

York Place tram stop to be demolished – trams to stop at West End until April

From 9 February trams will stop at West End tram stop in Shandwick Place for two months while the next stage of Trams to Newhaven is put in place. Edinburgh Trams will put alternative arrangements in place to allow passengers to continue into the city centre.

Any customers with a tram ticket, Ridacard or valid concessionary card can use Lothian Buses while the tram does not travel to the city centre stops. Or passengers can alight at Haymarket and use National Rail services to Waverley.

This involved demolishing the tram stop at York Place (which was always temporary) and a crossover linking the existing line with the new route being built.

From April Edinburgh Trams will then travel once more to the city centre, but only as far as St Andrew Square.

Lea Harrison, Edinburgh Trams Managing Director, said: “The closure of York Place marks a major milestone in the Trams to Newhaven project, and shows that work to expand our popular tram network is gathering pace ahead of the planned launch of services on the new line in 2023.

“However, we are aware that the closure, and temporary suspension of services to Princes Street and St Andrew Square may cause inconvenience to some customers, so these works have been scheduled during the quietest time of the year and well ahead of what is expected to be a busy summer for the city.”

In May work will begin on the new tram stop at Picardy Place – although the area is already a building site with no northbound traffic from Leith Street or London Road to Broughton Street meantime. The Picardy Place stop will be used when the Trams to Newhaven line opens in 2023.

Leith Walk

Construction works on the west side of Leith Walk are nearly complete and there are now changes to traffic diversions with traffic running city bound on the west side of the road. Meantime work continues on the pavements, public realm and new roadway on the eastern side.

Pilrig Street and Steads Place are reopened for southbound traffic although some side streets on the east side of Leith Walk will close from time to time. Check the Trams to Newhaven website for details.

Transport Convener, Cllr Lesley Macinnes, said: “We’re entering a significant phase of the Trams to Newhaven project, as we work to link the old line to the new. We are in the final year of construction for the project which will be followed by a period of testing and commissioning ahead of opening for service in Spring 2023.

“With 60% of track laid and main construction on two of the new tram stops completed, we’re making great progress and it’s exciting to be able to see elements of the new line in place, giving us an idea of how the route will look next year.

“Of course, as is expected of major infrastructure projects of this nature, there is bound to be some disruption, and I’d like to thank all those living and working nearby for their patience. We’re working hard to mitigate the impacts and will continue liaising with residents, businesses and public transport providers to keep them up to date.”

Missed opportunity?

Much discussion has taken place on social media about the cycle lanes now created. Some of these, according to reports and the photos, are not entirely straight or unimpeded. We have not yet been down there with a camera but hope to do so in the coming week. If you have any photos to share with us then please tag us on Twitter.

It is with hindsight a missed opportunity that Leith Walk will not become a public transport and active travel corridor in the same way that George Street will be in the coming years.

Traffic has admittedly been lighter on Leith Walk in the last two years, but drivers have still found alternative ways of getting about – even while avoiding Leith Walk. It would have been the ideal time to close it to traffic completely, allow drivers to find alternative routes and create a boulevard with seating and public realm areas, and space for walking, wheeling and cycling. Traders would have had to use the last mile delivery options which they have become used to during the frameworks – with handcarts and cargo bikes. On George Street there will also be designated delivery times for businesses as well as last mile options often observed in many European cities. Elsewhere in the city cargo bikes are now being used by some of the biggest courier companies.



FedEx on George Street PHOTO ©2022 The Edinburgh Reporter
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