

# Council planning to reopen Braid Road to southbound vehicles

**The council plans to reopen the southbound part of Braid Road coupling this with traffic calming measures in the Midmar area.**

The change to this scheme is a reaction to the delay in journey times on Lothian Buses using Comiston Road, as well as what is called 'intrusive traffic' on Braid Crescent and some other streets such as Cluny Drive.

But the council says it would like to introduce the planned Greenbank to Meadows Quiet Route in advance of making the change.

Blackford Safe Routes who organise the bike bus to James Gillespie's Primary School and who made a substantial contribution to the design of the planned Quiet Route responded to the plans on Twitter

*Sadly, reopening Braid Rd s-bound will not solve congestion on Comiston Rd & will likely make it worse. It will reopen rat runs along Midmar & Hermitage Dr, breaking a key safe-cycling connection between Meadows & Fairmilehead & returning the neighbourhood to antisocial driving*  
<https://t.co/vcelXbydwA>

– blackfordsaferoutes (@blackfordsafer1) [January 22, 2021](#)

*No city in the world ever solved traffic congestion by opening up new (or old) roads to traffic. Ever.*

– blackfordsaferoutes (@blackfordsafer1) [January 22, 2021](#)

Fairmilehead community councillor, Stella Thomson, who campaigns for safe cycling infrastructure as part of Spokes South Edinburgh, said: “This is such disappointing news and I hope councillors will keep Braid Road open to people walking, wheeling and cycling, and closed to traffic. Many people say they would like to cycle for everyday trips but the number one reason they give for not doing so is their fear of cycling in traffic.

“While Braid Road has been closed, and with protected cycle lanes on the A702 (Comiston Road), I have seen so many more people cycling. It’s been great to see far more women, teenagers, families, and older people all cycling. We were so looking forward to promoting the proposed quiet route connecting the Greenbank roundabout to the Meadows.

“It would give Fairmilehead a desperately needed safe cycle route into town and also to several High schools in South Edinburgh. If the Council is serious about addressing public health and air quality both during the pandemic and afterwards, it must provide traffic free routes to enable people to cycle in safety and comfort. We have seen too many people killed and injured on bikes in the city. Leadership is now required to ensure everyone who wants to cycle can do so in safety.”



Braid Road

Local councillor Jason Rust said: ““Having had such an entrenched view on the closure of Braid Road against local views, I am pleased that the Council now recognises that reopening will mitigate the negative impact of traffic and

public transport delays and reduce the level of intrusive traffic using surrounding residential streets.

“However, serious questions remain about why this is only a recommendation for part-opening in one direction rather than a full reopening and I am asking further questions of officers, not least about the anecdotal evidence referenced in their briefing.”

Councillor Scott Arthur who represents the Colinton/Fairmilehead Ward said: “The Braid Road saga is a result of the polarisation of the political debate – this should shame all of Edinburgh’s councillors. Right at the start the Council made the fundamental error of considering the Braid Road and Comiston Road schemes independently. This led to significant delays to public transport which have been downplayed due to political intransigence.

“Ironically, the case for improved support for walking and cycling between Fairmilehead and Morningside has never been clearer. Rather than consulting the community on one high quality route with no impact on the public transport, however, the Council made the mistake of dividing its efforts between two schemes. The result has been long delays to public transport and the local community has been left feeling alienated. As the imitable Ron Swanson once said: “Don’t half-ass two things, whole-ass one thing”.

“The lack of data driving decision making with regard to Braid Road has been worrying, but it appears now that limited information from Lothian Buses has broken through the political intransigence and Braid Road will open southbound only. This is welcome, but it is not too late for the Council to show some humility and open a debate with the local community about what the area actually needs.”

Other streets are also affected by closures to through traffic.







## FUNDING

As part of the Spaces for People programme, a government funded set of emergency measures to provide space for exercise and physical distancing, the council set in place measures for Braid Road and many others across the city.

Braid Road has always been a bit controversial, as some of those living there would like it open to traffic again as they say it would make the main road less congested while others want the road closed to vehicles to allow more space for walking and cycling.

The council was awarded £5.25 million to be spent by May 2021 and some of that will be held back to pay for maintenance of some of the schemes after May. Also the council received £1.7 million from the Scottish Government's Places for Everyone scheme for installing 'trial infrastructure'.

The City of Edinburgh Council has put in place 39 km of

segregated cycle lanes, widened 11 footpaths in the city centre and town centres and created three city centre pedestrian zones since last year. Ten roads have been closed, or at least closed to vehicles, near schools and 54 measures have been put in place near school gates to reduce infection risk among parents dropping off or collecting children.

While they are reopening part of Braid Road, the council also has plans for Braid Hills Drive: “Braid Hills Drive – this scheme has been proposed as an important safe link to areas of exercise in the Hermitage of Braid and Braid Hill area. The proposal is to introduce segregated cycleways on each side of Braid Hills Drive and reduce the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph to provide a safe link to this important space for exercise.”

In the council papers there are four design options for this road layout and closure of at least part of it. The decision on which design will be used looks as though it will be made internally before notification to key stakeholders.

Elsewhere in the city, the council plans an uphill cycle way on Orchard Brae, cycle markings on Meadow Place Road, more cycling segregation from Bellevue to Canonmills to join up to the North Edinburgh Path Network, advisory cycle lane from Granton Square to Marine Drive to improve access to the Forth Quarter Park and Gypsy Brae area, revisions to Silverknowes Road with a segregated cycle path and a part for buses, and a segregated cycleway at Slateford Road.

The Transport Committee will discuss and agree these measures on Thursday. The committee papers are [here](#).