

Council to improve road safety near tram tracks

The council is set to spend £30,000 on phase 1 of measures to improve cycle safety across the city near on street tram tracks, but they are doing so with a message to all road users.

Work will start next week on laying down red road surfaces across tram tracks to show cyclists the angle they ought to take when crossing the tracks. The road markings will indicate where they might cross more safely.

The Highway Code already provides guidance for all road users on the safest way to drive next to tram tracks or indeed where the road user is a cyclist, how to cross the tracks. Rule 306 provides:

All road users, but particularly cyclists and motorcyclists, should take extra care when driving or riding close to or crossing the tracks, especially if the rails are wet. You should take particular care when crossing the rails at shallow angles, on bends and at junctions. It is safest to cross the tracks directly at right angles. Other road users should be aware that cyclists and motorcyclists may need more space to cross the tracks safely.

A report for the Council's Transport and Environment Committee on 5 October 2017 details the changes, which will be rolled out over the coming weeks, along with new warning signs and a multi-channel publicity and awareness campaign.



The campaign will urge all road users to “look out for each other”, stressing the need for drivers to give cyclists ample

space when they're manoeuvring into the safest position for crossing tram tracks.

These initial measures, or Phase 1 in the project, involve new road markings at:

York Place into Elder Street

Shandwick Place into Queensferry Street

Princes Street on to Waverley Bridge

Princes Street into South St David Street

Princes Street into Frederick Street

There will also be red surfacing added to the existing cycle lane at Haymarket Yards.



Council officers told us that they had been in consultation with consultants working on behalf of the council and cycling groups such as SPOKES to assess areas of potential conflict between cyclists and tramlines in the city centre and develop proposals for improvements.

We were told that this work was already underway when a fatal collision occurred on 31 May 2017 at the junction of Shandwick Place and Queensferry Street, in which [Malaysian student Zhi Min Soh](#) tragically lost her life. We were told that it had become apparent from an examination of CCTV footage that the medical student was crossing the tracks from Princes Street to enter Queensferry Street on her way to the Western General when her wheels became stuck in the tracks.

On 29 June 2017, the Council approved a motion calling for a number of actions to be undertaken to improve conditions for vulnerable road users in the city centre and at various locations along the tram route.

These actions included undertaking reviews of infrastructure at the junction at the west end of Princes Street where the fatal collision happened, and of tram infrastructure in the city centre and at South Gyle/Edinburgh Park to enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety and convenience.

The motion also called for the design of any future tram line extension to reflect Council policies to prioritise pedestrian and cyclist safety and convenience. Council officers told us that these new measures will be introduced into the design of any extension to the tramline from Day 1.

The council begins work next week on red anti slip areas around tram tracks to allow cyclists to cross more safely
[@lmacinnessnp](https://twitter.com/rmk9xitqfc) explains [pic.twitter.com/rmk9xitqfc](https://twitter.com/rmk9xitqfc)

– Edinburgh Reporter (@EdinReporter) [September 29, 2017](#)

Transport Convener Councillor Lesley Macinnes said: “Road safety is one of the Council’s top priorities and we’ve been working very closely with cycling groups for many months on ways to help make it easier for cyclists to safely cross tram tracks in the city centre.

“The measures we’ve been able to bring forward as Phase 1 will help demonstrate the safest angle to cross the tracks at five key points along the route, something which we know will be especially welcomed by less confident cyclists.

“We’re emphasising that this is about all road users looking out for each other to keep themselves and each other safe. Drivers need to make sure they give cyclists plenty of time and extra space to get into the position they need to be in to cross the tram tracks safely and cyclists need to clearly signal – as early as possible – what they plan to do. By looking out for each other, we can ensure we all reach our destination safely.”

Katherine Soane, Senior Officer, Transport Integration, Sustrans said : “Sustrans welcomes CEC proposals around crossing tram tracks.

“This is an excellent first step in getting people on bikes to be more aware of the best angle to cross tram tracks, and we look forward to a more wide-reaching programme around safety where vulnerable road users interact with motorists.”

Dave du Feu, speaking on behalf of Spokes, said: “Spokes welcomes the Council’s 3-phase project to tackle tramline-related cyclist crashes and injuries.

“The Council rightly recognises that many crashes occur because traffic pressures force the cyclist into the tramlines at a poor angle. We therefore particularly welcome the phase 1 “Give Cyclists Space” signs and publicity.

“We urge the Council to progress rapidly with the consultations and Traffic Orders required for phases 2 and 3, which entail changes to traffic lights, road layouts, etc. We look forward to discussing these plans.

“Furthermore, Spokes welcomes the motion passed at the first meeting of the new Council, promising that any tramline extension would “prioritise pedestrian and cyclist safety and convenience, including consideration of segregated cycle lanes.”

Phase 2 will include improvements to Advanced Stop Lines at six city centre locations and improvements at Haymarket Station, Lothian Road and South Charlotte Street.

Phase 3 will include the area where cyclists will cross from Princes Street to South St Andrew Street and Phase 4 will make changes to the road layout at the foot of Lothian Road. Public realm will also be reviewed in this area.



Phases 2 and 3 will cost around £200,000 but Phase 4 cannot yet be budgeted as the details have to be finalised.

The new road markings will be promoted alongside the following guidance:

Advice for drivers

Give cyclists extra space, not just to the side but from behind. They need time to cycle safely near tram tracks.

If you see a cyclist indicating to turn across the tracks, you should stay at least 12 metres behind them – this is the length of 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cars or a bus.

Avoid driving on the red cycle lanes when cyclists are turning right at:

York Place into Elder Street

Shandwick Place into Queensferry Street

Princes Street onto Waverley Bridge

Princes Street into South St David Street

Princes Street into Frederick Street

Think ahead and signal early. Let other people using the road know what you are doing.

Advice for cyclists

Cross the tracks at least at 45 degrees. If you can't, you should get off your bike to avoid slipping on the tracks or getting your wheels stuck.

Avoid leaning when crossing the tram tracks.

Take care when cycling in the rain, the tracks will be slippery.

Think ahead and signal early. Plan how you will cross the tracks and let people using the road know what you are doing.

If there is a red cycle lane where you are turning, please use it as it offers the safest route to crossing the tram tracks.

Know your limits. Depending on the situation and your cycling experience, you may prefer to get off your bike at a safe point on the road to continue your journey.

Further information [here](#)

Phase 2 in the project, expected for completion by April 2018, will include improvements to Advanced Stop Lines for cyclists and traffic signals apparatus at six city centre locations.

Meanwhile, Phase 3, expected to be completed in autumn 2018, will include a short length of new segregated cycle lane on Princes Street. This timescale is dependent on successful promotion of redetermination orders.