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Ref: TF/BL/SI/D48

19 December 2019

Dear Sir/Madam,

**THE GLASGOW CITY COUNCIL, FASTLINK ROUTE  
(FINNIESTON BRIDGE TO WHITEFIELD ROAD) ORDER 2015, AMENDMENT No.1 20\_\_**

Thank you for your e-mail of 25 November and the opportunity to comment on the proposals for a permanent Traffic Regulation Order for taxis to share the bus and cycle lane on the west side of this bridge.

We understand that you consider the Experimental TRO was introduced successfully; however that is certainly not our opinion and we do not share your view that the temporary arrangements should now be made permanent. It is a very sad state of affairs that in a city that prides itself on introducing a Low Emission Zone, gaining City Deal funding for the Avenues projects and is hosting the UN Climate Change Conference in 2020 such a tragic demonstration of the low status of active and public transport is allowed to exist.

We objected to the Experimental TRO and we object to the current proposal 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. In the 2018 consultation it was stated “The purpose of the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order is to determine the effect of permitting taxis to access the segregated section of the Finnieston Bridge and to determine the effect on the journey time of buses currently using the Fastlink infrastructure.” In reality we consider that the true purpose was for the convenience of taxis travelling between the SEC and the south side of the river, otherwise the request from the taxi operators would have been to allow taxis to use the full length of the Fastlink bus lanes.
4. We are concerned that the views of those of us who cycle has not been taken into account. At a meeting with a member of the council’s cycle team prior to the introduction of the “temporary” arrangements 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.

5. 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.
6. 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.
7. From a strictly cycling point of view the inclusion of taxis makes 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.
8. The layout, especially now 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.
9. 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 is increased.
10. 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.
11. It is absolutely against the sustainable transport hierarchy that taxis should have priority over bicycles. There is no legal, safe place on this bridge for cycling.

To conclude, revisions to the working of the Fastlink carriageways 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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