

# Union Road E4 Consultation

Exeter Cycling Campaign Response June 2021

Exeter Cycling Campaign are broadly supportive of the proposals presented by Devon County Council for Union Road although there are several areas that need improvement and consideration.



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## Positive Aspects

- Stoke Hill Roundabout is a significant improvement on the current design and incorporates many aspects of best practice to keep all users safe
- Safe, dedicated, segregated cycle provision:
  - Is to the minimum standard demanded by LTN 1/20 for the traffic volumes
  - Will encourage more and less confident cyclists to travel the route
  - Will reassure parents of children travelling across the St James School catchment area by bike
  - Reduce the conflict between cars and cyclists on congested, narrow (due to parking) streets.
- Willingness to sacrifice on street parking to make the vision happen shows a strong drive from Devon Council
  - This promotes the Carbon Neutral 2030 vision
  - Shows that private cars are the least important user of the road (applying the inverted triangle of priorities: Walking, Active Transport, Public Transport, Private Vehicle)
- Access to the cycle lane has been considered along its length
- Wider road carriageways will provide smoother transit for busses, emergency vehicles, etc (unfortunately this includes private cars so it will not drive modal shift via the proven most effective carrot & stick approach<sup>1</sup>)
- Most residents still have access to driveways / garages / nearby side streets for parking (we do not yet live in a private car free society and recognise some residents will continue to need access to a private car)



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<sup>1</sup> Forsyth, Ann, and Kevin J. Krizek. 2010. "Promoting Walking and Bicycling: Assessing the Evidence to Assist Planners." Built Environment 36(4):429–46.

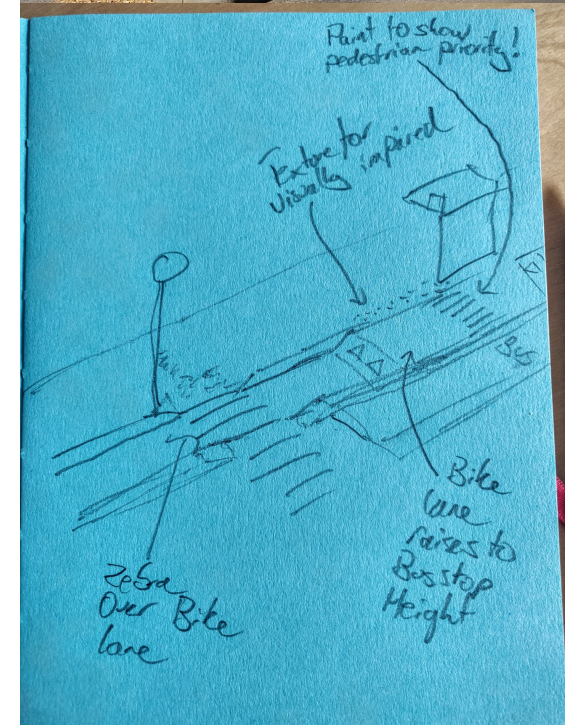
# Shared Use

We recognise that some sections may require shared use due to width constraints, particularly around 86 - 108 Union Road addresses where the property boundaries pinch the road significantly.

That said, shared use is a conflict point where pedestrians and cyclists alike both have to dodge each other, and more confident cyclists will be encouraged onto the road for smoother travel - annoying car drivers who believe there to be alternative cycle provision.

Where possible shared use should be made as wide as possible. We would recommend considering keeping the narrow pavement outside number 65/67 to add as much width as possible outside numbers 86/88 - currently the plans add to both sides.

We believe the shared use section opposite Saunders convenience store could (and should) be avoided. A pattern used in other major cities is to keep the bus stop on the pavement and alight over the cycle lane, which is raised to the correct height to facilitate this. This ensures pedestrians and cyclists both know where they should be and only impede one another when a bus is present (with pedestrians always having clear priority). Photos and rough plans illustrating this are included.

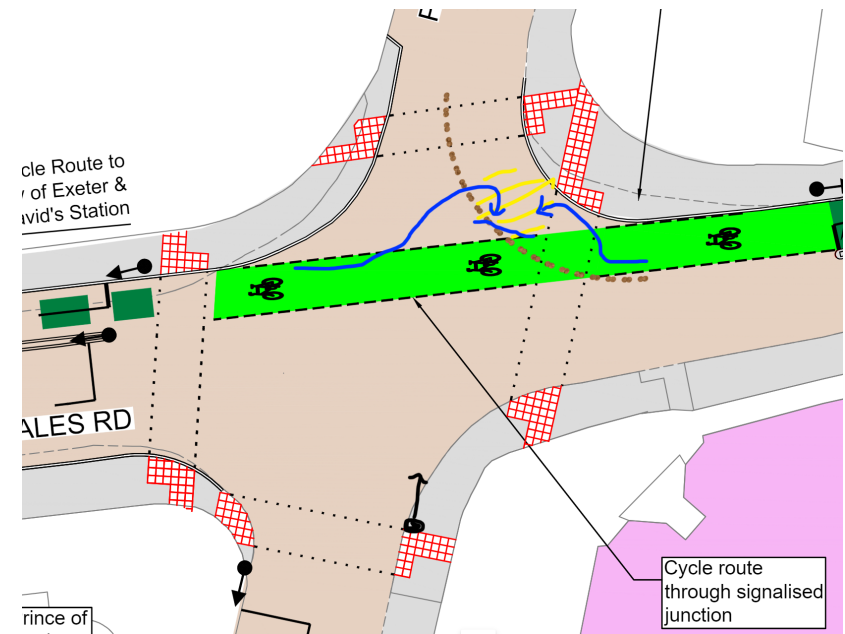




# Pennsylvania Road Junction

The inclusion of dedicated cycling provision is applauded but several routes through the junction do not feel like they have been considered (although phasing details are not presented in the proposals):

- Pedestrians crossing the Northern leg currently have no push button or lights. This is exacerbated on the north west corner where visibility is very poor up Pennsylvania road. This should be given a full signalled crossing as part of the redevelopment. Likewise crossing the Eastern leg. Given the north western pavement is the one bordering and accessing the university with large numbers of students on foot this seems something of an oversight! A marked diagonal crossing may also be beneficial.
- Cyclists turning from the E4 southbound. Assuming cyclists will be given a green light at the same time as the Union Road / Prince of Wales Road traffic then they will have to battle this to turn down to the city centre. This is particularly prevalent for those travelling west from the university as two of the preceding cut throughs are not available to cyclists (Lower St German is one way away from the city centre, Hooper Lane has restrictions) and the access via West Avenue can be very congested. Possible strategies for this include giving those turning a dedicated waiting space to wait for the southbound phase with suitable signage and paint to indicate this (safe zone in yellow hash, access paths in blue, extra light marked to let cyclists see phase), although this style of plans can be hard to make clear to cyclists and enforce. Another pattern is to create a dedicated turning phase for the cyclists but again this requires waiting space away from those trying to continue straight.



- Due to the one lane design of the beginning of Union Road cyclists will face being side swiped by traffic turning North from both Prince of Wales Road and Union Road - both will have cyclists close and in blind spots travelling the same direction for periods of time. Additional signage should be considered warning drivers, as well as reducing the speed limit.
- There is a risk of displacing traffic onto Maryfield Avenue and Sylvan Road. Particularly the latter may be a good candidate for a low traffic neighbourhood but traffic on these roads should be monitored pre and post changes to confirm impact.





## Devonshire Place

This is currently a popular cycle route through from Pennsylvania, avoiding Old Tiverton Road and the busy section of Pennsylvania Road. If made one way to motor vehicles a cycle counterflow should be considered. Given the residential nature of the streets this might be possible with only signage and not a segregated lane, although traffic volumes should be confirmed and checked against LTN1/20 for suitability.



## Road Speed

With the removal of the parking a large portion of union road would be widened, gaining a white line down the middle. This significantly increases the likelihood of drivers to speed. Currently the tight nature of the road causes cars to have to slow to pass, particularly with busses and other larger vehicles.

We would recommend enforcing a 20mph limit to mitigate this.





# Crossings

We would recommend adding raised tables to the tiger crossings and side junction priority crossings to help limit drivers speed on the entry and exit of the Old Tiverton Road roundabout, as well as further highlighting the priority of the pedestrians and cyclists. This is already used to good effect on Queens Street by the clocktower roundabout.



# Conclusions

Broadly this proposal is promising. With a few minor changes sections could be significantly improved.

Care must be given to considering all possible combinations of movements around the Pennsylvania Road junction, and this should be thoroughly assessed using the LTN 1/20 tools. This junction poses a significant potential for accidents if this is not thoroughly considered and the challenges mitigated.

We would encourage Devon Council to continue discussions with us if they have any queries about this report.