

Meadows to George Street – final designs now published for first link in transformation of the city centre

The final designs for a small but important part of the revamping of Edinburgh city centre have now been published, but don't hold your breath as construction will not begin until 2024.

The Meadows to George Street project, funded by Sustrans Places for Everyone programme, was interrupted by the pandemic. Although this gave the council an opportunity to trial some segregated cycle ways from the foot of the Mound to the Meadows, these have largely been taken out as there was already this scheme in design. Now the design is published and it shows areas for walking, wheeling and cycling on Teviot Place, Forrest Road, George IV Bridge, the Mound and Hanover Street with additional cycle parking on streets.

For example, Bank Street will have no general through traffic between Market Street and Lawnmarket. Floating bus stops will be included.

Forrest Road will become a pedestrianised area and there will be pedestrian priority at Candlemaker Row, with improvements

around the Greyfriars Bobby statue.



Greyfriars Bobby

The council says the changes will “be made in a way which respects and enriches the World Heritage Site”.

Some amendments to previous plans have been made – such as the two way cycle track at Hanover Street which will become one way cycle lanes on either side of the road. A bus gate will be introduced at Market Street (meaning that only buses taxis and cycles can access Jeffrey Street during certain hours) at the junction with Jeffrey Street to reduce through traffic, footpaths are widened and a new safe cycle crossing over the tram tracks on Princes Street has been added.

These changes will help the [Meadows to George Street](#) plans to tie in with the [George Street and First New Town](#) project currently under development, and the [City Centre Transformation Project](#) which has already been approved.

SPOKES, the Lothian cycle campaign group, say that they are

disappointed that few of their comments have been included in the final plans and describe the timeline as “ridiculous” given that funding was approved by Sustrans in 2017.

Spokes suggested that the bus gate would have to be controlled by automatic number plate recognition (ANPR), that Forrest Road would have to be controlled by bollards or ANPR cameras and that the signage on Forrest Road should state “pedestrian and cycle zone” rather than just “pedestrian zone”.

Living Streets Edinburgh say there is a lot of devil in the detail still to be decided, especially taxi access, bus stops and management and enforcement – particularly of parking.

Sustrans have said that it will not be long now until walking, wheeling and cycling in the city centre is the safe preferred option, while access is retained for buses, taxis and disabled vehicles.

Cllr Lesley Macinnes, Transport and Environment Convener, and who is standing as one of ten candidates in the Liberton/Gilmerton Ward in May 2022, said: “The transformation of Edinburgh’s city centre will lead to a truly connected, people-friendly place to live, work and spend time in. The Meadows to George Street project is one of the first steps to achieving this, as well as supporting our net zero goals by promoting sustainable travel, so it’s really exciting to see the final designs.

“We’ve worked hard over recent years to develop proposals which balance the needs of all those who use the street while prioritising safe and accessible travel by foot, wheel or bike. These plans provide a snapshot of how the route will look and operate in the near future, as part of our broader ambitions for the city.”

Councillor Karen Doran, Transport and Environment Vice Convener, who is stepping down at the May election, said: “Our plans for Meadows to George Street are key to creating a

capital fit for the future, where healthy, active and sustainable travel is supported, and public spaces are opened up for socialising and relaxation.

“This is one of many projects to transform the way we use our city centre and I look forward to seeing it progress in the coming years.”

