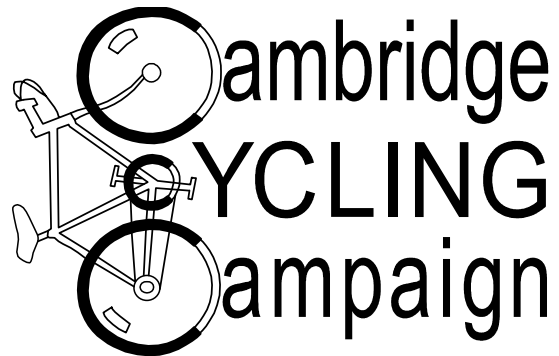


September 15th 2004

Our ref: P04 003
Your ref:

Mr Richard Preston
Core Traffic Scheme
Cambridge Transport Projects
Box ET1028
Cambridgeshire County Council
Shire Hall, Castle Hill
Cambridge CB3 0AP



Cambridge Cycling Campaign

P.O. Box 204, Cambridge CB4 3FN
01223 690718 (phone & fax)
contact@camcycle.org.uk
www.camcycle.org.uk

Dear Mr Preston,

CORE STAGE 4 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Cambridge Cycling Campaign regrets that it is unable to support most of the Core Stage 4 proposals for either the Drummer Street/Emmanuel Street or the Regent Street/Downing Street areas. We have given our active support to earlier stages of the Core Scheme. But, unlike these earlier stages, Stage 4 introduces difficulties and discouragements for cyclists.

In addition to promoting bus travel, a central aim of the County Council is to encourage cycling and to improve provision for cycling. Although Stage 4 would offer some real benefits for cycling – notably the reduction of traffic in Regent Street and St Andrew's Street – we consider that on balance the disadvantages of the proposals for cyclists outweigh the advantages.

If, after consideration of the present consultation, the relevant council committees decide to implement Stage 4 in whole or in part, we at Cambridge Cycling Campaign ask to be fully consulted over the detailed road designs. These could have major implications for the future of cycling in the area.

REASONS FOR OUR CONCERNS

Stage 4 is not needed to resolve Bus Delays

The problems over bus delays in Regent Street which have led to the Stage 4 proposals should, we believe, be tackled first by a set of much simpler measures which might well resolve the problems without the need to implement most of Stage 4.

These measures are:

1. Creation of a peak-hours Urban Clearway along Regent Street and St Andrew's Street. All parking (including disabled parking) and loading and unloading should be prohibited

during peak hours (we suggest 7.30-9.30am and 4-6pm) as part of this Urban Clearway rule. There is also a case for total removal of the pay-and-display bays. (If an exception could be made to clearway regulations for parking in the layby on the outbound side of Regent Street (south end) we suggest that this be reserved for blue-badge holders and for cycle parking. Additional cycle parking could be provided off-road along the pavement outside the former telephone exchange immediately north of the Regent Street/Park Terrace junction.)

The present absurd situation in which parking in the pay-and-display bays is encouraged by making it free-of-charge from 5pm during the evening peak should be ended immediately.

2. On-street ticketing should be introduced urgently so that the dwell times of buses at bus stops along their routes are much reduced with consequent reduction of road congestion. Tickets and bus passes should also be sold in newsagents, etc.
3. Re-design of the road layout and the traffic light timings at the Catholic Church crossroads to give greater priority to incoming traffic flows from Hills Road during the morning peak and to outgoing traffic flows from Regent Street during the afternoon peak. Strict enforcement of the yellow box, perhaps with automated fines if the technology exists and use of it is acceptable.

If, as we hope, the junction is redesigned, there is much scope for making it more suitable for cyclists by installing ASLs on all four approaches and by moving the Hills Road central reservation eastwards to make room for a cycle approach lane to the ASL for City-bound cyclists.

4. The illegal use of Drummer Street and Emmanuel Street by non-exempt motor vehicles, the illegal use of St Andrew's Street and Hobson Street by through traffic and illegal left turns by non-exempt vehicles out of Downing Street must be stopped by effective enforcement measures (perhaps with cameras if the law permits this).

We wish to emphasise that there is nothing to prevent a number of the proposed bus changes from being introduced without implementing the contentious and costly elements of Stage 4 (without blocking non-exempt motor-vehicle access to Regent Street at the Park Terrace junction, without making Emmanuel Street one-way, without preventing vehicle exit from Downing Street into St Andrew's Street during the afternoon peak, without creating two-way motor vehicle traffic in Downing Street and without reversing the flow in Tennis Court Road.)

For example:

- Bus layover bays in Park Terrace could still be introduced. In fact it would be easier to introduce them because vehicle flows in Park Terrace would be reduced.
- The bus stops along the north side of Emmanuel Street could still be removed to free up pedestrian movement along the pavement and to improve road conditions for cycling even if the street remains two-way. (Some buses would, however, have to be re-routed.)

Problems for Cyclists in Emmanuel Street

The Stage 4 proposals indicate that the right to two-way cycling would be maintained along Emmanuel Street even though the street would become one-way for all motor vehicles. This street is a very important link for cyclists travelling in both directions.

We consider that to make the cycle contraflow effective would be difficult. It would be entirely

unacceptable to have either a taxi rank or blue-badge car spaces along the north side of Emmanuel Street. Either of these would destroy the viability of the proposed cycle contraflow. Whether or not there is a formal cycle contraflow lane, on-coming buses pulling out from one side of a one-way street and on-coming taxis or blue-badge vehicles pulling out from the other side would create impossible conditions for contraflow cyclists, especially less experienced cyclists.

Even without any parking along the north side of the street, pavement widening would be ruled out by the need to provide an effective cycle contraflow in an area in which buses need to be able to pull out and pass each other with ease.

From our experience of the lack of respect accorded to contraflow cyclists by buses on St Andrew's Street where there is no marked contraflow lane (outside Bradwell's Court), we consider that the cycle contraflow in Emmanuel Street would probably have to be a red-surfaced marked contraflow lane alongside the northern pavement for the whole length of the street. Particular attention would be needed to produce high-quality designs for this contraflow lane.

It seems strange to us that the County Council is opposing two-way cycling both in Trinity Street and in Corn Exchange Street on safety grounds and yet is at the same time putting forward Stage 4 proposals aspects of which could be said to be reducing the safety of two-way cycling in Emmanuel Street.

Problems for buses and for cyclists in Drummer Street and Emmanuel Street would be intensified under Stage 4 because the heavy vehicles, including articulated vehicles, which service much of the City Centre (including Hobson Street) and at present enter via Regent Street and St Andrew's Street are to be directed through Drummer Street and Emmanuel Street. These vehicles will in many, perhaps most, cases be entering the City Centre during the morning and afternoon peaks in Drummer Street/Emmanuel Street (during the two hours before 10am and the two hours after 4pm). In addition to having to work their way through bus-congested Drummer Street and Emmanuel Street, such vehicles would be faced with a difficult right turn from Emmanuel Street into St Andrew's Street which would bring them into conflict with streams of cyclists travelling in both directions along St Andrew's Street.

Problems for Cyclists in Downing Street

The Downing Street/Pembroke Street cycle contraflow lane provides an important link for cyclists and is heavily used. It provides one of the best City Centre cycle routes. Stage 4 would remove the lane from the section of Downing Street between St Tibb's Row and Tennis Court Road.

Cyclists would still be able to use this section of Downing Street in both directions but would be under greatly increased pressure from motor vehicles. Because of the narrowness of the carriageway, the existing contraflow lane could not be converted into a with-flow cycle lane for this length of road. The continuity and integrity of the contraflow lane would be lost and visibility of the legitimacy of two-way cycling here would be reduced.

Restricted road space would make the turning movements of motor vehicles - into Downing Street westbound from St Tibb's Row and from Corn Exchange Street; into Tennis Court Road southbound from Downing Street; into Corn Exchange Street northbound from Downing Street - problematical for cyclists. Turns by cyclists would become more difficult, especially the right turn into Corn Exchange Street northbound by cyclists travelling west along Downing Street. This manoeuvre will become even more important when the large cycle park in the Grand Arcade is opened.

Problems for Cyclists at the Lensfield Road/Tennis Court Road Junction

Under the Stage 4 proposals the direction of the one-way motor vehicle traffic along the southern section of Tennis Court Road would be reversed. Outbound motor vehicles would use the road instead of inbound vehicles. Two-way cycling would still be permitted but the contraflow lane would be moved to the other side of the road.

For cyclists a particular difficulty which would arise from this change would be the right turn into the new Tennis Court Road contraflow lane when cycling west along Lensfield Road. Unlike most of the city where traffic levels have stabilised or reduced, traffic levels along Lensfield Road and the rest of the Ring Road have increased. The right turn in question has always been quite difficult for cyclists but the road markings for right-turning motorists have made it easier than it would otherwise be for cyclists. Under the Stage 4 proposals motorists would no longer be turning into Tennis Court Road from Lensfield Road. They would instead be emerging from Tennis Court Road onto Lensfield Road. Turning right from Lensfield Road would, for cyclists, become more problematical. They would have to contend not only with much on-coming traffic along Lensfield Road but also with much traffic emerging from Tennis Court Road and swinging out into their path. In particular large vehicles would not be able to make the left turn without encroaching on the approach of such right-turning cyclists.

Problems for Cyclists at the Tennis Court Road/Fitzwilliam Street Junction

Under Stage 4, the cycle contraflow along Tennis Court Road would be on the other side of the road. There would be problems of priority at the junction unless the entitlement of cyclists coming along the contraflow to priority over motorists turning right into Fitzwilliam Street were to be very clearly marked out on the road.

Increase in Left and Right Turns for Motor Vehicles

Unlike earlier stages of the Core Scheme, Stage 4 would greatly increase the number of both left and right turns for motor vehicles including articulated lorries and other heavy vehicles. Such turns are statistically linked with road collisions and, for this reason, should not be increased without very strong justification.

For cyclists the dangers of turning vehicles are particularly great in the case of large vehicles (especially articulated vehicles) where the driver is high above the road. In such vehicles present-day mirror systems still have large blind spots in which cyclists alongside the vehicle cannot be seen by the driver (see article on page five of our April-May 2004 Newsletter).

The increase in turns can be illustrated by the case of a large delivery vehicle travelling along Regent Street to deliver goods to Boots when the City Centre barriers are lifted at 4pm. At present its journey is direct with no turns. Under Stage 4 it would have to turn right down Park Terrace, left into Parker Street, left again into Emmanuel Street and right into St Andrew's Street.

It should be noted that the proposed obligatory turn for inbound non-exempt vehicles from Regent Street into Park Terrace could, in one respect, actually increase bus delays for buses outbound along St Andrew's Street/Regent Street. They could be held up by inbound vehicles (including buses) turning right across their path. Inbound buses might also be held up by traffic waiting to turn right at this junction.

20mph Speed Limit

Whether or not Stage 4 is implemented, we believe that a 20mph speed limit should be introduced for the entire area covered by the Stage 4 proposals. This area has narrow streets, a very high density of cyclists and pedestrians and complex vehicle movements which are incompatible with a 30mph limit. Research evidence clearly demonstrates that a 20mph limit, even without traffic calming, does tend to reduce average speeds.

Yours sincerely,
on behalf of Cambridge Cycling Campaign,

James Woodburn

Copy to Mr Brian Stinton