

City Centre West to East Link – ground broken today at official ceremony

The official ceremony to break ground on the City Centre West to East Link project took place on Tuesday. The ground was broken today by Transport Convener, Lesley Macinnes and Minister for Active Travel, Patrick Harvie in Roseburn.

Representatives from Sustrans, Roseburn Cycle Route, children from Roseburn Primary School joined the official party and the Balfour Beatty team who will carry out the work in a safe area away from traffic to conduct the ceremony.

The project, overseen by contractors Balfour Beatty, is leading the way in sustainable construction, with measures to cut carbon emissions. Site compounds will utilise 'EcoSense' cabins in conjunction with an ECONET power management system, which significantly reduces energy consumption and water usage. Project officers will also use e-bikes rather than cars to travel between the site compound and works areas wherever possible, and cycle training has been provided as part of this.

The long awaited CCWEL will improve infrastructure for active travel from the West to the East of the city. Today ground was broken on the project at Roseburn – the site of many protests against the scheme in the past seven years – and

some in support of it too pic.twitter.com/jlCMcq1DsL

– Edinburgh Reporter (@EdinReporter) [February 8, 2022](#)



Transport Convener Councillor Lesley Macinnes is joined in Roseburn by Patrick Harvie, Minister for Zero Carbon Buildings, Active Travel and Tenants' Rights, with L-R Claire Daly Sustrans, and Karen McGregor, Portfolio Director for Sustrans to break the ground on the £19.4 million City Centre West to East Link (CCWEL) along with pupils from Roseburn Primary School L-R Maheer Zahir (10), Isla Kinnear (10) Molly Jamieson (11) and Sadie Walsh (11) The e-bike in the photo is used by contractors Balfour Beatty to get around the site. PHOTO Greg Macvean

Construction is expected to last around 18 months, with [full details of plans](#) available on the dedicated CCWEL website. In the first phase of the section between Roseburn and West Coates there will be some lane closures and changes to parking and bus stops, though traffic will be maintained in both directions.



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Patrick Harvie said: "Scotland has been seeing not enough progress on reducing emissions from transport, but we have also seen problems like air pollution, problems of active travel not being safe and attractive for people. I just cycled along here from Parliament and I am painfully aware how much this particular route needs investment to make sure it is safe and attractive for people to walk as well as cycle. This project is going to make a big difference but we need lots more of this kind of thing right around the country."

We asked the minister about the painfully slow planning process that this kind of project needs to pass through before becoming reality. He replied: "This project has been a long

time in the planning and when local communities and local government know what they want to achieve and have a lot of support for it we need to cut through that process and make sure that it is easier for them to deliver what communities need in Scotland. We are working on that and we are going to be making big changes to the way that we deliver active travel so that we can scale up. We have the budget going in but we need to make those projects easier to deliver in practice.”



Transport Convener Lesley Macinnes with Active Travel Minister, Patrick Harvie break ground at City Centre West to East Link in Roseburn with Karen McGregor Portfolio Director for Sustrans and pupils from Roseburn Primary School L-R Maheer Zahir (10), Isla Kinnear (10) Molly Jamieson (11) and Sadie Walsh (11) PHOTO ©The Edinburgh Reporter

Cllr Macinnes said: “A project of this scale and quality is going to take time to deliver, but it won’t all be 74 weeks in one spot . It is moving right across the route of the project. People’s level of local upheaval will be limited. Each part will not take 74 weeks but that is the amount of time it takes us to deliver a very large and quality piece of active travel

infrastructure.

“This project will act to join up a network and means that people can cross the city knowing that they have safe segregated cycle ways and a good quality walking environment. All of the things that this project will bring. It just delivered confidence I think for people to move around the city today. I cycled here myself and know exactly how much it is needed.”

We asked the Transport Convener if this was more the kind of project which could have been achieved with Spaces for People funding. The council was granted £5.35 million by The Scottish Government through Sustrans during the pandemic. Some of the funds were used for segregated cycle lanes and some for expanding areas to walk in town centres all over Edinburgh. Some of the cycle lanes remain in place.

Cllr Macinnes replied: “This is a permanent piece, whereas Spaces for People was a temporary measure in response to a pandemic. Are we looking at what we can keep with that? Absolutely – we are learning lessons and understanding where the benefits are where it needs tweaks but eventually it will all expand into permanent infrastructure.”

A spokesperson for [Roseburn Cycle Route](#) – a local group backing plans for a segregated cycle route from Roseburn to Haymarket & through the city centre to Leith Walk – and who have campaigned for the new cycle route since the beginning said: “We at the Roseburn Cycle Support Group are delighted to see work start on the public realm improvements in the Roseburn area which will make it safer for those not in motor vehicles. It has been a long six years since the initial plans and consultation for the project went out and after many meetings, discussions and community involvement its great that work has finally started.

“The new pedestrian crossings, removal of the Roseburn Gardens

'rat run' and wider pavements on Roseburn Terrace will make it safer and more pleasant to be on foot. The segregated cycle path to Haymarket and onto the City Centre will allow many more journeys by bike especially by those previously scared to take on the hostile road conditions.

"We look forward to seeing the new layout being finished and encourage people to continue to support the local traders during the upheaval of the construction phase."



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