

Scottish transport projects to accelerate economic recovery

The Scottish Government has announced on Wednesday the way it will invest in transport projects in the next two to three years.

This is the second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) and although only Phase One is published today we are promised Phase Two in autumn of this year. It follows the publication of the National Transport Strategy in March 2020.

The Strategy outlined four priorities: reducing inequalities, tackling climate change, helping to deliver inclusive economic growth and improving health and wellbeing.

Some of the key recommendations include a lot of measures that we have already encountered here in Edinburgh like 20mph zones. And the language the report uses is very much the language of The City of Edinburgh Council reports on transport matters.

There is an explanation of “Sustainable Travel Hierarchy” – which we are told means that “this promotes walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport and shared transport options in preference to individual use of a private car”. Comments and feedback are invited from the public by 31 March 2021.

One of the threads in STPR2 relates to Transforming Cities and will have most application in Edinburgh with “measures that will support active and sustainable travel alongside

placemaking principles in Scotland's seven cities to help transform cities and neighbourhood centres." This will include reallocating roadspace for active travel, enhancing facilities at major rail stations and the development of an Edinburgh Mass Transit strategy.

The Scottish Government has allocated £3.2 billion to transport with £1.6 billion for rail and bus services and £100.5 million for active travel.



STRATEGIC TRANSPORT PROJECTS REVIEW

PROTECTING OUR CLIMATE
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Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity, Michael Matheson said: "As we continue to navigate our way through an unprecedented global health emergency, the investment decisions we make have never been so important. We want to lock in the changes to the healthy, green travel options we've seen during the pandemic, while supporting interventions that will aid and help accelerate economic recovery.

"We are conducting a thorough, evidence-based review of the performance of Scotland's strategic transport network across active travel, bus, ferry, rail and the trunk road network and my thanks go to everyone who is engaged in that process, particularly our Regional Transport Working Groups.

"Phase One sets out some of our transport investment priorities for the next few years, which will support a fair

and sustainable economic recovery from the pandemic, while working towards our longer term goals of making Scotland more accessible for residents, visitors and businesses; improving connectivity and highlighting the vital contribution that transport investment can play in enabling and sustaining Scotland's economic growth.

"STPR2 will help us to deliver the vision, priorities and outcomes set out in our National Transport Strategy as well as aligning with other important national plans such as the Climate Change Plan, Infrastructure Investment Plan and National Planning Framework."

John Lauder, Deputy CEO of Sustrans and Executive Director for Scotland said: "Sustrans Scotland welcomes the recognition of the importance of active travel in STPR2. The continued commitment of £100m annually for the next 5 years provides continuity to build on well-established partnership programmes with local authorities and other statutory bodies to enable sustained planning of high quality infrastructure.

"The evidence and expertise to make Scotland's transport greener, healthier and fairer is all there. The time to act is now."

Transport and Environment Convener Councillor Lesley Macinnes said: "The need to invest in sustainable and accessible transport is essential for our city's green recovery from the Covid crisis, and to meet our long term goal of carbon neutrality by 2030.

"This report acknowledges the central role clean, integrated transport will play in the city and region's economic development, improving the environment and progressing social equality amongst the people who live here.

“Amongst the schemes highlighted, the progress of mass rapid transit is key to our forthcoming City Mobility Plan, supporting people to make convenient, sustainable transport choices as well as connecting to areas of future growth. Support in this Scottish Government report for reallocation of road space for walking and cycling, expanding on work through our Spaces for People project, City Centre Transformation and our ongoing, ambitious active travel programme, will help us create a truly people-friendly city.

“I’m very pleased that STPR2 recognises and builds on the importance of these strategic projects, as well as highlighting the effectiveness of our 20mph roll-out, and will be of great support as we work towards a greener, fairer future.”

Transport Vice Convener Councillor Karen Doran said: “We’re already focusing on a great many schemes to support sustainable transport, from measures to prioritise public transport and investing in Trams to Newhaven to major cycling and walking improvements around the Capital.

“The themes and recommendations within this report very much reflect and bolster our own aspirations to encourage modal shift away from private car journeys, responding to the climate emergency, minimising air pollution and supporting healthy lifestyles. We look forward to working with Transport Scotland to progress the recommendations, to the benefit of the city.”


The report reproduced below concentrates on Edinburgh and South East Scotland Region. This was first published last year and has now been updated with interesting information about the ways we all get about Edinburgh, including to and from work (when we are not advised to Stay At Home):




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