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Dear John Foster,

**GLASGOW CITY COUNCIL,  
CENTRAL DISTRICT REGENERATION FRAMEWORK**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Central DRF. GoBike is a voluntary organisation campaigning in the Strathclyde area for better infrastructure, policy and political support for cycling. Cycling should be a safe, efficient, healthy and attractive form of transport for people of all abilities and ages and using every variety of cycle. The comments which follow are made in the context of GoBike's campaign aims.

GoBike welcomes the recognition that attempts at (road)building the way out of the problems of congestion have failed and that successful world cities are focusing on making their hearts places for people rather than cars. GoBike strongly supports the ambitions of the Central DRF in this direction.

GoBike also welcomes the implicit recognition that one key change needed is for transformative numbers of people to choose to use bikes instead of cars for local trips.

There will be vocal opposition from those who sincerely believe they will be losers from the proposed changes. It's not helpful that during the period of this consultation planning permission has been granted for a large, car-centric retail/leisure development at Partick. The political capital needed for the proposals to be implemented in full means they must be seen to be successful. From a cycling campaign group it may seem like special pleading, but it is still true that if large numbers of people are to choose cycling over driving cycle infrastructure must be built to the standards of the best international examples. Any watering down that results in only a few people switching to cycling (and only minor improvements in bus speed and reliability) will be a waste of everyone's time and money.

GoBike offers the following observations with the aim of contributing to the success of the proposed ideas. They're in three parts, relating to: (1) the narrative section, (2) the section on planning policy and (3) the action plan.

**1. Response to narrative section**

The Updated Mobility section's introduction (*'shift to sustainable mobility'* p 44) is admirably to-the-point, recognising the city's need to *move away from its strong dependence on cars* and that it should *'change its modal split to more sustainable modes of transport'*. The list of priority projects (summary p 30) should be tweaked to provide stronger support for these aims.

- It's imperative that commitment to the transport hierarchy (walking, cycling first, private cars last) is written into guidance derived from the DRF for any and all changes made to streets.
- To achieve the aim of creating an attractive, liveable city area where people want to spend time a key priority must be for all the streets to be redesigned (over time, clearly) according to *Designing Streets*. This document (which has been national policy for a decade) is mentioned once, but only far down the list of projects under *Street Safety and Accessibility* which is not even shown as a priority project.
- The project listed first, *Ultra low emission zone*, does nothing to reduce car dependency or traffic clogging our streets. Projects which make the choice of active travel or public transport more attractive than car use must take priority over encouraging a switch to e-cars.
- The second project, *Traffic-calmed Central*, needs to be more upfront with its title - traffic reduction is needed, not traffic calming. GoBike strongly supports the elimination of through traffic in the central area. Taxis and private hire vehicles are not mentioned (perhaps by design), but they must be included in the restrictions. Demand for a taxi-type service can be met by frequent small electric shuttle buses and cycle rickshaw taxis. The increasing numbers of courier vans must also be considered, with substitution by cycle rickshaws in the city centre as a practical alternative. Clearly, implementing this aim depends on transport policy decisions outside the scope of this DRF, affecting the whole central area or even the whole city.
- The tartan concept for the specialisation of street types is intriguing. However, the language used could be understood in ways unhelpful for making walking and cycling attractive alternatives to the car. For example, the associated graphic (p 42-3) uses the terms '*pedestrian link*' and '*smart bike network*'. People want to walk by the most direct route without interminable hold-ups at crossings, regardless of a street's designated role. Similarly, people want to cycle by direct routes with minimal stopping and starting. A bike network ('smart' or not) could be interpreted as a sparse set of routes imposed from above. Or it could be interpreted as a wonderful internet-like network with many options for getting from A to B (or Z) and with designed-in redundancy. A more robust approach would be for all streets to be cycle-friendly, with either cycle lanes or design features giving foot and cycle traffic priority over motor vehicles.
- Walking and cycling are commonly bracketed together and do have in common that they both need protection from motor traffic. But they have distinct characteristics. The council's own fingerposts assume a cycling travel speed four times as fast as walking speed. Foot and cycle traffic do not mix well and as a general rule need separate infrastructure. A benefit of creating a grid of world class cycle infrastructure will be that people wishing to cycle at faster speeds will choose to use alternatives to busy pedestrianised streets ('The Golden Z').
- Part of the project *Smarter parking in Central* should be to provide charging facilities for e-cars only in edge-of-centre car parks, and to remove existing on-street charging points. Parking provision must include that for cycles, including covered parking, parking for larger types of cycle (e.g., cargo bikes, tandems) and charging points for e-bikes.

## 2. Response to Planning Policy section

- It's noted that policy quoted in this section is written to be applied to 'proposed developments'. It must also apply to replacement and renewal work and to work initiated by the council as well as by developers.
- Also needed is a requirement for the council itself to make its best efforts to implement policies. The transport hierarchy and permitting contraflow cycling in one-way streets have been policy for the past several years, but far too frequently reasons seem to be found for them not to be implemented in individual cases.
- In CDP4 (p 174) events spaces must be designed so that their use does not require diversions for people travelling on foot or cycle.

### 3. Response to Action Plan

- GoBike strongly supports immediate action to incorporate the findings of the Connectivity Commission into a City Centre Transport Strategy (p 180). A revised Transport Strategy must cover walking, cycling, public transport and private vehicle use as integrated facets of a single whole.
- Traffic modelling is included as an action point in several key projects. This takes time and expertise, the input assumptions and system bounds are critical, and modelling does not have a record of predicting traffic induction or evaporation. Reducing traffic in the central area is a matter of political will and leadership. As the consultation document says '*measures can only be properly assessed in wider city context*' (p 44, 51), for which modelling is probably not very informative.
- Even within the realities of local government decision making, given the urgency of the climate emergency and the need to revive internet-sapped high streets, the time scales for significant change are disappointingly long: 5+ years to reduce city centre traffic! (p 181)
- In the Updated Mobility *Specialisation in streets (Tartan)* action point (p 182) the reservation above about different possible interpretations of 'routes' and networks' applies. Ambiguity would be reduced by inserting 'fine-grained', as on page 74, and by including the requirement to use the *Designing Streets* principles for all streets.
- Immediate '*Quick wins*' in less than the planned two to four years (p 182) would help build confidence in the planned changes, and encourage steady increases in walking and cycling. An early example could be permitting contraflow cycling in one-way streets.
- Cycle connections between railway stations need to be improved, as well as walking routes (p 186).
- The review of the one-way system (p 190) must include its effect on cycle journeys and the provision of contraflow cycling to eliminate lengthening of routes

Finally, the online response form asks for feedback on the presentation of the proposals. GoBike readers found the language in which the proposals were presented clear and readable. But the Rubik's cube of interlocking Objectives, Projects, Themes and further Objectives was hard to grasp. The document, with its splashy graphics and oversized double-page layouts of single topics was designed for print. It was not easy to follow on a screen, where it's not possible to flip quickly to and fro between possibly related points. Printing the whole of such a document is impractical and printing selected parts on A4 requires reduction to 69% design size.

Future consultations will most likely elicit more considered responses if they can be designed to be easily studied on a screen.

It's also noted that on the online feedback form the list of key projects at Question 19 does not correspond with the projects indicated as key in the text. In particular, it does not include the projects GoBike sees as top priority for Updated Mobility.

Yours sincerely



Tricia Fort  
for Consultations, GoBike