

# Fossgate Redesign

## September 2018 Consultation



Following the public consultation on proposals for a redesign of the street layout on Fossgate, York Cycle Campaign have consulted our membership via an online survey on matters within the design that might have an effect on cycling in the area.

Those that responded are frequent visitors to Fossgate, with 85% visiting at least monthly and 58% of them visiting weekly. When visiting Fossgate, 85% usually or always visited by cycling to Fossgate directly or into the city centre.

When asked if improvements to the cycling facilities on Fossgate would encourage them to visit more often, 76% said that it would but 38% caveated that with 'only if [the changes] went beyond the current proposals'.

### Street Design

The Campaign understands that a true shared space, has been considered for the space but opted against due to concerns about dangers to vulnerable users, such as the visually impaired, from traffic. The Campaign agrees with this decision, as the issue of confusion of use in shared spaces is often raised by our membership with concerns for safety for both cyclists and pedestrians. However our members did not feel that the current design proposals went far enough in reducing conflict and increasing safety of cyclists and pedestrians, given that pedestrian overspill is a frequent occurrence on Fossgate due to its existing narrow pavements and popularity with shoppers. 63% felt that the footpaths should be widened for the majority, if not all, of the street giving more space for pedestrians, in turn reducing the likelihood of pedestrians having to step out into traffic and potentially causing an incident. It was also felt that a wider footpath/narrower roadway arrangement would have a speed calming effect increasing actual & perceptive safety, and making the street a more attractive place to visit.

Additionally the use of the current and proposed fixed bollards along the footpath edges were questioned, with concerns that they only create barriers within the footpath that must be dodged increasing the chance of overspill in these points. It is our understanding that these are placed to protect buildings from the potential of vehicle strikes, however the Campaign suggests an alternative of using additional road narrowing islands with cycle parking in these locations. This provides a dual purpose benefit in both protecting the buildings and providing much needed parking locations, whilst removing obstructions to pedestrians.

With regards to the proposed signage, there was strong support amongst the membership that the signage should reflect the stated aim of promoting cycling in the street as well as prohibiting the motor traffic. Members widely supported the idea of incorporating cycle signage into the street entrance totems (sign ref SR.2) as a way of positively identifying the street as a cycling street, such as blue directional signage indicating it as a route to the city centre. There was also support given regular on road cycle markings on the street to serve as a reminder to both pedestrians and motorists to expect cyclists to be using the route, but also to provide guidance that the street remains a cycle route despite the restrictions on motor traffic.

### Cycle Parking

The proposals indicate 5 Sheffield style cycle stands, in 2 clusters of 2 & 3, allowing parking for 10 bikes in total. Currently there is no cycle parking on Fossgate or Walmgate, with the nearest cycle parking being at Whip-ma-whop-ma Gate (12 Sheffield stands) or Merchantgate (18 Sheffield stands), both of which are consistently over occupied

In comparison, based on the typical design allowance for a parallel parked vehicle of 6m, this equates to approximately 10 motor vehicle parking spaces, the same as cycles. This equal provision seems at odds with the stated aims of the redesign to 'improve access to Fossgate for pedestrians and cyclists', and with wider aims locally and nationally to prioritise sustainable transport.

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Responding members strongly believed that the proposals do not provide enough parking for cycling, with only one respondent agreeing the proposals provided enough parking. In order to provide the required parking, 94% agreed that more parking should be provided even if it was at the detriment for motor vehicle parking. Such a move could be beneficial for the area as a 2016 DfT publication reported that cycle parking generates 5x the retail spend than the equivalent area of motor vehicle parking<sup>1</sup>.

An ongoing concern of the membership with cycle parking is that not all parking is equally accessible to all users. Parking which is too closely spaced prohibits users of non-standard type cycles, often people with disabilities or young families, or who have difficulty maneuvering their cycles in racks, such as elderly cyclists or cyclists with heavy shopping. The Campaign would like to see spacing of the racks to be at a minimum 1m to facilitate ease of access for all users, ideally with end racks spaced more widely and marked for use by adapted/cargo cycles.

### Motor Vehicle Access Restrictions

The preferred proposal to retain the current restriction timings is welcomed, as to match other footstreets around York would unnecessarily reduce the hours of restriction by 3 hours, reducing the effectiveness of any improvements to encourage walking and cycling within the street.



A proposed concept of how an alternative true pedestrian/cycle street could work, with widened footpaths (green), a distinct cycle lane (blue) and bi-directional vehicle access to the south (red).

Base image © Google Earth 2018

Another alternative suggested within the Campaign, and widely supported by members in the survey (90%) would be to limit motor vehicle access only to the lower end of Fossgate in a two way direction, as far as Franklin's Yard (Ambiente/The Hairy Fig), allowing only pedestrians & cyclists the rest of the street. This would still allow access to the parking provided for residents & not restrict those with blue badges, whilst providing a much safer pedestrian & cycling street for the rest of Fossgate at its busiest end by removing

<sup>1</sup> [Department of Transport & University of Birmingham: Value of Cycling Report - 2016](#)



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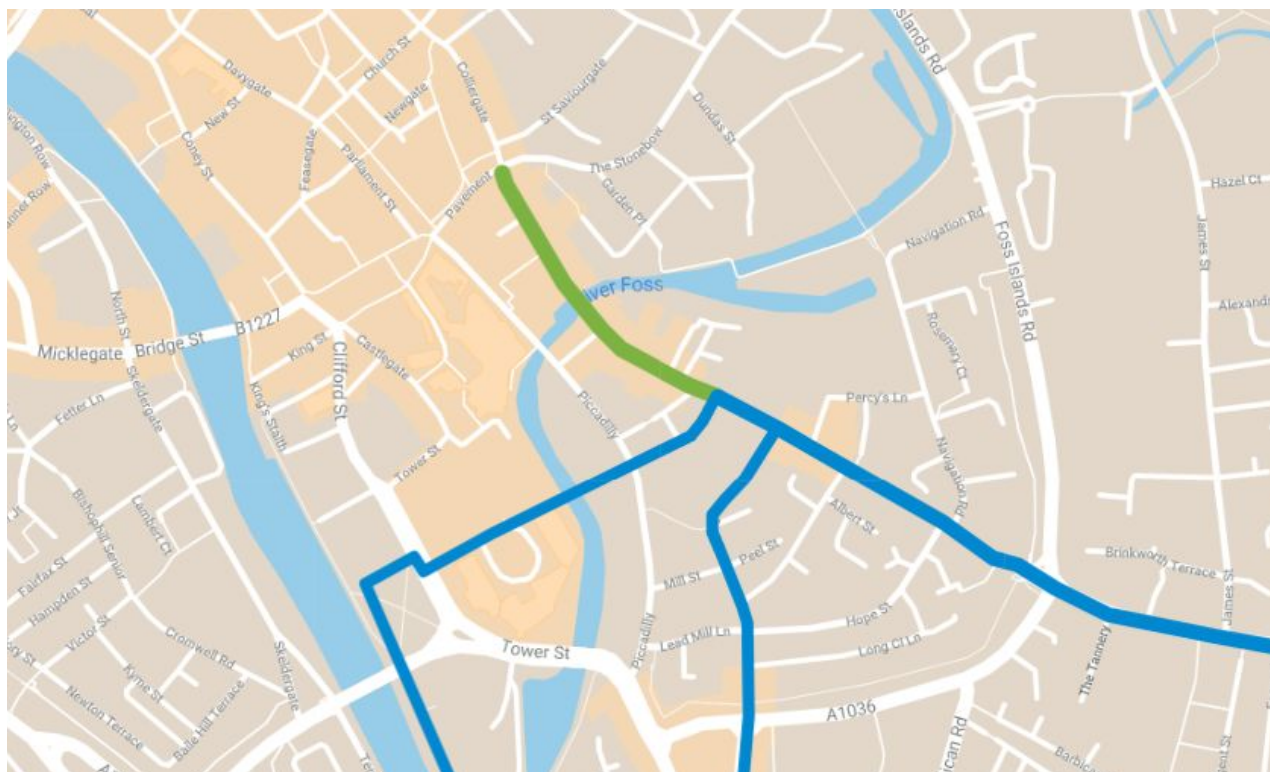
motor vehicles entirely. Delivery access can then be provided in a time window in line with other city centre streets.

### Cycle Contraflow

As the current proposal is one way for all vehicles it means that cyclists wishing to travel north-south from Stonebow to Walmgate must make an additional 150m diversion via Piccadilly and through the 'Piccadilly bus interchange' which consists of 6 stops and serving 28 routes,<sup>2</sup> or dismount and push - a difficult option with the busy narrow pavements and oncoming traffic, especially for those with disabilities or the elderly who may be using their cycle as a mobility aid.

Introducing a cycle contraflow as part of the proposals would be of significant benefit to cycling in the area. Concerns have also been raised about the minority of people who currently ride against the one way traffic and potential for injury, and while the Campaign does not condone such actions, it demonstrates a need for an alternative safer route and legitimising it would reduce the risk to otherwise unsuspecting users.

Fossgate has the potential to be a vital segment of a quiet and safe cycle network connecting the city centre with the Walmgate and Fishergate entrances into the city, and the neighbourhoods beyond. Such connections would not only benefit cyclists, but would bring benefit to businesses along Fossgate who would have an increased number of potential customers cycling by their shops - research has shown that in comparison to motorists the long term spending of cyclists tends to almost twice as high due to increased frequency of visits & loyalty.<sup>3</sup>



The main routes that could be unlocked for cycling if Fossgate and part of Walmgate were opened up to contraflow cycling. Base map © Google Maps 2018

Whilst it would be technically and legally possible to introduce an unmarked contraflow due to low number of vehicles & vehicle speeds on the street, our members voiced support for the lane to be fully marked (with

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.itravelyork.info/buses/bus-stops/city-centre-interchanges/piccadilly/>

<sup>3</sup> [Thomas Krass: Commerce and Bicycles presented at 'Trafikdage' at Aalborg University - 2002](#)

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cycle symbols & contrasting colours) for the entirety of its length. This would give enhanced visibility to pedestrians that cyclists could be travelling in the opposite direction down the street and to look both ways before crossing/stepping out, especially as they may not see or be looking for contraflow signs at the ends of the streets.