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Ref: TF/BL/SI

08 June 2018

Dear Sir/Madam,

**THE GLASGOW CITY COUNCIL, FINNIESTON BRIDGE)**  
(EXPERIMENTAL TRAFFIC REGULATION) ORDER 2018

Thank you for your e-mail of 01 June and the opportunity to comment on the proposals for an experimental Traffic Regulation Order for taxis to share the current bus and cycle lane on the west side of this bridge.

We understand that this Experimental TRO will be in operation for no more than 18 months, that it has been introduced further to representation from taxi operators and the effect on the operation on the north side of the bridge will be monitored during its operation.

We object to this Experimental TRO on the following grounds:

1. We consider that a full review of the whole Fastlink scheme should be carried out rather than the current series of incremental and piecemeal changes. Since the initial installation there have been changes at the north end of the bridge, at the south end of the bridge and changes to the cycling regime at different locations. The review should be conducted of how well the whole system is working for all users, emphasising the needs of pedestrians and cyclists in line with council policy.
2. There are inherent risks in permitting different classes of user on different sections of this route; at some parts it is bus only, at some it is bus and cycle and others bus, cycle and taxi – the latter being the standard for bus lanes. This is confusing for all road users. We are aware that a few years ago an off-duty police sergeant was killed on a similar route in Swansea.
3. We are concerned that the views of those of us who cycle has not been taken into account. At a recent meeting with a member of the council's cycle team we were told that nothing could be done at the bridge to improve matters for us. We recognise that in one of the changes to the bridge regime we were allowed to use the bus lanes but access is difficult and as we observed at our meeting with the council representative people cycle on the east footway, the car lanes and the bus lanes. This is not a satisfactory state of affairs for anyone, cycling or not.
4. The Lancefield Quay section of the Fastlink route will remain a westbound bottleneck, and SEC event traffic will remain a problem unless changes are made to the local traffic regime.
5. The traffic signals at the north end of the bridge add to delays by always including a green phase for the bridge Fastlink carriageway even when there is nothing waiting. For smooth operation with priority given to traffic other than the private car, in line with

council policy, these signals should be reset to operate on demand for buses, taxis and cycles.

6. From a strictly cycling point of view the inclusion of taxis will make using the bridge Fastlink lanes much less attractive. From our regular observations more people on bikes use the eastern footway than use the Fastlink side. This is despite the bus traffic being quite infrequent but once taxis, including private hire vehicles, start using it there will be more pressure on bikes and we suspect more people will choose to cycle on the footway.
7. The layout, especially when taxis are included on the west side, is inherently risky. It goes against all the reflexes ingrained by a lifetime's experience of traffic driving on the left. It requires users to have the same levels of concentration needed when visiting a country that drives on the right. The risks will increase with taxis, particularly when many will be indistinguishable from a private car except for the badge, travelling on the 'wrong' side.
8. The east/northbound layout leading to the bridge on the south side is already confusing for drivers. Even people who know the area can be thrown by the choice of lanes for crossing the bridge. With vehicles that look like ordinary cars using the Fastlink side the confusion will be increased.
9. The Govan Road / Pacific Drive junction, where Fastlink crosses the other carriageway, creates risk for traffic (cycle, taxi, bus) continuing south on Govan Road – it is impossible to tell whether a city-bound bus on the west side of the lights is intending to continue on the Fastlink carriageway or to proceed straight ahead on the ordinary carriageway, crossing the path of traffic turning onto the southbound leg of Govan Road.
10. It is perhaps coincidental, but should not be, that another TRO is currently out for consultation that involves changes, again affecting taxis, at the SEC. The SEC is so close to the Finnieston Bridge that the two should have been considered together, particularly when the two are linked by a completely inadequate, substandard, shared cycle and pedestrian footway outside the hotel on the river side on the SEC access road. This is an area where many people cycle and the overall traffic regime should be considered so that improvements could be made for bus, taxi and active travellers.

To conclude, if revisions to the working of the Fastlink carriageways are being considered they should not start with piecemeal, opportunistic changes on individual sections. They should follow an independent review of the effectiveness for all users of the full length, including the impact on active travel and should follow the city council's overall plans for bus and cycle travel in the whole city.

Yours sincerely



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