

Byres Road: Design Workshop (21 March 2019)

Participants were divided into Groups 1-6 with an attempt made to ensure that all groups included representatives from the diverse range of stakeholders in attendance. The facilitator provided a presentation on important features of the proposed concept design. Groups were invited to discuss key issues and consider whether the design features were supported or opposed.

The commentary below aims to capture the main points of discussion and strength of support or opposition to particular aspects of the proposal. The nature of discussion meant that it was not always possible for groups to reach agreement- where consensus was not possible the position shared by the majority of group members has been used to identify levels of support or opposition to each design feature.

1. Re-allocation of road space

Current Situation

At present Byres Road is dominated by vehicular traffic- 60% of available space is occupied by carriageway despite the fact that only a third of shoppers travel to the street by car.

Design Proposal

The concept design proposes the narrowing of the carriageway on Byres Road to 6.0m in order to create additional pedestrian and cycling space. Proposals to narrow the carriageway will be accompanied by a range of measures to reduce the volume and speed of traffic. The proposals result in an overall reduction of road space by approximately 30%, an increase in pedestrian space by 20% and the introduction of protected cycle space.

Feedback

Groups were asked their views on 4 specific elements of the proposal.

Design Feature		Strongly Support	Support	Neither Support nor Oppose	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
1. Re-Allocation of Road Space	Reduction of carriageway width to 6m.	1, 3, 4	2, 5, 6			
	Introduction of 20MPH speed limit.	1, 3, 4, 5, 6	2			
	Removal of left-turn filter lane at Great Western Road junction.	3	1, 2, 4, 6	5		
	Introduction of one-way system at southern end of Street (Byres Road one-way northbound, Church Street one-way southbound)	2, 3	1, 5, 6	4		

Although there was significant support for the four design features that were the focus of group discussion concerns were raised in relation to the following issues:

- **Emergency Vehicle Access-** A number of participants expressed concern about the impact that the reduction in carriageway width would have on emergency service access.

- **Removal of Left Turn Filter Lane-** Some participants questioned the merit of this proposal noting that it may have an adverse impact on traffic flow.

2. Pedestrian Environment

Current Situation

Public consultation identified significant concern with the quality of the pedestrian environment. The surfaces of footways are cracked and uneven, the positioning of bus stops and commercial waste bins create pinch points, unauthorised parking at entrances to side streets obstruct movement of those in wheelchairs or pushing prams, there are a lack of places to stop and rest and it is often difficult to cross the street.

Design Proposal

The proposals seeks to address the quality of the pedestrian environment through the introduction of the following design features:

- Widening and upgrading of footways to make pedestrian movement along the street more relaxed and enjoyable and to reduce the width of crossing points.
- Introduction of step free crossings at junctions with side streets.
- Enhancing key corners to create distinct and attractive spaces along the street where people can sit and rest.
- Using greenery to delineate space and provide seasonal interest particularly at street corners.

Feedback

Participants were asked to provide their views on measures aimed at improving the pedestrian environment.

Design Feature		Strongly Support	Support	Neither Support nor Oppose	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
2. Pedestrian Environment	Measures to widen footways, remove pedestrian pinch points and reduce crossing distances.	1, 3, 4, 5, 6	2			
	Resurfacing of footways in natural stone e.g. Caithness and Granite.	1, 4, 5, 6	2, 3			
	Introduction of Step-Free	1, 3, 4, 5	2, 6			

	Crossings at Side Streets.					
	Introduction of Additional Signalised Crossing at Torness Street/Dalcross Street.	3, 4, 5, 6	1, 2			
	Introduction of additional seating/planting at street corners.	4, 6	1, 2, 3, 5			
	Creation of new amenity space at Ashton Road Car Park.	1, 4	2, 3	6	5	
	Creation of new amenity space at Great Western Road junction.	4	1, 2, 3, 6	5		

There was a general consensus amongst the groups that the measures proposed would have a positive impact on the pedestrian environment. There was discussion about the following issues:

- **Designing for Visual Impairment-** Although the introduction of step-free crossing was welcomed it was noted that any design should incorporate features to assist those with visual impairment including the use of contrasting materials and tactile paving.
- **Street Clutter-** The introduction of additional seating and planting was welcomed but delegates noted that careful consideration should be given to the positioning of new street furniture to ensure that it did not create new pedestrian pinch points.
- **Civic Space at Ashton Road Car Park-** A number of delegates did not support this proposal in light of concerns that the reduction in car parking would have a detrimental impact on local business.
- **Civic Space at Great Western Road-** Some delegates noted that the high volume of traffic in the area is likely to detract from the quality of any civic space created at this location.

3. Cycle Infrastructure

Current Situation

Byres Road is not regarded as an environment that will encourage an increase in cycling contrary to local and national policy. Cyclists are required to share the carriageway with high volumes of vehicular traffic and are often forced to ride at the edge of the road increasing the risk of collision with car doors. Cyclists are not afforded any additional protection at main intersections or at bus stops where there is a high risk of conflict. Given the potential safety risks many cyclists currently choose to cycle on the footway and this has been identified as a significant issue during public consultation.

Design Proposal

The proposals seek to create an environment that is safe for cycling through the introduction of segregated cycle lanes including a contraflow cycle lane that will allow those on bikes continuous travel from Great Western Road to Partick Cross. Bus stop bypasses are proposed to minimise the risk of conflict between cyclists and vehicular traffic. Cycle Gates will be introduced at main signal controlled junctions to minimise the risk of collision between cyclists and vehicular traffic.

Feedback

Participants were asked their views on 4 specific elements of the proposal:

Design Feature		Strongly Support	Support	Neither Support nor Oppose	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
3. Cycle Infrastructure	Introduction of kerb segregated cycle lanes at carriageway level.	3	1, 6	2, 4		5
	Introduction of contraflow cycle lane to permit continuous cycle travel between Great Western Road and Partick Cross.	3	1, 5, 6	2, 4		
	Introduction of bus stop bypasses to minimise	1, 3	6	2, 4, 5		

	conflict between cyclists and buses.					
	Introduction of cycle gates at main signal controlled junctions (Great Western Road, University Avenue, Church Street)		1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6			

There was very little consensus in relation to measures proposed to improve the cycle friendliness of the street. The decision to include segregated cycle infrastructure was not supported by a number of stakeholders who felt that the benefits to cyclists were outweighed by disadvantages to other users of the street. There was particular concern in relation to loss of on-street parking, localised narrowing of footways and the fact that the introduction of an additional kerb line will make it more difficult to cross the street.

There was specific discussion about the following issues:

- **Introduction of Kerb Segregated Cycle Lanes-** A number of groups who accepted the introduction of protected cycle infrastructure did not agree with the design approach currently proposed. It was noted that the introduction of an additional kerb line would represent a trip hazard particularly for the visually impaired. A number of delegates stated that the revised design prioritised movement through the street at the expense of place quality and that this was contrary to the original placemaking ambitions of the project. Stakeholders who supported the introduction of segregated cycle lanes felt that consideration should be given to alternative approaches including footway level cycle tracks and stepped 'Copenhagen' style designs.
- **Introduction of Bus Stop Bypass-** A number of participants expressed a concern that the introduction of bus stop bypasses may increase the risk of conflict between people walking and those on bikes and noted that detailed design would need to include features to minimise this risk.

4. Public Transport

Current Situation

Byres Road is currently served by a limited number of bus services and by the Subway with stations at Hillhead and Kelvinhall. Buses are currently able to travel the length of the street from Great Western Road to Partick Cross. Buses are required to pull into stops at a number of locations- the delays when waiting to re-enter the traffic lane can result in increased journey times. The positioning of bus shelters creates pedestrian pinch points at a number of locations on the street. Kelvinhall Subway currently benefits from two entrances however the entrance onto Dalcross Street is not particularly legible and its setting is adversely affected by an area of vacant land.

Design Proposal

The design proposes the introduction of one-way system at southern end of street which would require south-bound bus services to be diverted onto Church Street. This will result in the removal of the bus stop that is currently positioned at the Former Church Street School Swimming Pool. It is therefore proposed to relocate the bus stop at 114 Byres Road approximately 100m southwards to the junction of Byres Road and University Place. The expansion of the University of Glasgow onto the site of the Former Western Infirmary is expected to increase patronage at Kelvinhall Subway. It is proposed to undertake works to enhance access to Kelvinhall Station through the creation of a new civic space on vacant land at Dalcross Street.

Feedback

Groups were asked their views on 4 specific elements of the proposal:

Design Feature		Strongly Support	Support	Neither Support nor Oppose	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
4. Public Transport	Introduction of bus boarder islands.	1	5	2, 3	6	4
	Diversion of south-bound bus services via Church Street.		1, 2, 3, 5, 6	4		
	Relocation of south-bound bus stop from Bar Soba to University Place.		1, 5, 6	2, 3, 4		
	Measures to enhance access to Kelvinhall	1, 4	2, 3, 5, 6			

	Subway Station through the creation of a new civic space at Dalcross Street.					
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There was general support for the measures proposed in relation to public transport. There was discussion in relation to the following issues:

- **Introduction of Bus Boarder Islands-** Respondents reiterated that the proposed design may increase the risk of conflict between people walking and those on bikes and noted that detailed design would need to include features to minimise this risk.
- **Church Street Traffic Signals –** There was general support for the introduction of a one way system that would result in south-bound bus services being diverted to Church Street however the requirement for additional signals at the junction of Church Street and Dumbarton Road was noted. It was suggested that any signals should seek to give priority to buses waiting to turn right.
- **Public Transport Provision-** Although not within the scope of the public realm project a number of participants noted the need for additional bus services and for measures to make the Subway accessible to those in wheelchairs.

5. Motorised Vehicles

Current Situation

Cars are currently able to travel the entire length of Byres Road from Great Western Road to Partick Cross. The street is served by 14 loading bays and has on-street parking capacity for 117 cars. A taxi rank is located outside of Hillhead Subway Station- the rank is currently licensed for use from 6PM-2AM but is frequently used at all times of the day. Local residents have raised concerns about the idling of taxi engines and the consequential impact on air quality.

Design Proposal

The design proposes the introduction of one-way system at the southern end of street which would require south-bound cars to be diverted onto Church Street. The design also proposes a reduction of on-street parking bays on Byres Road from 117 to 42. Loading bays are accommodated with 12 retained on Byres Road and new bays provided on University Place and Torness Street. Loading bays will provide additional capacity for 56 car parking spaces after 6PM. It is proposed to relocate disabled parking from Byres Road to side streets. The taxi rank will be retained at Hillhead Subway however physical measures will be used to restrict the use of the rank to licensed hours and minimise conflict between taxis and cycles particularly during peak commuting hours.

Feedback

Design Feature		Strongly Support	Support	Neither Support nor Oppose	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
5. Motorised Vehicles	Diversion of south bound vehicular traffic via Church Street.	1, 4	2, 3, 5, 6			
	Retention/minor relocation of loading bays.	1, 4, 5	2, 6	3		
	Reduction in on-street car parking from 107 shared use bays to 42 shared use bays.	3	1	2, 4, 5, 6		
	Relocation of disabled parking bays from Byres Road to side streets. Increased provision of disabled parking.	1	5	2, 3, 6	4	

Retention of Taxi Rank at Hillhead Subway.	5	1, 3, 4, 6			2
Measures to prohibit use of taxi rank outside of licensed hours (6PM -2AM).	2	1	3, 4, 5	6	

Although there was agreement about a number of the proposed design features the removal of on-street car parking was a divisive proposal. Representatives from Byres Road BID noted that approximately 90% of operational businesses in the area had signed a petition to note opposition to reduction in car parking in light of concerns about impact on trade. There was discussion in relation to the following additional issues:

- **Mitigation for loss of on-street car parking-** A number of delegates suggested that reduction of on-street car parking on Byres Road should be accompanied by measures to increase parking provision within the wider area. Suggestions included the construction of a new multi-storey facility at the existing surface level car park at Lilybank Gardens and introduction of shared-use parking bays within the Hillhead area.
- **Loading Bays-** There was support for the retention of existing provision however it was noted that many businesses that use private vehicles for loading cannot currently access loading bays as they are restricted for use of commercial vehicles only.
- **Disabled Parking-** Greater clarity was sought on the location of disabled parking bays and some delegates remained of the view that provision should be included within Byres Road itself.
- **Car Club Provision-** It was noted that additional provision should be made for the use of Car Club members given that it has demonstrated the potential to reduce car ownership.
- **Taxi Rank-** Although the retention of the taxi rank was supported it was identified as a potential source of conflict for those on bikes. Use of the rank outside of permitted hours remained a source of concern and there was support for the introduction of measures to prevent this. It was noted that introduction of a new rank on Church Street could facilitate daytime ranking and service the future needs of the University.