

Thanks for the opportunity for us to speak about the part of the report dealing with pedestrian crossings and traffic signals. (Appendix 4 of the 'Travelling Safely' Update.)

My name is Hilda Sim. I walk and cycle in Edinburgh and use public transport; but I also drive, therefore understand driver behaviour.

The Living Streets Edinburgh Group has spent a lot of time looking at Edinburgh road junctions and pedestrian crossings over the past year and documenting just how poor they are for pedestrians. I have personally observed over 20.

General impression - junctions and signal timings are designed around convenience of motor vehicle, not pedestrian.

Result - long waiting times, danger, noise, and unpleasant conditions discourage walking.

Key observations:

1. **Pedestrians have to wait too long between Green Mans.**

Result - frustration makes people cross during red man - Green Wait (GW), risking accident. eg. Lothian Road / Morrison Street - had to wait 2 minutes and 20 seconds for Green Man.

On Wednesday 29 September, a bus hit pedestrian at corner of Leith Street and Princes Street near St James Quarter where there is a typically excessive wait for Green Man.

2. **Green Man illumination time too short.**

eg. Jock's Lodge (Restalrig Road) near Morrisons supermarket - Green Man only 6-7 seconds (after GW more than 2 minutes).

Result - people feel pressurised and run across (unsafe and unfair).

3. **Large junctions with multiple unconnected pedestrian crossings result in excessive crossing times due to aggregated wait times.**

eg. Took over 5 minutes to cross from Portobello Road to Portobello High Street via the crossings unless ignored red man and risked jaywalking.

4. **Drivers do not always stop at their amber.**

Result - amber gamblers reduce available time for pedestrians to cross, or may even drive through pedestrians on Green Man phase. eg. Holy Corner. Why not put cameras on traffic lights to enforce obedience to red & amber lights?

5. **Motorists sometimes end up driving through the Green Man phase at another part of the junction, sometimes when turning right, or if traffic is backed up ahead.**

Result - obvious risk of collision with pedestrians on the crossing. eg. Entrance to Craighleith shopping centre off Queensferry Road.

Examine signal timings to reduce chance of motor vehicles driving through Green Man phase at other side of junction.

6. **Junction design prioritises convenience of motor vehicles over pedestrians.**

eg. Charlotte Sq / west end Princes St / Lothian Rd - race track, unsafe for pedestrians.

Could replace dual lanes of traffic with single lane.

7. Two pedestrian phases per cycle are an excellent idea.

eg. already operating at High Street junctions with GIV Bridge & Bridges; also Nicolson Street / W Richmond Street.

Making it easier for people to walk across junctions is a good way to shift people out of cars and encourage them to go by foot or public transport.

Main conclusion - pedestrians have to wait too long to cross the road.

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David Hunter, Convenor LSEG

Although walking (including wheeling) is top of everyone's movement hierarchy, it is virtually invisible in so many ways - the number of pedestrians is rarely monitored in transport schemes and models- for example, it is not mentioned in the Lanark Road section of this report - nor is the time it takes to walk for one place to another. Probably the single most important way to make walking quicker in a city is to reduce delays when crossing the road.

So it is fantastic to see the improvements to pedestrian crossings described in this report: the time that people have to wait to cross the road is in some cases reduced by 50%. If this was rolled out across the city, the overall impact of these measures would be enormous - I'd say potentially the biggest single improvement for walking in Edinburgh for years - certainly since introducing the 20mph speed limits. The plan to ensure that school leaving times benefit from the more pedestrian-friendly phases is especially welcome. Also welcome is noting how many faults there are (8 out of 63) and that the default setting will no longer be the worst for pedestrians.

This has been funded by the £100,000 budget agreed by T&E in January which has also paid for the upgrade of several pelican crossings. This amounts to 2% of the Spaces for People budget - fantastic value for money. I'd like to thank in particular Andy Edwards for his patience in liaising with us over recent months.

However, I hope that this is only the start: there is so much more scope for further improvements.

So far, the project has only focussed on a few corridors - it must be extended to the whole city so that every signalised junction and pedestrian crossing is assessed for improvement.

Signals along the tram route have been excluded - these need to be looked at too.

The project has excluded peak periods and weekends - these also need to be looked at - especially because we may no longer return to the same 'peaks' that we had before the pandemic.

Most fundamentally, Appendix 4 is based on a consultant's observations which gives the traditional priority to motor traffic. For example, the statement that "there is little scope to amend timings for pedestrian improvements without having a significant impact on the overall junction operation" really just means that traffic flow comes first. This is at odds with current policy.

Another example: in his report, the consultant recommended that there should be no change at Balgreen Road because the signals (quote) “provide a reasonable balance for all users, as it allows traffic to keep moving, and keeps waiting time for pedestrians relatively low”.

Let’s turn that around and adopt a mind set which “allows pedestrians to keep moving, and keeps waiting time for traffic relatively low”!

It’s also assumed that pedestrians cross the road at 1.2m per second, and yet there is a pile of evidence that this is too fast for many particularly older people. Many crossings should be configured for pedestrians who move more slowly.

The report shows that signal timings have been unnecessarily weighted in favour of motor traffic for years - or almost certainly, decades. This despite all the policy documents and guidance talking of the need to put walking first. So we shouldn’t accept city streets as just the way they are, but we should actively query and challenge the conventions over how streets are designed and managed, which so often still put traffic first.

So, we’d like to ask that Committee:

- **agrees for a further report** taking in all these points and
- **agrees a budget** as a key part of the Active Travel programme.

Living Streets Edinburgh Group
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