

From John & Jean Raven, 30 Great King St., Edinburgh EH3 6QH

To: **TRO/21/32 Traffic Orders, Waverley Court, 4 East Market St, Edinburgh, EH8 8BG**

George St. to Meadows traffic plan.

Having examined the material available to us, we are writing to object most strongly to this plan.

Having lived in the New Town for 50 years and been a cyclist, car user, bus user, and pedestrian, we are well aware that Edinburgh has a serious problem with it's North-South routes and that there is no easy solution.

Currently, at 88 years of age, I am unable to walk far and am reliant on buses and taxis.

From a pedestrian's point of view, the No. 1 problems with this route were the narrow pavements in Bank St. (west side) and, in particular, the crossings of Mound Place/Ramsay Lane on the West side and Market St. on the other.

Crossing Mound Place/Ramsay Lane is particularly difficult since the pavement slopes in several directions at once, making it hard for me to keep my balance. And the hand rail which had been broken for years had still not been repaired last time I was there.

Crossing Market St. became extremely difficult when the Playfield Steps were closed.

This underlines a basic problem with this and related plans. Closing off alternative routes makes it extremely difficult to respond to changing circumstances. It is to be resisted wherever possible.

While speaking about the Mound, we used to find the bus stop behind the art gallery extremely useful for access to Waverley station and are very annoyed that it has not been re-opened.

Cycling.

From a cyclist's point of view, the problem was not the traffic but the terrain itself. I found it difficult to cycle up the hill both in Dundas St. and the Mound and would route myself round Broughton St., Leith St. and the Bridges ... although it was great fun to come back via the Mound and Dundas St.!

Which brings me to my next couple of points.

I do not believe that whoever developed these plans has had much contact with people like myself - ordinary cyclists, not cycling enthusiasts.

I do not believe that many people will use the Mound cycle route even if the cycle lanes are improved.

We gave bicycles to a couple of people who started out with enthusiasm but gently gave up when they discovered the hills. One could get down to the shore along cycle paths ... but, actually, one does not want to go there all that often ... and what to do with one's bike in the interim?

Indeed, I am skeptical that the vast international organisation that prepared these proposals has had much contact with ordinary residents.

George IV Bridge and Forrest Rd.

These are anything but good advertisements for the competence of our Council and officials. Quite the opposite

Our experience as pedestrians on **George IV bridge** has been **markedly worsened** by the appearance of concrete bollards on the pavements along both sides of the street. They greatly restrict the effective width of the pavement and one has to dodge them by walking into the street ... necessitating turning round to check for on-coming cars and buses.

And if that is not sufficient evidence to be skeptical of planners' antics, just look at **Forrest Rd.**

The last round of "improvements" made this street impossible. Most of the street is unusable ... "ornamental" sets ("cobble") (which it is hard to walk on), trees, and huge litter bins. The traffic builds up because there is nowhere for it to go to get around delivery vehicles, refuse collection vehicles, and buses. Ambulances have a major problem.

This street, better than anything else could do, illustrates the danger of letting ideologically-based, office-based, enthusiasts loose with their pencils.

And **beware of the word "experimental"**. We still haven't got rid of all those white lines and bollards introduced by a few enthusiasts *with the aid of external money* on the pretext of protecting us from Covid.

In fact, the Council lacks the understanding and capacity to generate *comprehensive* evaluations of interventions - experimental or otherwise. Such interventions need to be *comprehensively* evaluated because they *always* have counterintuitive and counterproductive effects ... that is to say, they produced

unanticipated undesired and undesirable as well as desired and desirable outcomes. How to anticipate and assess these?

Cars.

To cap it all, in all these years, we never had serious problems with traffic on the Mound ... except that caused by summer visitors, the trams project, and building works. **None of these (and others like them) is/are fixable by draconian fixed interventions of the kind being proposed.**

What is needed is an open, self-adjusting, system with multiple options.

Hence, we are opposed to the whole scheme.

But please do the obvious: fix the pavements half way up the Mound. Fix the hand rail. Restore the bus stop behind the art gallery. Get rid of those bollards on George IV bridge. Get rid of the trees and "cobblestones" (and bins) in Forrest Rd. And get rid of most of the white lines and temporary bollards introduced on the pretext of protecting against COVID.

Get rid of international consultants and beware, oh beware, of G(r)eeks bearing gifts (eg Sustrans and UNESCO). They will prove to be, have proved to be, Trojan horses. Neither the horses nor their occupants are welcome here.

John and Jean Raven.