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Dear Chris Burrows and LES Sustainable Transport Team,

Byres Road Public Realm Concept Design Public Consultation

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the public consultation on the Byres Road Public Realm Concept Design.

As you will be aware, GoBike do not support the proposals in this consultation for Byres Road, which simply do not go far enough to redress a transport balance that could create a vibrant living high street for the people of Glasgow. We believe that money spent on major projects on busy roads such as here, should always include physically segregated cycling infrastructure, safe for everyone of all ages and abilities to use. We cannot support a multi-million pound project on a key route that will deliver cycling provision that is so far from current best practice.

Early on in the consultation process for Byres Road, a key feature was identified as important for the design. "Infrastructure that supports safe and comfortable cycling, regardless of age and confidence, and which connects to the wider network, is a realistic and positive goal". Early public consultation findings found that "safe cycle routes" were a top desire from the people who use Byres Road. A design that actively encourages motor vehicles to cross a cycle lane at frequent intervals is not safe for all ages and abilities. Any design that fails to create a physical barrier preventing traffic from entering the cycling space is not safe for all ages and abilities. Any design that will frequently force people on bikes into the stream of motor traffic is not safe for all ages and abilities. An unprotected lane on a busy carriageway does not provide a connection into a wider safe cycling network. A cycling network that is slowly starting to grow in our city with great examples being built on the South City Way and the Avenues project on Sauchiehall Street. Indeed, plans for a properly segregated cycle lane are underway for Queen Margaret Drive, just north of Byres Road, which will stop short of linking the high street into a wider network with the current plans as they stand. Without consistency across redevelopment projects in Glasgow, our cycling network will continue to sit decades behind other forward thinking cities that provide linked up routes for active travel. Without safe, protected space in which to cycle, active travel rates in Glasgow will continue to remain abysmally low, as people in our city will continue to view the cycling provision we have on our busy roads as too dangerous and disconnected for active travel to be a consideration.

The government National Transport Strategy pledges to put cycling above the private car in its planning policy hierarchy, and this pledge has not been upheld in these designs. People on foot are at the top of this hierarchy, and so we welcome the widening of the pavements, however a failure to reduce through traffic volumes on Byres Road will not address the effects of the illegally high air pollution levels on the environment or the health of the people who use the street. Implementation of a 20mph zone on the street is positive, although your research has shown that this is already the current average speed of the traffic on Byres Road. On a street with unusually high collision rates for people cycling, a 20mph zone will not

reduce the volume of traffic, and without protected space for cycling, will not reduce the current danger facing people on bikes.

The lack of physical segregation for cycling in these plans appear to be nothing better than paint on the road, and we do not believe that they constitute "safe cycle routes". The designs clearly show that motor vehicles will have to cross the demarcated cycle lane to reach the parking spaces, the loading bays, the taxi rank, and the bus stops. Each time the lane is crossed by a vehicle, anyone cycling in the lane will be forced to exit it into the stream of traffic to continue riding. And this will happen often – the half mile stretch of Byres Road appears from the plans to have 60 parking bays, 13 loading bays, 7 bus stops and a long taxi rank, all on the inside of the cycle lane.

The cycle lanes will encourage close passes and driver confusion about where cyclists have a right to position themselves on the road. The dimensions to be provided are at the absolute minimum quoted in Cycling by Design section 5.1.4 and in contravention of the spirit of that section. If a rumble strip is to be added within the 1.5m of the lane, the width would be substandard and in direct contravention of your design guide.

The positioning and lack of hard segregation on the cycle lanes will create a risk of conflict with vehicles turning at side streets and parking.

The cycle lanes will put people on bikes at risk of "dooring" from the parked cars on their inside. Officers at consultation dropins have mentioned that a buffer zone of 0.5 meters may be painted within the parking bays. This is the absolute minimum width dictated in Cycling by Design, far short of the width of a car door, and with the cycle lanes also at the absolute minimum width, we do not believe that this is wide enough to avoid anyone on a bike from having to enter the stream of motor traffic to avoid the door hazard, if they were to avoid it in time.

The stone setts that the designs suggest for use in the cycle lanes have a question mark over their longevity, when considering that heavy motor traffic will frequently cross them to enter the pavement level bays and bus stops. If these setts are not designed for heavy traffic and become displaced over time, this will create a hazardous surface for people on bikes.

Unless road maintenance in the city is drastically improved, the narrow cycle lanes will become full of debris swept to the side of the road, creating hazardous conditions for people on bikes.

Some officers have talked about implementing a form of 'soft-segregation' described as a rumble strip on the line demarcating the cycle lane. A rumble strip will not prevent vehicle entry into the cycle lane and it's only function will be to alert drivers who may drift into the lane unintentionally. Vehicles will still be able to easily cross over the line, in fact the designs clearly show that motor vehicles will HAVE to cross the cycle lane to reach the parking spaces, the loading bays, the taxi rank, and the bus stops. Further, a ribbed sett of this type could actually make things worse for people on bikes, causing a slip hazard each time the riders have to exit the lane due to obstructing vehicles. Using the words soft-segregation for a rumble strip is misleading and disingenuous.

We would like to see physically segregated cycle lanes moved to the inside of the parking and loading bays, at a separate height from the pavement.

We are in favour of the introduction of a one-way system to the south of Byres Road.

We believe the number of loading bays in the plans is higher than required and could be reduced.

The reduction in on-street parking is positive but we believe that this could be further reduced to allow the cycling infrastructure in the designs to be improved, enabling more people to reach the street via active travel.

We welcome the widening of pavements for people on foot, but a greater number of pedestrian or zebra crossings is needed to improve what will be a difficult road to cross due to the volume of traffic.

We are pleased to see the narrowing of side streets with continuous raised tables, and feel that this would be further improved by ensuring a continuous colour in the pedestrian level of paving, and the removal of kerb lines to make it clear that motor traffic should give way to people on foot. Further tightening the curvature on the corners would further slow the turning traffic.

GoBike do not believe that these plans have gone far enough to have to provide a truly visionary improvement to Byres Road. A visionary improvement that would be welcomed by the majority of Glaswegian residents who don't own a car, yet are exposed to traffic pollution daily, and by those who want to leave their cars at home and make the active travel choice, but don't, because a truly safe and linked up network isn't there.

Your sincerely

Iona Shepherd

Co-Convenor
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