

The ongoing tale of the Polwarth Roundabout

Merchiston Community Council (MCC) say that the traffic and pedestrian data for the mini roundabout at Polwarth show that this is the busiest neighbourhood junction in this part of the city.

It also appears that it is also one of the junctions which has been analysed and examined more often than many others in recent times.

And, MCC say, the current layout of the junction still “demands a serious rethink”.

The council commissioned a survey last year which showed that traffic numbers are “considerable”. In August the previous year the community council celebrated that the local authority was “considering all options” for the junction despite the fact that they had suggested a signalised junction – also the most expensive. (In 2024, the council suggested that there could be a signalised junction installed at Polwarth Gardens/Crescent in the Business Bulletin section of papers for the June 2024 Transport Committee as part of a new Local Traffic Improvement programme). MCC say that this is not a serious option and is not being considered for this version of the redesign.

MCC Report

This is the latest in a long-running story. In 2023 MCC produced its own vision for the roundabout – which is a three way junction at Polwarth Gardens, Polwarth Crescent and Granville Terrace – following a campaign to make it safer and greener. This was funded by a grant received from the council in spring 2022. Over 12 months the community council conducted traffic surveys, assessed and analysed pedestrian safety and public amenity.

In July 2023 MCC produced a report (reproduced below) with a plan for the rearrangement of the junction to “improve safety. increase space for pavement users, reduce vehicle volume and speed and introduce some much-needed facilities for cyclists and ‘green’ the environment”. The community council engaged with the council who established a Local Traffic Improvement Plan, allocated £100,000 to design work for the area with the actual work on the ground to be carried out in 2026.

Resurfacing the pavements

Muddying the waters somewhat, the council then resurfaced the pavements at the junction of Polwarth Gardens and Yeaman Place in June 2024 without incorporating any of the proposals from the community council. The then Transport Convener, Scott Arthur, denied this would be a waste of money as the new pavements would be incorporated in any redesign.

The community council asked the council to delay incurring this expense while considering the layout further. In MCC’s view this work – which took 26 weeks – did not improve anything for pedestrians or cyclists who the council say are at the top of their agenda. The railings were reinstated which the community council pointed out was a 50 year old design which only encourages drivers to speed and does little for pedestrian safety.

MCC said that the resurfacing has “effectively entrenched the 1970s layout” and runs counter to the council’s design guidance.



**COMING SOON:
A NEW POLWARTH JUNCTION**

The City of Edinburgh Council is redesigning the Polwarth roundabout junction to improve safety, following a campaign by the Merchiston Community Council (MCC)

This is great news for local residents!

WE WANT:

- ✓ Better crossings
- ✓ Wider pavements
- ✓ Speed management
- ✓ Improved road layout
- ✓ Safer cycling
- ✓ Greenspace
- ✓ A pleasant place to shop and linger



The City Council is developing new designs for the junction, and our community's feedback will help shape the final layout and safety features

Get involved!

Sign up for project updates



Visit merchistoncc.org.uk/projects/the-polwarth-pavement-project

email: pavementproject@merchistoncc.org.uk

MCC informally collected views from the public only last month, finding that most members of the public they spoke to were unhappy with the way the roundabout currently operates. The campaigners are keen to keep engaging with the council and show them that change is needed, while the council has continued to survey the junction measuring every last detail of the streets and pavements.

March 2025 – publishing the data

The data just published which dates from November 2024 shows that:

the number of vehicles passing in one week along Polwarth Crescent was 42,515 which is an average of 6,500 per day. Of these, 37% are vans or commercial vehicles.

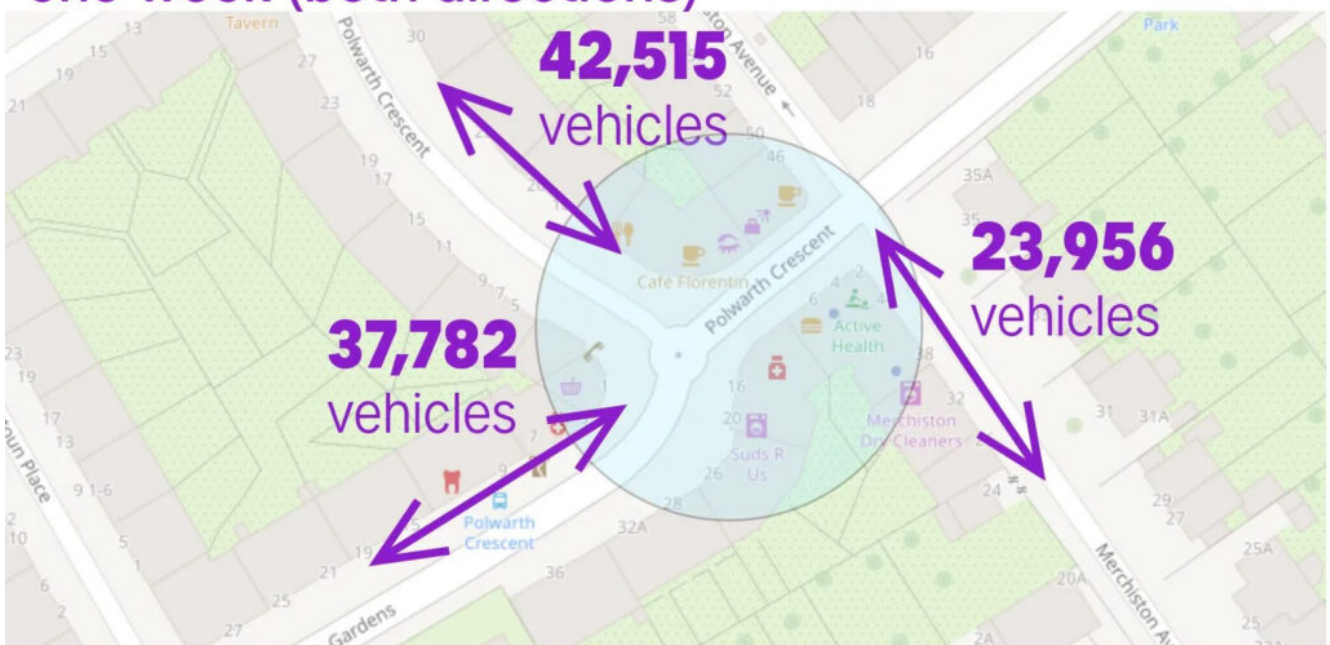
On Polwarth Gardens the number of vehicles is 37,782 and on Merchiston Avenue it is 23,956. The community council produced this graphic.

Polwarth roundabout

Number of vehicles passing in one week (both directions)



Merchiston
Community
Council



Data collected November 2024

Speeding has been reported as part of this exercise with 73% of all vehicles exceeding the 20mph limit and 34% travelling at more than 24mph.

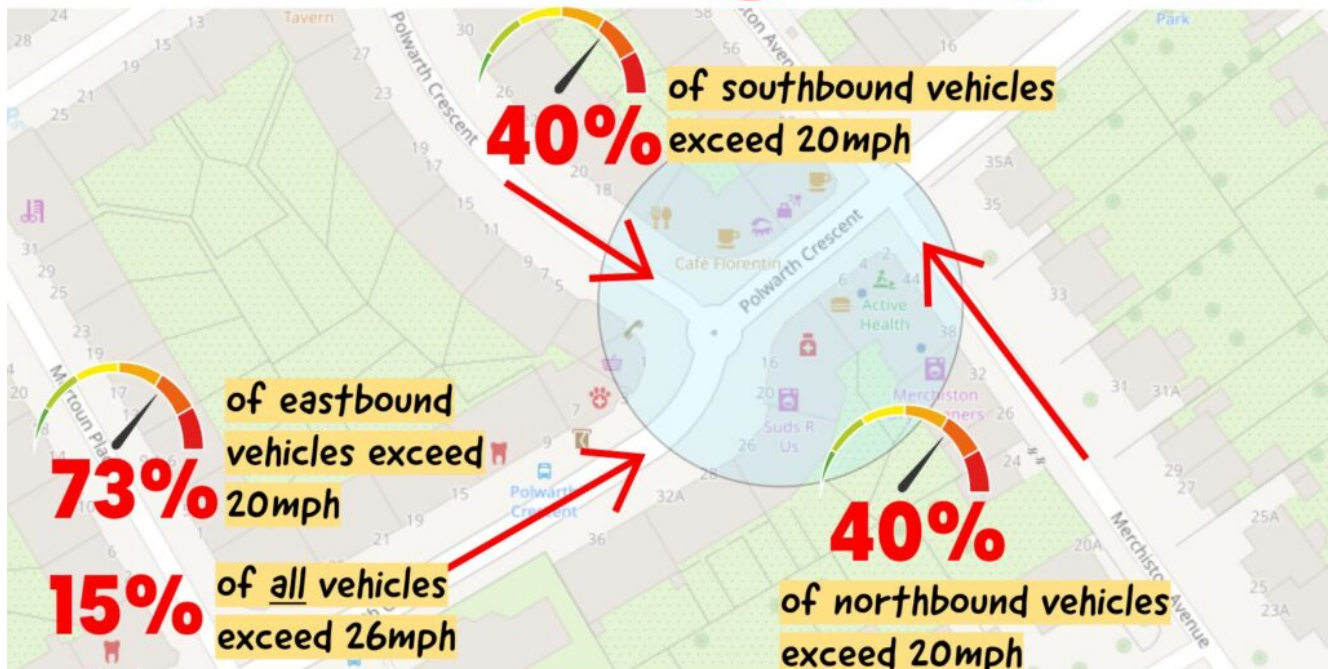
Again MCC produced a graphic of vehicle speeds:

Polwarth roundabout

Vehicle speeds exceeding **20** mph



Merchiston
Community
Council



Data collected November 2024

What happens now?

MCC say that the council is “making good progress in redesigning the roundabout” and they expect the design plans within weeks.

The community council continue to hope that their proposals will be included in the plans produced by the council’s road safety team. After that there will be a consultation with local businesses and the community council will share these plans on their website. [Everyone is encouraged to sign up for updates here.](#)

In MCC’s view the redesign must balance these priorities:

- Making crossing safer for pedestrians, especially children
- Supporting local businesses’ needs for loading and customer access

- Addressing speeding concerns
- Maintaining necessary traffic flow while discouraging cut-through traffic



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