

PRESS RELEASE



For Immediate Release
Glasgow 22nd February 2017

www.gobike.org
@GoBikeGlasgow

GoBike, an organisation that exists to promote cycling and good cycle infrastructure in the Strathclyde area of Scotland, is pleased to announce that it held a useful and constructive meeting with the Transport Minister, Humza Yousaf, on the 21st February 2017.

Highlights:

Urban 20 mph: GoBike was keen to impress on the minister its strong support for 20mph speed limits in built-up areas, except where local road conditions were consistent with higher speeds. The issue of whether roads for 20mph designation should be left to local authorities to decide, or whether the Scottish Parliament should legislate a blanket change in urban speeds was discussed. GoBike strongly favours central intervention to ensure that all residential areas and all urban roads with high cycle/pedestrian accidents are covered by 20mph in a timely manner. The Minister was open to the proposal and indicated that he was keen for Mark Ruskell, the Green MSP for Mid Scotland and Fife, to bring forward his proposed bill following these lines, and to look openly and without prejudice on it when it is brought forward.

Use of Evidence for Planning of Cycle Facilities: GoBike is fed up with cycle facilities that are discontinuous and placed with little heed regarding the roads that cyclists actually use for their urban travel. In recent years data have become available from Strava, the European Cycling Challenge and other sources that typically show that cyclists preferentially use the main, largely radial road networks that connect city suburbs to city centres. If cycle facilities are to be effective, they must be continuous and located on or very near to these main routes, not winding round the back streets. The Minister was very interested in the data presentations and we received the impression that he had previously seen little data on actual urban cycle activity. He was very open to the implications of the data and took on board the suggestion from GoBike that local authorities seeking Central Government funding for cycle facilities should provide evidence that they will satisfy a need, rather than fill an empty bit of road.

Space Reallocation: GoBike made the case to the Minister that space must be made for cyclists on main urban roads. Whilst this is and will remain in the purview of local authorities, we asked him to consider legislation that would mandate the siting of cycle facilities on new-build roads and renovated roads. The Minister was sympathetic to our position and considered that much had been lost through not following this approach in the past.

Presumed Liability: This is the issue where the opinions of GoBike and the Minister diverged most. Despite it being the norm in most European countries, he was not convinced that it would make roads safer for cyclists or pedestrians and wished to see evidence of enhanced safety before considering action. Such evidence can only be gained after the fact of changing from one system to another and as far as we are aware has never been meaningfully collected. GoBike, however, take the view that presumed liability is an issue of trying to protect the weak; anyone who is in control of a potentially dangerous device such as a motor vehicle, should be presumed to be liable in the event of death or injury as a consequence of its use. We agreed that our views differ and hope that further argument may change his opinion.

—ENDS—

Attachment:

- A copy of the discussion document presented to Humza Yousaf

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1. 20mph Speeds in Urban Areas

- Multiple benefits of safety, environment and air quality agreed by central/local governments, residents, road safety groups and cyclists. Change from urban 30mph to 20mph is in progress.
- Implementation rates are slow due to budgetary constraints and perceived requirement for complex and expensive traffic calming. Cities risk developing a confusing patchwork of 20mph islands in a 30mph sea.

Action requested: That Holyrood make Scotland a better place by passing legislation to expedite 20mph as the default urban speed limit, except on specified non-residential arterial roads

2. Use of Evidence When Specifying Location and Design of Urban Cycle Facilities

- Most existing cycle facilities suffer from two main failings: they are discontinuous and their positioning takes little cognisance of the preferred routes that cyclists use (cycle desire lines). They tend to be installed where local authorities see un-utilised road space, rather than from an assessment of cyclists' needs (directness/continuity of route, safety & speed of travel).
- Data concerning cycle desire lines is becoming abundantly available and shows that urban cyclists in Scotland substantially travel on direct (radial) main road routes that connect the suburbs with city centre. Cycle desire lines frequently cross local authority boundaries.

Action requested: That Holyrood preferentially promotes and funds cycle facilities that are based upon evidence of cyclists' needs, such as directness and continuity of route, and those which allow connection between local authority areas

3. Space Reallocation

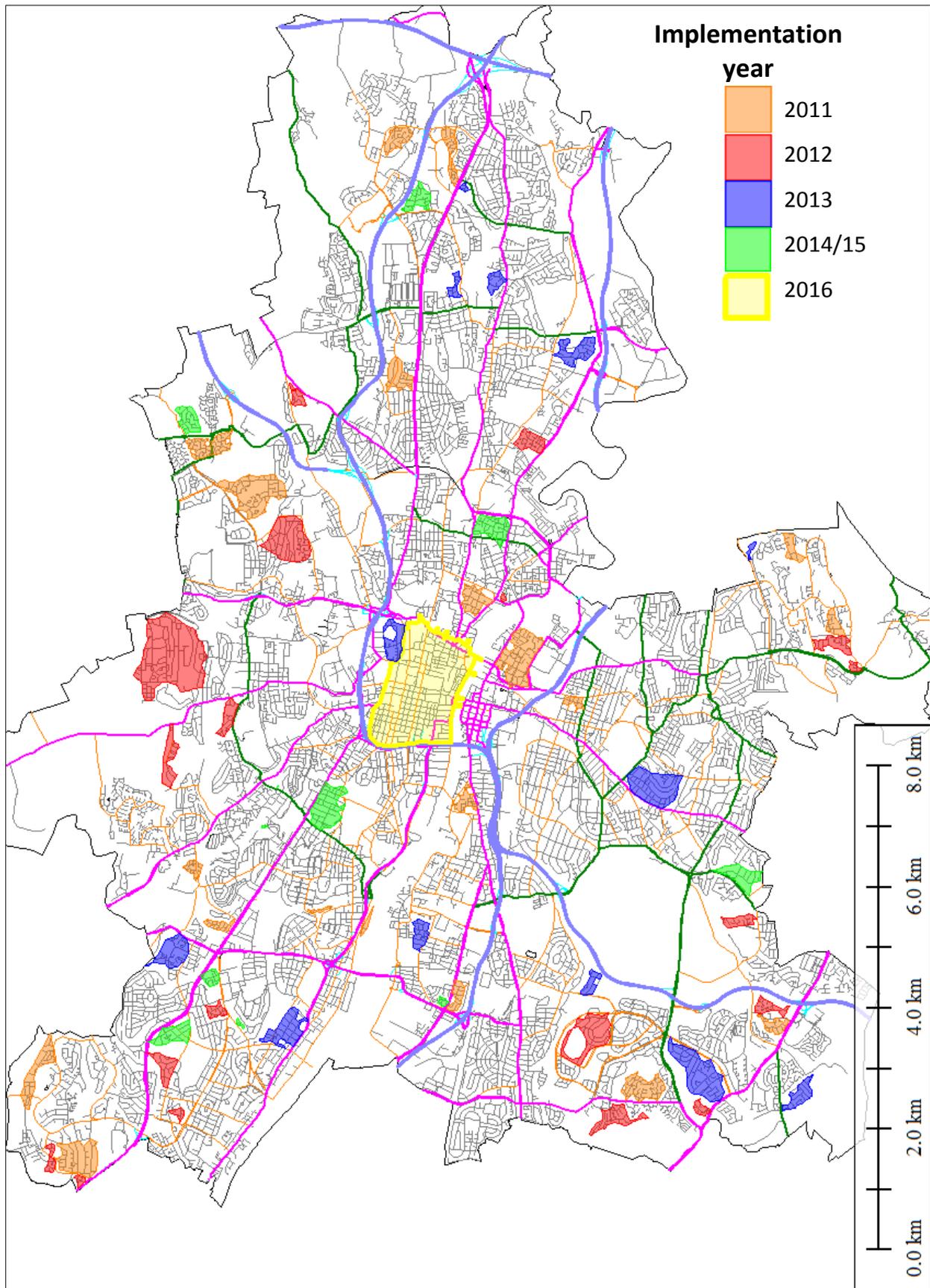
- Evidence shows that cyclists tend to travel in straight and continuous paths from suburban areas into urban centres, preferentially using the main roads, where cycle speeds are faster than on back road routes.
- Unless the desire by cyclists to use these direct main road routes is satisfied, then further spending on back-street cycle facilities will be largely wasted. The desire for cyclists to use main roads means that due consideration must be given to providing space on these.

Actions requested: 1) Holyrood mandates new build roads and renovated roads must have cycle facilities as a primary design criterion. 2) Prioritises facilities on faster/direct main road routes

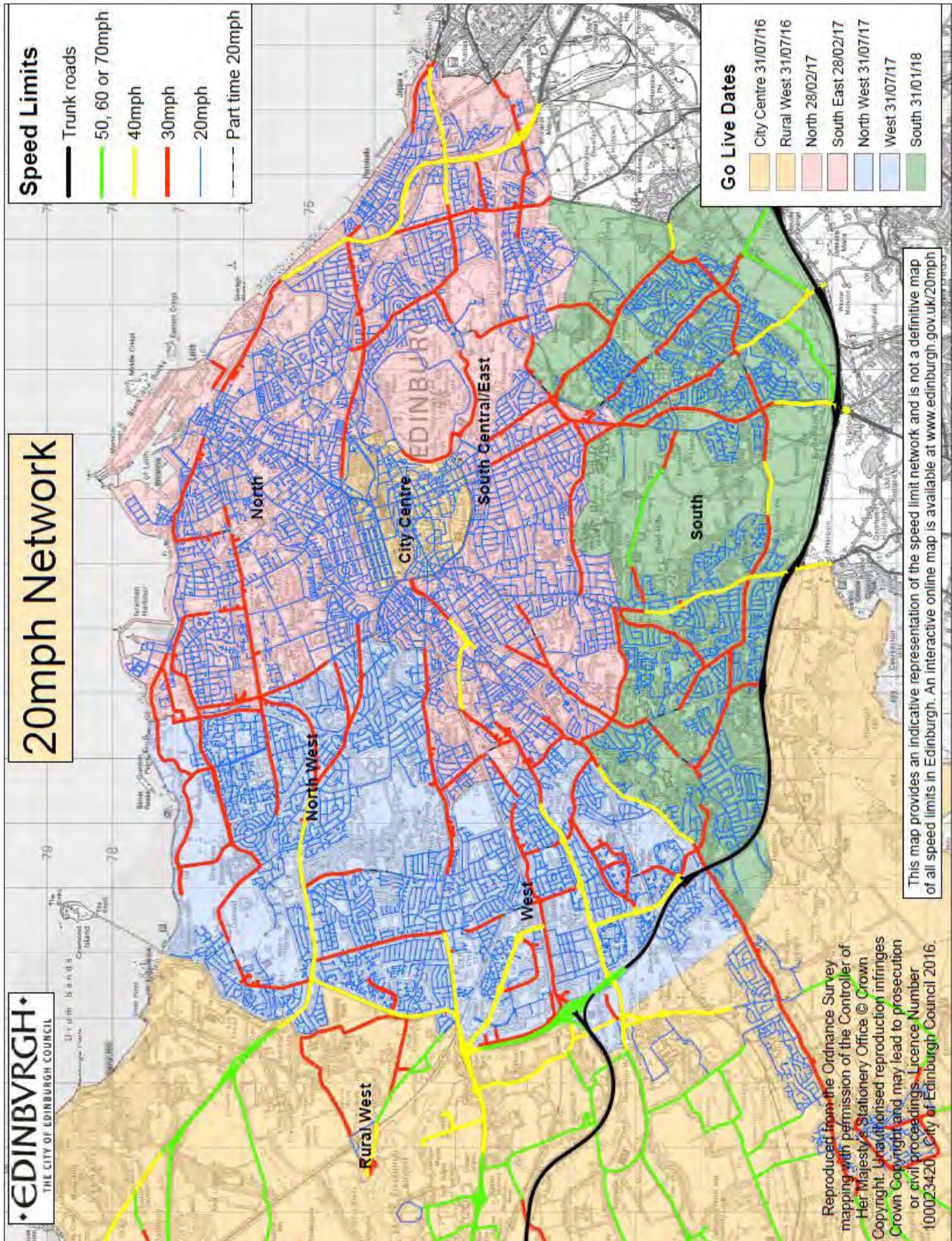
4. Presumed Liability

- It is a well-established legal principle that anyone who uses a dangerous instrument should be presumed to be liable in the event of death or injury as a consequence of its use.
- It is therefore unfortunate that insurance companies generally take an adversarial position when vehicles come into collision with unprotected road users such as cyclists and pedestrians. Compensation may be delayed or denied as result.
- At present, the UK is one of only five European countries (along with Cyprus, Malta, Romania and Ireland) that do not operate some form of strict liability law for vulnerable road users.

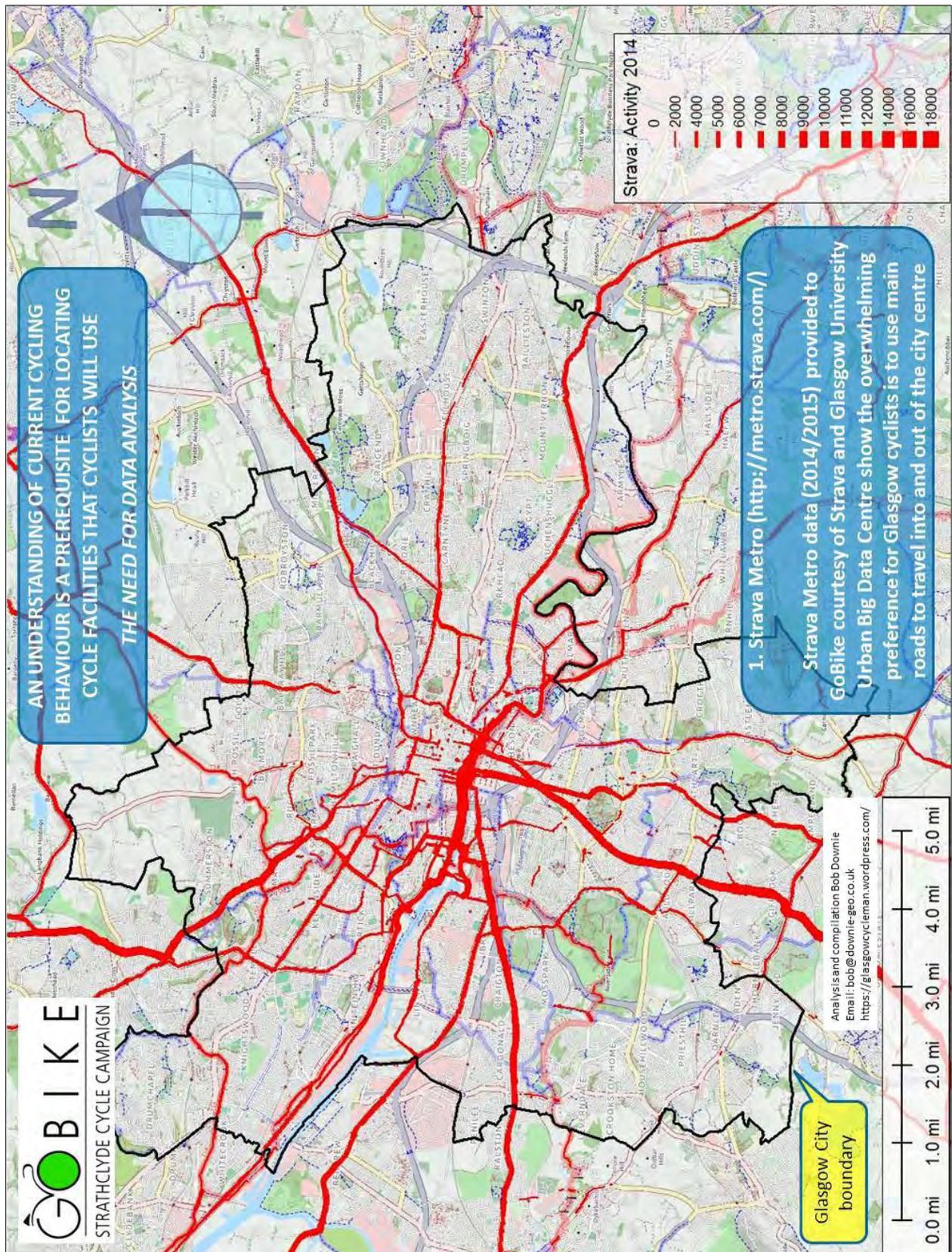
Action requested: That Holyrood makes Scotland a better place by enacting presumed liability legislation between motorists, cyclists and pedestrians



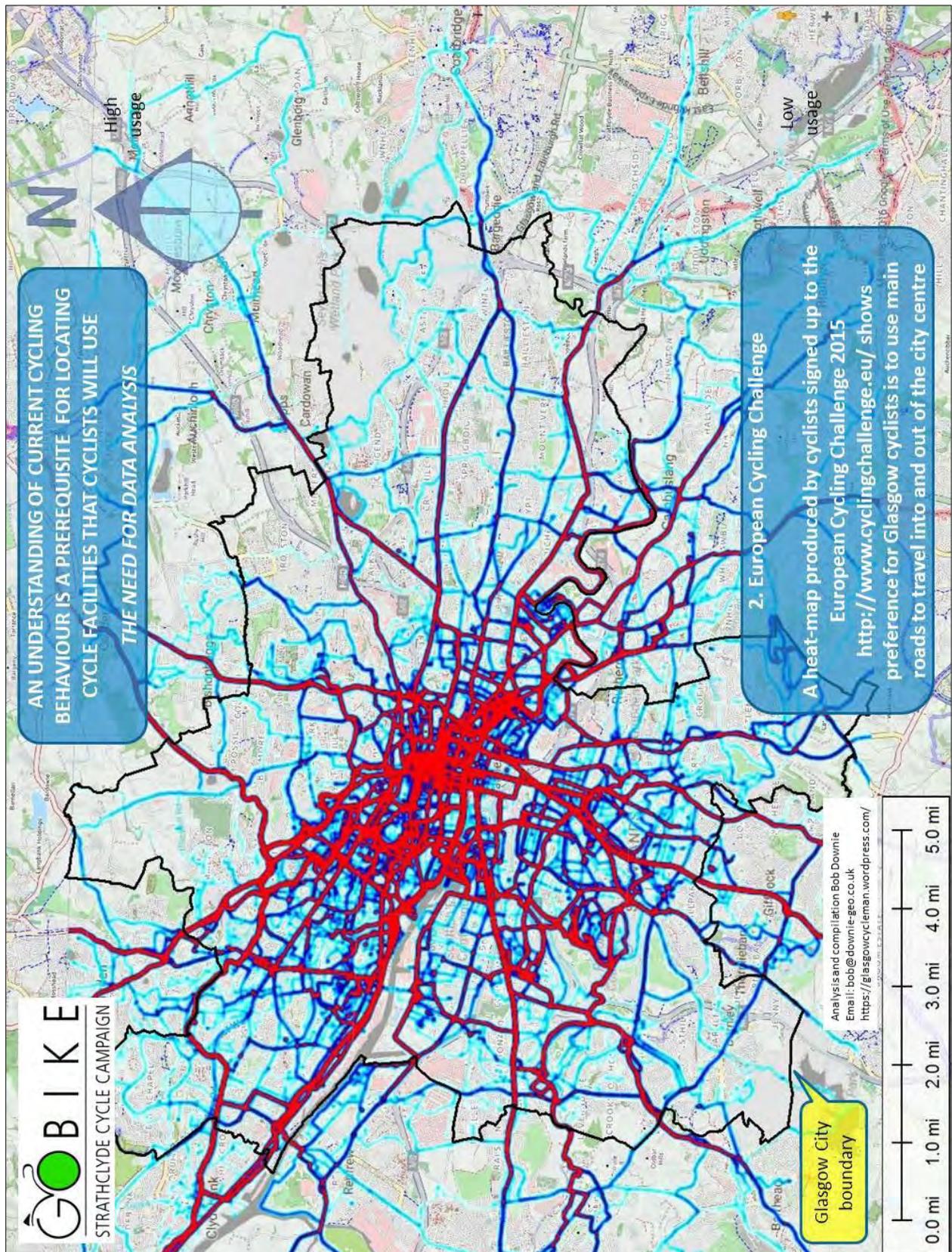
Glasgow City: Patchwork implementation of 20mph leading to 20mph islands in a 30mph sea. Slow rates of implementation; highly confusing for road users



Edinburgh City: Default 20mph except on major thoroughfares. Easily understood by road users



Glasgow: Radial Cycle Desire lines (red) utilising main roads revealed by Strava data (www.strava.com) showing continuous cycle usage from the suburbs into the city centre, width of line proportional to usage



Glasgow: Radial Cycle Desire lines utilising main roads revealed by European Cycle Challenge data (<http://www.cyclingchallenge.eu/>), showing continuous cycle usage from the suburbs into the city centre, width and colour of line proportional to usage