network and hence what sort of demand/usage there is likely to be. There is only a small scale map which does not reflect the detailed plans e.g. the Eastern Gateway.
- 2.4 We feel that there should be greater consistency in any surface colouring used to indicate cycling facilities - in some areas there is a green wash and in others cycle lanes are coloured red. We understand that this may be to differentiate CityConnect routes but surely it would be simpler for all road users to associate one surface colour with cycling?
- 2.5 Signage will be a key consideration when marking out these routes - if they are to be attractive to cyclists, the direction of travel should be immediately apparent to all users without needing to read complex small blue signs. The location of signage should be consistent so people know where to look and repeaters (perhaps simple paint on the ground) should be provided at regular intervals.
- 2.6 Maintenance is a crucial issue as on road cycle lanes are cleaned by passing vehicles or, when wider, are washed by rain flowing off the wider carriageway. When a narrow kerbed area is installed, there is less likelihood of rain washing the tarmac clean and standard street sweepers are unable to enter to clean the surface.



- 2.7 The quality of the consultation material is inconsistent (as has been the case for many other cycle schemes) and so it is not easy to respond effectively e.g.
- limited or non-existent labelling of the streets, making it difficult to orientate and see what areas are involved
  - the key is different for different maps e.g. Toucan crossings are red on the Western Gateway sheet but green on the Eastern Gateway, footways are grey in some areas and purple in others - consistent graphics would assist in understanding the plans
  - there is no clear indication whether the cycle lanes will be single- or bi-directional
  - there is no indication of what width the cycle lanes will be, and also the width of adjacent footways (there have been previous instances of too much space being reallocated from pedestrians to cyclists)
  - there is no indication of what the impact will be for vehicles e.g. road width/parking.

### **3 Western Gateway**

- 3.1 The graphics here are not easy to follow:
- is it really 'new footway' across the Wellington Road end of Wellington Bridge Street?
  - it is difficult to distinguish between 'Toucan crossing' and 'Separate cycle/ped crossing' - the colours are almost identical
  - road names are not well placed for clarity.
- 3.2 There is very heavy traffic in this area (and this is likely to remain so as the A65 is a key connection with the IRR) - at present it is difficult for bikes to navigate around some sections but other routes where there are already cycle lanes (e.g. Wellington Road to Wellington Street) are easy to follow.
- 3.3 However, there are issues with the existing route along the western side of Wellington Street where there is an extensive 'shared use' zone which is partly obstructed by street furniture and traffic signs - this is a key link to Armley Road so provision here should be enhanced.
- 3.4 Given the above, what are the new bike flows that the scheme is seeking to accommodate? What is the key purpose of the scheme?

### **4 Eastern Gateway**

- 4.1 The diagram is headed Eastern Gateway 1 but there only seems to be one diagram.
- 4.2 'Ady Lane' should be 'Lady Lane'!
- 4.3 This area should be considered as part of the Eastgate Quarter Design Brief recently prepared for the area and presented to the City Plans Panel.
- 4.4 Where does the cycle lane go to beyond the north end of Bridge Street? The tunnel under the Inner Ring Road is quite narrow and the footpath is not wide enough for shared use, even if that were desirable - as this the pedestrian access to the Hilton Hotel, the footway is likely to be used by those unfamiliar to Leeds and/or carrying/rolling luggage.
- 4.5 How do these cycle lanes link into the wider cycle network e.g. Regent Street/East Street where there is already a cycle lane? Is this a duplication of facilities, particularly as Mabgate is also to be reconstructed as a 'mini-Holland' scheme which is intended to provide a safe route for cyclists?



- 4.6 As traffic on Eastgate from Vicar Lane to the roundabout will be significantly reduced on completion of the current road works, is there actually a need for a cycle route up Lady Lane?
- 4.7 There is a motorcycle parking area on Bridge Street - will this need to be re-provided? Also, parking spaces on Lady Lane are convenient for the disabled so will these be re-provided elsewhere?

## **5 Southern Gateway**

- 5.1 There are no street names on this plan and some of the colours are not explained on the key. The difference between 'cycle crossings' and 'Toucan crossings' should be explained.
- 5.2 Looking at the top diagram (Victoria Road), to the south of here there is a bus lane. What is the plan for buses/cycles when Neville Street is closed to private vehicles? Should there be a bus lane on Victoria Road all the way to Victoria Bridge? There needs to be a strategy for this area which includes all future aspirations.
- 5.3 What is the arrangement for the bus stop outside Bridgewater Place? The cycle lane looks to go right through the bus shelter.
- 5.4 How do Neville Street and Sovereign Street link into a cycle network and the Bishopgate Street Station Gateway scheme?
- 5.5 There does not appear to be a clearly identified cycle route linking the riverside outside the Asda HQ to the Canal towpath to the west of Granary Wharf, although this part of the Trans-Pennine Trail (NCR 66) is likely to be a key route for leisure cyclists. Or is it envisaged that those riding the Trail will head north along Neville Street to Dark Neville Street and reach the towpath by Candle House? If this the case, cycle routes around Granary Wharf should be carefully defined and surfaces repaired. The alternative is to route cycles along Canal Wharf and Water Lane as now but this is less convenient for the city centre.
- 5.6 Should the section of footway between the Neville Street/Water Lane junction and the River Aire embankment be redesignated as 'shared space' or, better still, re-constructed with separate cycle and footway sections?
- 5.7 The yellow colour indicating 'parking' on Sovereign Street is proposed as a taxi feeder rank for the station so it would not normally be available for general parking. And Sovereign Street is a location for Rail Replacement bus services and shuttle buses for major events in Leeds (football matches, Leeds Festival, etc) - where would these be relocated to?
- 5.8 How does the cycle lane in Sovereign Street link with the new Sovereign Bridge and onwards to South Leeds via the Hunslet Stray and Aire Park?

## **6 Crown Point Road**

- 6.1 Cycle plans need to be linked with wider repurposing of Crown Point Road alongside any Eastside master-planning, the development of Aire Park and potential use as a MRT corridor. Also, there should be a general repurposing of space freed up by diversion of through traffic to Inner Ring Road and Marsh Lane.
- 6.2 There are no links shown to the riverside Trans-Pennine Trail (NCR 66) although this runs from Waterloo Street to Armouries Way - this is a key leisure route which is likely to be used by family groups who would most benefit from a segregated cycle route.



- 6.3 How do proposals in this area tie in with any cycle routes through Aire Park such as the Hunslet Stray and the down-grading of Crown Point Road to the south of Waterloo Street? No links are shown to the A61 Hunslet Road cycle scheme now under construction.
- 6.4 Crown Point Bridge is shown as two lanes northbound and one lane southbound - how is it envisaged that this would operate as part of the wider city centre highway network? Is it necessary to have two lanes northbound if general traffic is re-directed to East Street and Marsh Lane, so allowing more space for pedestrians and cyclists (a boulevard to link through to Aire Park?).

## **7 Holbeck Gateway 1**

- 7.1 Comments here and on Holbeck Gateway 2 are presented outbound from the city centre.
- 7.2 Have these plans been reviewed against the aspirations of the Holbeck Urban Village Planning Framework, the Holbeck Neighbourhood Plan and the aspirations of key developers such as CEG who have large landholdings in the area?
- 7.3 Whitehall Road (bottom diagram):
- is the road wide enough to accommodate cycle lanes without narrowing pavements and so reducing space available for pedestrians?
  - what does 'informal crossing to bus stop' mean?
  - what is the status of the 'formal crossing' close to the junction with Springwell Road?
  - currently there are bus stops on both sides of the road east of the railway viaduct - how will those on the north side of Whitehall Road be accommodated?
- 7.4 Holbeck (top diagram):
- the majority of this part of the route is shared use footway although this is not appropriate over long distances as it can lead to 'conflict' between pedestrians and cyclists - the Gear Change report is strongly against shared use and says that national funding cannot be used for its construction
  - there is a cycleway marked on Whitehall Road but it is labelled as 'shared use' - which is it?
  - there are also bus stops on Whitehall Road but these are not marked on the diagram - how will they be accommodated?

## **8 Holbeck Gateway 2**

- 8.1 Ingram Distributor (top diagram):
- this is almost all footway widened for shared use - could this be widened to be segregated?
  - where the cycle route heads away from highways, provision needs to be made for enhanced lighting and long-term maintenance - this seems to be forgotten when cycle routes are less visible.
- 8.2 Elland Road motorway junction (bottom diagram):
- this is almost all footway for shared use - could this be wider to be more fully segregated?
  - although cyclists would do well to keep away from the area, there could be conflict with fans walking to matches at Elland Road Stadium
  - there is no indication of routes away from the south end of the scheme other than 'Quiet street link to CityConnect route' - we assume that this is the route along Elland Road?