

Decision due on Roseburn cycle route on Tuesday



The cycle route which the council plans to create, joining west and east of the city, has resulted in much debate, not least in the Roseburn area where there are two options on the table at the council's Transport committee meeting on Tuesday.

On the one hand there are the cyclists who would like a segregated cycle route along Roseburn Terrace allowing them the most direct and convenient route to travel into the city centre. On the other hand there are the shopkeepers and residents in Roseburn who fear that it will be the end of their local shops.

The Edinburgh Reporter joined those who cycled this morning from Charlotte Square to Roseburn to publicise the option which they would like the council to adopt tomorrow (Option A) where they were met with protesters who do not want a cycle route in any shape or form. The organised cycle was joined by several Green Party councillors, the Vice-Convenor of Transport, Adam McVey, the Vice-Convenor of Finance Bill Cook, Councillor Marion Donaldson and two Green party MSPs, Alison Johnstone and Andy Wightman who both cycle regularly.



Protesters were waiting for the cyclists at
Roseburn

We spoke to Andy Wightman MSP in Charlotte Square ahead of the cycle. He said: "I want Option A. Most cities in Europe now are developing or have developed in the past very very good cycling infrastructure. Even London has done that. Edinburgh has been left behind and it's absolutely critical that through the key bits of the city that there are easy to use routes for cyclists, for commuting or for leisure travel. Edinburgh

hasn't got that. There is a missing link in the middle and a critical part of that is at Roseburn. We need to be able to cycle through Roseburn as it is the most direct route to the city centre."

The Green Party have made their views on tomorrow's decision well known on Twitter. They will definitely back Option A.

Councillor Nigel Bagshaw is a Green Group councillor and spokesman on Transport. He is a regular cyclist and was part of the cycle today. He said to The Edinburgh Reporter: "The decision tomorrow is important because it sets the tone for what the city wants to do from now on. Over time we can build up a proper network of segregated cycling across the city but we have to start somewhere and this is the place we should be starting."

Although the SNP have not yet come down on one option or another, at least publicly, Adam McVey, SNP councillor and Vice-Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee said that they are supporting the project. He continued: "Right from the very start a lot of people have made this a very binary process : either you do it or you don't or it's Option A or Option B. I think that tomorrow there might be a way of trying to satisfy as many people as we possibly can.

Claire Connachan was not in cycling gear today but still very much behind the cycle route through Roseburn Terrace. She explained her own views: "I would like to see Edinburgh become a city where everybody cycling is the norm. We have massive potential in this city and also congestion and pollution. Cycling is an amazing answer to these kinds of problems.

[The Edinburgh Reporter news West to East Cycle Link](#) from [Phyllis Stephen](#) on [Vimeo](#).

We did not get to speak with everyone of course but we tried to get a flavour of the arguments for and against when the

protesters arrived at Roseburn:

Henry Whaley, who set up the Roseburn Cycle Route website, said: "This is a key route to get into the city centre. The Council's proposal will make a huge difference for anyone going into and out of the city centre from the west side. It is so important because at the moment there is a huge gap between safe routes to the west and then getting into the city centre." The main problem I have with this is that there will be a 28% reduction in loading so not all the loading bays are going. The loading bays are not always fully used at the moment, so I don't think this will have as big an impact as people think it will. Surveys in other parts of the world show that when a cycle route gets put in it actually enhances the footfall and turnover increases.

Pete Gregson who had organised a silent protest by some business owners in the area said : "Look at the traffic! The cyclists have created a traffic jam here. By reducing the roadway from four lanes of traffic here on the A8 to two you will have double the trouble. The cars have nowhere to go. That is not what we want.

"We do not want congestion and also the loading bays that you see here will be lost under the new scheme. If you take away half the loading bays the shops will go out of business. We want the shops to stay and no congestion. We have a perfectly good solution called National Cycle Route 1 which is already there but not signposted so none of these cyclists know about it."

Tom Kelman is a cyclist too. He explained his position: "I live in this community and have been here for 14 years. The road is very busy I admit but there is already a cycle route in place which could be improved. It would separate cyclists from buses and it's a safer, cleaner, less polluted route for cyclists to take."

Dave du Feu of Spokes, the Lothian Cycle Campaign said: "We are very hopeful that the whole area here is going to be improved and we think the council's proposals, particularly if they choose Option A, are going to do that. It would improve the whole area for pedestrians and for local shops not just for cycling." He accepted that a lot of local shopkeepers were against the cycle route plans and continued: "Yes quite a lot of them oppose the plans, but if you look at what has happened in other towns it is often the case that shopkeepers are against until it happens and then they find it all works well."

Samantha Rendall is a local who would like to see a route other than the route on Roseburn Terrace. She explained: "First of all it would be safer for the cyclists as this is a busy road. Secondly it would be safer for local residents who are now going to have to cross a cycle lane, one of the busiest roads in Edinburgh. It would also be of benefit to the local residents who live here and shop here. All the shops are going to lose 70% of their parking and loading bays. How are they going to get customers into their stores? How are we going to get any deliveries. Cyclists say we will get deliveries at different times but what about the resident who wants to move house? Where is their truck going to go? When the bus stops the traffic already backs up across the bridge, so it will block the entire street. It is not going to be pleasant for cars, cyclists, residents or businesses. All we ask is that the cycle route is sent down Roseburn Street away from the shops where it is so busy already. It would just be a nightmare really."

One resident of Roseburn Cliff wants cycleways and is a cyclist himself but said that Roseburn Terrace is a very bad place to put one. He said: "From a local point of view you can't build a Copenhagen junction just here at Roseburn Cliff. The main problem I see is with the potential ruination of the local shops for this community. There are a large number of

people who moved here into new homes who are really dependent on the provision of the shops in this area.”

Osman Simsek owns Vigo Delicatessen on Roseburn Terrace. He is anxious about his business: “Roseburn is a small community. We depend on people within the area as our customers, and our deliveries would be affected. I was talking to my delivery driver this morning who has a large artic lorry for our deliveries made three times a week. He would not be able to make the deliveries and I would lose my business because of this.

“At the moment what they are building is the fastest route for cyclists going from A to B. They will not stop to shop here.”

The owner of the Roseburn Café, Kadir Kavak, is afraid that all the businesses will lose half of their business because there will be nowhere for cars to stop and park. He said: “We need a loading bay plus somewhere for cars to stop. Half of the businesses will close within a year in this area, and the community will lose out.”

The council has spent an increasing share of its Transport budget on cycling improvements during the last four and a half years under the Labour/SNP coalition, and it has a plan for the future. It seeks in its ambitious [Vision for Transport](#) that: “By 2030 to make Edinburgh’s transport system one of the most environmentally friendly, healthiest and most accessible in Northern Europe.” Part of that plan is to increase the number of children walking and cycling to school year on year and reduce the local nitrogen dioxide concentrations year on year too.

In order to make cycling more attractive the council plans to prioritise it along with public transport and cycling and to reduce journey times along the way. To do this it has projected investment in cycling and walking in its annual budgets since the administration has been in power. No doubt

in the council election manifestos which we will start seeing soon, there will be much talk about cycling and active travel too. It is clear that the council's aim is to reduce the number of cars in the city centre and the dependency on the car as a means of travel.

The Scottish Government has its own plan for increasing the numbers of people cycling but still has to publish its Cycling Action Plan for Scotland. The last was published in 2010, and when Stewart Stevenson MSP was Transport Minister he issued a draft document setting out plans for increasing cycling across the country to 10% of all journeys and asking for the public to respond to a consultation questionnaire.

You can read the council report being discussed at tomorrow's Transport committee [here](#)