

New look for the New Town and George Street on display today

The new look for George Street and the New Town, which is a concept design only and not the final blueprint, is going on display today at the City Art Centre.

This is the result of discussions with those who run businesses in the city, community groups and special interest groups.

There is a real move towards eradicating the car, giving room to cyclists and pedestrians, making active travel more of a priority while improving accessibility for those with buggies or wheelchairs. This is not a big surprise to anyone who has been following the discussions, and particularly as Daisy Narayanan the Depute Director of Sustrans was seconded to the council to spearhead this project.

The drop-in sessions are being held on the fifth floor of the City Art Centre from 2.00pm to 7.00pm today, 11.00am to 5.00pm tomorrow 9 November 2018 and 10.00 to 4.00pm on 10 November 2018.

An online survey about the concept design will be available from today until January 25, 2019. This, along with more information about the project, will be available on the project website – www.edinburgh.gov.uk/firstnewtown

As a key element within the wider [City Centre Transformation project](#), the George Street and New Town (GNT) project aims to design a vibrant street environment that is safe for all users – one which significantly enhances its use for pedestrians while prioritising active travel and accessibility.

Lesley Macinnes, Transport and Environment Convener at The City of Edinburgh Council, which is driving forward the project with support from Sustrans, said: “The GNT project is widely recognised as a crucial catalyst to re-invigorating George Street and adjoining New Town streets for the present day but is also fundamental to ensuring the area can easily adapt in the future as the city of Edinburgh continues to evolve.



Greater New Town Hanover Street Junction visual

“The concept design aims to create a world-class space that respects and enhances the World Heritage Site. It seeks to make the First New Town a safer and more vibrant area by opening up central places to more people and enhancing the current setting and position of the street’s statues to make greater feature points of them.

“The concept has been shaped through ongoing stakeholder consultation and listening to a wide range of views and aspirations.

“The drop-in sessions will now help gauge the appetite for a

range of a proposals, amongst which are the potential introduction of greening, trees and new seating areas to the street, in addition to the creation of a segregated cycle lane and much enhanced pedestrian space.”

Transport and Environment Vice Convener, Councillor Karen Doran, said: “The project team welcomes people’s feedback on the initial concept design which is a major step forward in the project’s development.

“Anyone and everyone is now welcome to attend the drop-in sessions and meet the team – we really want to involve as many people as possible in the processes that will help shape this important historic area within our city.”

Other key elements of the draft concept design, which has been developed in line with the design principles for George Street, are:

- Creating a welcoming public realm on par with other great global cities by improving accessibility, pedestrian experience and providing interest for people of all ages and abilities.
- Creating spaces where people can sit, rest, relax and linger comfortably in the street, with significantly more outdoor seating available.
- Creating plazas – areas that reinforce views of key buildings, provide attractive spaces within the street and support events of an appropriate scale without impacting pedestrian and cycle routes.
- Increasing the width of pedestrian areas to enhance the pedestrian experience, accessibility and movement flow.
- Creating dedicated and segregated space for cycling in two directions on George Street.
- Eliminating existing street clutter which detracts from the

heritage and buildings and also impedes pedestrian movement, presenting a particular obstacle for people with visual and mobility impairments and those with prams.

- Improving the pedestrian experience at road junctions by extending the footway space available and narrowing vehicle carriageways.
- Enhancing the visual settings of the statues on George Street by removing street clutter and providing more pedestrian space to ensure the statues can be better appreciated.
- Introducing greenery to improve the environmental qualities and the comfort of the street, including some carefully placed smaller native trees and some lower level Georgian plants, to resonate with the street's heritage.
- Reducing the current impact of vehicles by removing the central median parking which detracts from the character and heritage of the street.
- Prioritising blue badge parking on George Street, with resident and pay and display parking in side streets.
- Creating dedicated delivery and servicing areas.
- Considering the restriction of vehicle access to core services and access hours to key times of day to reduce vehicle dominance while still allowing the function of businesses.
- Adopting a holistic design approach which considers the design's impact on the wider city centre.

The public events follow on from drop-in sessions held earlier this year and at the end of last year when members of the public were offered the chance to help refine the project's design objectives. The project's design team includes WYG Environment Planning Transport Ltd and urban design experts, LDA Design, who were commissioned by the Council to develop

this design project.