



Scottish Government  
Town Centre Action Plan Review Group

PO Box 15175, Glasgow, G4 9LP

e-mail: [consultations@gobike.org](mailto:consultations@gobike.org)

web: [www.gobike.org](http://www.gobike.org)

By e-mail to: [TCAPreview@lovelocal.scot](mailto:TCAPreview@lovelocal.scot)

Ref: TF/D66

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Dear Sir/Madam,

**THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT  
REVIEW OF THE TOWN CENTRE ACTION PLAN**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposals for update of the Town Centre Action Plan, which one of our members brought to our attention.

GoBike is a voluntary organisation, funded only by its members, which campaign in Glasgow and the Strathclyde area for good cycling facilities so that cycling may become a viable option for everyday journeys in all our neighbourhoods. As such we have a strong interest in our town centres and local neighbourhoods.

We will respond to your questions in turn:

1. What are the challenges and opportunities facing town centres in Scotland and how should these be addressed?

The challenges facing town centres are many but the main ones are:

- Pollution and congestion from motor vehicles
- The absence of housing
- The rise of out-of-town shopping and other amenities such as hospitals and workplaces
- The preponderance of chain stores and high rents prohibiting local one-off shops
- The lack of green space

The opportunities are many but need concerted political action to implement them.

- Private motor cars must be removed from our town centres and be replaced by space for people to walk, cycle or sit
- Buses in our town centres must be electrically powered
- Gap sites should be replaced with housing and the housing must have good cycle storage rather than a garage for a car.
- Land values should reflect the potential for pollution and developers should pay more for land remote from public transport
- Incentives should be offered to local retailers to open shops on local high streets
- Gap sites, vacant buildings and road space should be given over to grassed, park areas where people may sit and relax
- Cycling should be encouraged with cycle lanes and cycle parking

2. What are the barriers to developing town centres suitable for their communities and how can these be removed?

The barriers are vested interests in maintaining the access of private motor cars to town centres and the vested interests in maintaining the current policy of land values.

They may be removed by concerted political action to improve our health, to improve housing and to ensure rents and property prices are fair.

3. To what extent has the Town Centre Action Plan (TCAP) delivered against its stated ambitions? In what areas has delivery been successful? In what areas is there room for progress and/or barriers to overcome?

The TCAP has not been mentioned before in GoBike circles and we have no knowledge of its ambitions or successes. There is obviously great potential for changing our town centres to look at all similar to the scene shown on your website advertising this consultation.

4. To what extent are the stated objectives and policy challenges TCAP seeks to address relevant for the new challenges for our towns?

A search on your website to find “objectives and policy challenges” was unsuccessful so we cannot answer this question.

5. If TCAP were to be revised, what additional or replacement areas and objectives would you recommend should be included and how should these be addressed?

This is a disappointing question given that we did not find your website helpful. However, it is clear that there need to be significant policy changes within the Scottish Government and our local councils to reduce motor traffic, particularly private motor traffic, increase active travel and ensure that the majority of us have shops, schools and other essential facilities within a reasonable distance by walking, cycling or bus.

6. Can you provide details and contacts of any examples of excellent practice in town centres which you believe have wider potential?

Glasgow City Council has significantly reduced motor traffic in George Square in the centre of the city.

7. Is there anything else you would like to add?

- Scotland’s population has poor health and a poor health service, relative to other European countries. If we are to improve this then we must make it easier for people to walk and cycle to the shops, to the schools, to medical facilities and to workplaces.
- Most people live in towns and there must now be a reversal of out-of-town shopping. Introducing parking fees at such places would be a start.
- Public transport must be significantly improved, fares reduced and routes extended so that people have a viable alternative to the car
- All radial road routes into town centres should have wide footways and safe cycle lanes to encourage active travel.

Overall, it is clear that the Town Centre Action Plan cannot sit alone, and needs to be considered within the context of national housing policy, transport policy and public health to have any significant impact.

Yours sincerely



Tricia Fort  
for Consultations, GoBike