

Coalition for Healthy Streets and Active Travel

Coalition for Healthy Streets and Active Travel (CoHSAT) Botley Road Improvement Scheme Phase 1 response November 2019

Introduction

The members of CoHSAT welcomed the proposals in Connecting Oxford which shows that the county council and city council are moving towards reliable public transport and removing space for cars on our city roads.

This scheme at present does not yet align with that vision as the proposals are based on the maintenance of traffic flows, whereas the radical proposals in Connecting Oxford will result in a considerable drop in motor traffic.

Waltham Forest has been an inspiration to many of us. There is much we can learn from how they have tackled the roads with high volumes of traffic surrounding their low traffic neighbourhoods.

Proposals we support

The following proposals will improve the cycling experience of existing cyclists.

- **Removal of parking from Botley Road**

The continuity of cycle paths must be maintained along the whole route. We therefore strongly support the removal of car parking on the Botley Road and adding in short term parking in the residential streets. There is good evidence that reducing motor traffic and increasing footfall and cycle movement results in more thriving streets. We support the creation of short-term parking spaces in the side streets.

- **20mph speed limit**

We are pleased to see that you have extended the 20mph to Binsey Lane, though we would like to see this extend even further, at least to Waitrose, but preferably to Seacourt Park and Ride.

Issues

We wish to see the following issues addressed within the development of the design. We would prefer to see funding spent on a few high-quality developments rather than some high cost changes that might be of more marginal benefit, such as moving bus stops (with the exception of the Waitrose bus stop).

1. Junction with the Eynsham Road

This junction design is not safe for cycle riders. This is our top priority ask for change. We are expecting the funding to be found for the B4044 cycle path, and when that happens the numbers of cycle riders will increase as the new safe route will induce demand. The Eynsham Road junction will therefore be handling many more cycle riders, coming in the direction from

Witney, Farmoor and Eynsham into the city. The current design proposal for Eynsham Road will provide neither safety nor convenience for riders nor be attractive to potential cyclists.

We realise that safe cycling at junctions, in the UK, is at an early stage both in trial and in practice. Here are three links to approaches to safe cycling at major junctions:

1. [Dutch design concepts](#)ⁱ,
2. [US segregated junction](#)ⁱⁱ,
3. [Manchester, creating protected junctions \(2019\)](#)ⁱⁱⁱ

➤ *The junction needs either a signalled crossing or a roundabout with a segregated cycle path.*

2. Junction with the A420 (McDonald's Junction)

We also have concerns about the A420 junction. Following the inquest into the death of Claudia Comberti the Oxfordshire Coroner wrote to the county council asking for improvement. The design has no safe pedestrian crossing from the inbound bus stop to the Seacourt Retail Park and vice-versa. We note that the 'off-carriageway segregated path' could 'begin' further to the west, adjusting the corner radius from the A420.

➤ *We would suggest a two stage Toucan crossing. Cycle riders could be 7+m ahead of the bus and arrive at the bus stop ahead of the bus.*

2. Width of pavements

We are concerned that there are some pavements that are below 2m width. This allows for comfortable safe walking and passing, and paying particular attention to inclusive transport, for two people in wheelchairs to pass each other safely.

➤ *Pavements should be 2m wide as a minimum*

3. On-carriageway cycle lanes

We agree with the Oxfordshire Cycling Design Standards that 'Stepped cycle tracks' should be used on roads with >5,000 annual average daily traffic, and we object in principle to on-carriageway cycle lanes. With just a painted white line, motor vehicle drivers make closer passes as they perceive that cycle riders are in protected space. Lines of paint can confuse pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. The width of the cycle lane could be physically maximised if the carriageway for general traffic is minimised and visually maximised where an additional kerb enables Double Yellow line markings to be painted on the carriageway and not the cycle path/lane. We find it difficult to understand why a stepped track cannot be used, for instance, in the sections from Binsey Lane to the river bridge east of Ferry Hinksey Road.

- *We wish to see better delineation, using a physical barrier, as in Oxfordshire's standards.*
- *Cycle lanes need to have a different colour surface so drivers of motor vehicles see that the space is protected. If you are intending to use colour on the bus lanes, could you use the funds instead to colour the cycle lanes?*
- *We would like to work with you on ways to ensure that the on-carriageway cycle lanes are not encroached into by motor vehicles.*

4. Shared-use paths

We also object on principle to shared use paths. These put pedestrians and cycle riders in conflict. We support the requirement to reduce carriageway, not pavement in the areas that you have identified. The particular section of shared use path by the Minns Industrial Estate, behind the bus stop, is a particular worry to us as cycle riders and pedestrians will be jostling for very limited space there. At that point there are a number of traffic lanes which, when Connecting Oxford is implemented, will not be needed.

- *More space should be taken away from the general traffic to avoid shared use paths*

5. Design of the Side Road Entry Treatments (SRETs)

There are inconsistencies across the city in how SRETs have been constructed and there are very few examples that come up to the standards that we have seen in Waltham Forest (Figure 1). The tops of the SRET must be at the same level as the pavement and cycle path, should be direct (ie they should not deviate into the side street), there needs to be a substantial ramp to slow motor vehicles, and the kerb radii need to be tight (or non-existent as in Figure 1). These are critical components of the scheme that will make the difference between pedestrians and cyclists being safe, or not.

The officers have told us that the design of the SRETs will be undertaken at the detailed design stage which is during the implementation.

Figure 1 Here is an example of a blended crossing at Waltham Forest



- *We believe that the conceptual design of SRETs is fundamental aspect of the scheme and we would really value being able to comment on those designs as they develop to avoid the problems that have arisen in the Access to Headington scheme.*

General points and suggestions

Quiet routes

The aspiration of all the CoHSAT member groups is to get more people out of cars, by creating an infrastructure which encourages walking, cycling and public transport. We are not yet convinced that this scheme would encourage less confident cyclists, or a 12yr old heading for school, to get on their bikes.

- *We want to see further development of quiet routes to allow less confident cycle riders to get to the city and the river.*

Traffic flow

While there is more space for buses there is little reallocation of space to cycling and walking, which are only given the space that remains once general motor traffic and buses have been accommodated on the road. Connecting Oxford is about reducing motor traffic. Our understanding of the aspiration of Connecting Oxford is that as traffic reduces, so the speed of all motorised vehicles increases, allowing buses to journey along the main carriageway.

- *Use a sufficiently flexible design to allow reallocation of space to cycling and walking, so that a narrow cycle route becomes a wider one as traffic diminishes.*

Actions following the consultation

- *Use of appropriate before and after measurement of road use by all road users so that it is possible to see the impacts of the changes, to ensure continuous quality improvement.*
- *Implement a healthy streets audit before and after the scheme so that there is a good objective measure of the differences to the street environment that the changes have made.*
- *Set up an active travel and healthy streets stakeholder group to advise you during the implementation phase.*

About CoHSAT

The Coalition of Healthy Streets and Active Travel (CoHSAT) is a group of 10 voluntary and campaigning organisations, striving for efficient, active, low carbon and sustainable travel across Oxfordshire. We want to encourage healthy and thriving communities through reduced traffic, air pollution and noise. This will create attractive, accessible and people-friendly streets, where everybody can enjoy spending time. More details: <http://www.cohsat.org.uk>

ⁱ Junction design in the Netherlands <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XpQMgbDJPok>

ⁱⁱ Protected Intersections for Bicyclists <http://www.protectedintersection.com/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Greater Manchester's cycling and walking network CYCLOPS – [Creating Protected Junctions](#) July 2019