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Dear Sir/Madam,

**Glasgow City Council,  
City Centre Strategic Development Framework 2050**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on to the City Centre Strategic Development Framework (SDF). 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 active travel 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, and of the need to create conditions which make cycling the natural way of getting around for the large numbers of people for whom it currently seems much too risky.

GoBike notes that the City Centre SDF intends to set out strategic policy guidance for the next 30 years, rather than providing details for implementation. It is also noted that of the nine District Regeneration Frameworks referred to in the consultation document two (Broomielaw and St Enoch districts) have already been consulted on.

The remainder of these comments respond to the questions set out in the online consultation form.

3. *Do you agree or disagree with the proposed 'Strategic Place Ambitions for the City Centre' (Page 10)?*

Tend to agree – with the following caveats:

- The ambition to “reduce traffic dominance” in the city centre lacks urgency. The need is to end car dominance, not reduce it. This does not imply barring all cars from the streets, it means that the drivers of vehicles in the city centre are constrained by street design to behave as guests rather than as an occupying force.
- Context is all – if a magic wand were to be waved over the city centre creating congestion-free streets, speedy, reliable, frequent buses and cycling conditions attractive to the timid as well as the bold, it would need the same magic to be worked over the short-trip doughnut encircling the central area before transformative numbers of people would want to leave their car keys at home. However, the conditions must be right before people will leave their car at home to use other modes of transport for their journeys.

4. *Please use the space below to provide any comments you may have on the themed sections of the CCSDF ('Vibrant, Liveable, Connected, Green & Resilient')*

## Theme 4 (A connected city centre)

- GoBike strongly supports the intention of creating “a *joined up, coherent cycle network that will allow safe travel by bike to/from surrounding communities*” (p26 and many other references), but urges changing the language to recognise that this will be achieved by appropriate, clever design of all streets, and not by providing a specific set of routes that people on bikes are expected to use. What’s needed is a *street environment that allows safe travel by bike...* References to cycle “lanes” are specially unhelpful. No-one should ever be able to look to this document as support for lanes marked by just paint on the carriageway as they offer no protection to people cycling. Transformative numbers of people will choose cycling for journeys to and within the city centre only when it is possible to cycle comfortably from anywhere to anywhere.
- The aim for “*less car journeys*” (p26) needs to be stated much more powerfully, perhaps as “fewer journeys by car than by other modes” The recent report by the House of Commons Select Committee on Science and Technology (published 22 August 2019) pointed out the gap between current thinking and the scale of change needed, in relation to climate change. In order to achieve emissions targets it will be necessary for nearly 20,000 conventional cars to be removed from the [UK] roads **each week for the next 31 years**, while last year only about 1,200 new ultra-low emissions vehicles were registered each week. And replacing conventional vehicles by low emission ones does nothing to reduce the domination of the city’s streets by motor vehicles.
- The aim for “*more walkable and attractive streetscape that encourages sustainable travel behaviours*” (p27) should require adherence to the principles set out in the national policy document “[Designing Streets](#)” and for these principles to take precedence over other technical guidance. In addition, it will be helpful for the City Centre SDF to recognise explicitly the different needs of foot and cycle traffic – the council’s own direction fingerposts assume a cycle traffic speed about four times greater than walking speed. Foot and cycle traffic generally need to be to be kept separate.
- Are the reductions targeted for car journeys in the city centre (p28) ambitious enough even in their own terms? It’s possible that the intended reduction in road space for motor traffic will mean that congestion remains a disincentive to living, walking or cycling in the city centre.
- The need to address “*unattractive ‘gateways’*” (p27) is acute in the context of making cycling a natural choice for short trips. It’s at the various river / railway / road crossings into the central city area that road space is most contested, and the challenges of creating safe conditions for cycling are greatest. These problems need to be solved first when thinking about routes for cycling, not last as seems to be current practice.

## Theme 5 – A green and resilient city centre

- Creation of low emission zones and other incentives for replacing conventional vehicles with electric ones will be a policy cul-de-sac. When someone has bought or leased the expensive e-vehicle and the marginal cost of a single trip is close to zero why would they chose public transport or active travel instead? We will still have congestion and we will not have the modal transfer that is required to improve the city centre.
5. *Please use the space below to provide any comments you may have on the strategic direction for the development within the Centre’s Districts or masterplan areas?*

The strategic direction is admirably ambitious, even with the caveats above. Have checks been made for existing policies which may impede achievement of the aims? Are council departments structured in a way that best supports the achievement of the aims? The council already has policies in place for improving conditions for cycling (the transport

hierarchy, contraflow cycling in one-way streets) yet other considerations repeatedly prevent their implementation.

6. *Is there anything missing or that requires greater or less emphasis in the Draft CCSDf 2050?*

The Grand Projects should be supplemented by the requirement for continual incremental change in the course of 'renewal' and minor works. For example, by requiring all newly created or modified turnings to have small radii so that drivers have to moderate their speed when turning, by adjusting existing crossings to give priority to pedestrians.

7. *Are there actions you would like removed or included within the Action Plan?  
(yes, no, don't know/no opinion)  
If yes, please provide more details.*

- The Avenues construction programme should be accelerated
- A detailed survey should be carried out of existing planning, professional, safety, etc, guidance, directives or practices which will get in the way of this document's ambitions if they are not updated or made secondary to new guidance
- The structure of council departments should be reviewed. The 'Roads Department' should be renamed and given new priorities to emphasise the aim of providing for foot and cycle traffic ahead of motor traffic. The outcome should be that provision for foot/cycle/motor traffic is treated as a coherent whole, rather than in the current compartmentalised way in which the provision of cycle infrastructure is through disjointed, separately funded, one-off special projects.

8. *Please use the space below to provide any other comments you may have about the CCSDf 2050?*

- No further comments.

We trust that you will take cognisance of our concerns when compiling the final document for publication. Should you require clarification of any of the points we make please do contact us.

Yours sincerely



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for Consultations, GoBike