

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Report No</b>	<b>CIA/27/22</b>

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** City of Inverness Area

**Date:** 24 November 2022

**Report Title:** Academy Street Proposals – Next Steps

**Report By:** Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

### 1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 Inverness finds itself at a pivotal moment where significant efforts are underway to transform the city centre into a vibrant, successful place where people and business can enjoy a revival, following the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and shifts in retail behaviours. Crucial to this change is how urban design and transport modes affect – positively or negatively – the quality, safety and enjoyment of our streets.
- 1.2 The Highland Council secured £800k from the Scottish Government’s Places for Everyone programme to redesign Academy Street in favour of walking, wheeling and cycling, and undertake public consultation on design options.
- 1.3 This report provides Members with an update on the results of the public consultation and seeks a decision on what design option to progress.

### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:-
  - i. **Note** the feedback from the consultation including the ambition to improve the environment in Academy Street for all users;
  - ii. **Agree** for Officers to proceed with the design development of **Option B** outlined in **Section 8**, ensuring the best opportunity to attract external construction funding by promoting an ambitious vision for the city centre; and
  - iii. **Agree** for Officers to continue public consultation on the development of **Option B** including the detail of any traffic orders.

### 3 Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** – The project team and design costs are externally funded from Places for Everyone fund. Subject to a further successful award, funding for the construction can be met from the same source.
- 3.2 **Legal** – Depending on the design option chosen by Members there may be a requirement to prepare a Traffic Regulation Order for Academy Street. The costs for this work will be met from within the project budget.
- 3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island)** – The scheme aims to improve options for people to walk, wheel and cycle in Inverness, which are typically low or zero cost travel options and therefore accessible to all socioeconomic groups. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken and has informed the design development process, direct engagement with people representing those with protected characteristics has also been undertaken.
- 3.4 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever** – If implemented, a redesigned Academy Street will support positive behaviour change towards more sustainable travel modes (walking, wheeling and cycling) and therefore make a positive contribution to reducing the carbon footprint of travel in Highland, contributing to the Council's response to the Climate and Ecological Emergency.
- 3.5 **Risk** – There is potential for reputational risk to the Council by not implementing improvements in terms of tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency and the city centre Air Quality Management Area. Depending on the option chosen to progress, there is potential for disruption to motorised users in the short term during and following construction, until people develop new routing habits.
- 3.6 **Gaelic** – There are no implications.

### 4 Background

- 4.1 Scottish Government has committed 10% of the annual Transport budget to Active Travel by 2024/25, expected to be £320m per year and it has set a national target to reduce car kilometres by 20% by 2030. The Highland Council has secured £10.6m for the Inverness City Active Travel Network; £1.6m for Cycling, Walking and Safer Routes for 2022/23 and £109m for transport through the City and Region Deal; as well as initial funding of £2.7m to unlock up to £50m for public transport, through the Bus Partnership Fund.
- 4.2 Scottish Government published the National Transport Strategy in 2020, in doing so it places *people* at the top of the priority for travel and private cars at the bottom (Fig. 1). Scottish Government also published the draft Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 in 2022, identifying a requirement for widespread local interventions to decarbonise transport, final reporting is expected at the end of 2022. A government review of how the major increase in national active travel funding should be distributed locally is also expected to report at end of 2022.

## Prioritising Sustainable Transport

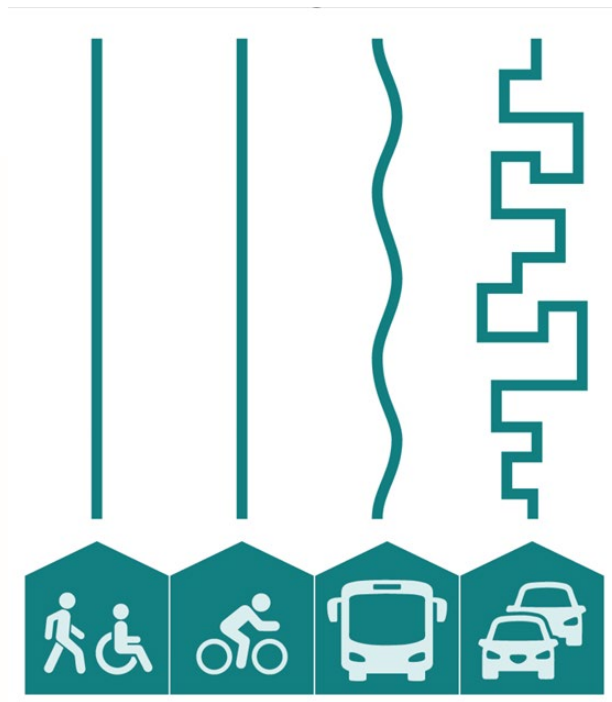
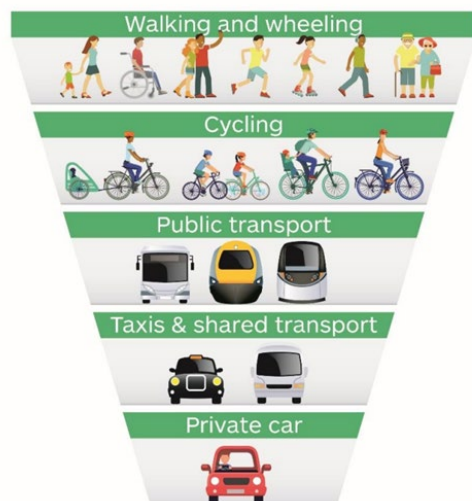


Figure 1: Sustainable Travel Hierarchy and Modal Routing for Liveable Cities.

- 4.3 Over three years ago The Highland Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency, identifying action to respond remains a priority. Transport contributes 37% of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions and prioritising ways to reduce this will deliver a strong response to the Emergency.
- 4.4 The Covid-19 pandemic transformed how people lived their lives. One of the few positive aspects was people's increased appreciation of local natural and built environments, and walking, wheeling and cycling for daily exercise. It is expected that more people will seek to continue these positive lifestyle changes, and policy should also harness this.
- 4.5 The Council committed to applying a place-based approach across Inverness as detailed in the December 2021 report to [Full Council](#), at the City Members briefing in May 2022 and the City of Inverness Area Committee [Inverness Strategy paper](#) in September 2022. The ambition of this approach, which aligns with the [Inverness One City One Vision](#) is to coordinate the funding and delivery of plans and projects, reinforcing Inverness' regional and national role as the Highland's premier destination for residents, visitors and investment. The Academy Street project is included in these Strategy documents (**Appendix 1**) and delivers on their core outcomes.

## 5 Spaces for People

- 5.1 In response to the Covid-19 pandemic the Highland Council secured £1.9m from Scottish Government's 'Spaces for People' fund to implement immediate measures to ensure that people could walk, wheel or cycle whilst physically distancing and remaining safe from traffic in settlements across the Highland area.
- 5.2 These measures included installing temporary bollards along the length of Academy Street to widen the footpath and create more space for people to physically distance.

Members will recall the decision taken by this Committee on 21 August 2021 where it was agreed 'to retain a Spaces for People intervention in Academy Street' pending a full accessibility assessment and the delivery of a permanent scheme.

## **6 Current Status**

- 6.1 The Spaces for People intervention remains in place and officers have developed options for a permanent scheme that have been subject to consultation as summarised below. A 'do-minimum' scenario to remove the temporary bollards and reinstate the previous carriageway width was discounted, as it does not deliver any benefits to Academy Street or the wider city centre.
- 6.2 The Academy Street project is funded through Scottish Government's Places for Everyone fund. The current award (£800k) is to deliver a construction-level design for a reimagined Academy Street. To be eligible for the next construction-stage of funding, the design of the street needs to be compliant with Cycling by Design Guidance. A key aspect of these design standards is ensuring the safety of people cycling on carriageway, where traffic speeds must be kept at a maximum of 20mph and motorised vehicle volumes must be below 2000 vehicles per day.
- 6.3 The speed limit on Academy Street is 20mph but the typical motorised vehicle volumes are between 8,500 and 9,500 vehicles per day. This means the current situation on Academy Street fails to meet Cycling by Design Standards and would not be eligible for external funding unless alternative cycle routes are identified, or mechanisms put in place to reduce the traffic volumes on Academy Street.
- 6.4 An analysis of the vehicular traffic (automatic number plate tracking) using Academy Street has demonstrated that on average 50% of vehicles are using the street as a through route, increasing to 75% exiting at Chapel Street in the morning peak, and therefore are not providing an economic benefit to the Street or wider City Centre. Most of the vehicles that remain in the City Centre will park in one of the major city centre car parks (2867 spaces) which are within a 5-minute walk of Academy Street.
- 6.5 Option A looks at improving the public realm, widened footpaths and the provision of alternate cycle routes away from Academy Street. Option B is focused on reducing traffic volumes to enable cyclists to remain on Academy Street.

## **7 Consultation and Engagement**

- 7.1 The [Commonplace portal](#) for the Academy Street has been live since May 2022. This outlines the proposals and provides the public with opportunities to give feedback on Option A. As of 20 October 2022, the platform had attracted: -
- 6,167 visitors;
  - 496 respondents;
  - 1,071 contributions; and
  - 500 news subscribers
- 7.2 There have also been five updates to the platform including opportunities to engage with the project team, give more detail on the proposals and share a recent traffic

survey conducted on Academy Street. Other engagement has included 63 stakeholder organisations being contacted by email, six group events between July and October (which engaged over 300 people), individual meetings with seven organisations to address specific needs, surveys distributed to Academy Street businesses, and 35 pieces of local media coverage.

- 7.3 Leaflets containing a QR code for the Commonplace portal were delivered to around 200 business and residential addresses in Academy Street and the immediately surrounding area. A summary of all engagement activities is detailed in **Appendix 2**.

Officers attended an Inverness City Centre Business Improvement District (BID) breakfast meeting to share the proposals. Following presentations, a discussion was held with the BID Members where aspirations, concerns and operational requirements of different businesses were shared. This feedback was taken into account in the development of the designs and in the recommendations made in this paper.

- 7.4 Of the Academy Street businesses surveyed, there were 30 responses. Of these 67% support the widening of pavements there whilst 72% stated that through traffic has either a detrimental or negligible effect on their trade and business this data is summarised and visualised in **Appendix 3**.

- 7.5 Feedback from the Commonplace online portal shows that 68% of respondents view the proposals as positive, mostly positive or neutral, with 73% of those engaged stating that they feel happy, satisfied or neutral regarding proposals. In the case of unhappy or dissatisfied responses (27% of total), 32% of these respondents (9% of overall feedback) stated that they thought more radical changes were needed for Academy Street. This data is summarised and visualised in **Appendix 3**.

- 7.6 There is broad support from the public consultation for the reduced road space and increase space for non-motorised users. A clear majority of the responses support this approach therefore the physical layout remains the same, the choice therefore is how the traffic is allowed to move through the city centre.

## **8 Future Options for Academy Street**

- 8.1 It is important to note that the use of Academy Street for Public Transport and Service deliveries requires a physical layout common to all the proposed Options. All options require a 6m wide carriageway for motorised vehicles to allow busses to pass one another, for emergency response vehicles and to allow for deliveries.

8.2 The detailed options developed and consulted upon are summarised as Option A below:-

<p><b>Option A:</b></p> <p>Footpaths widened to maximum, pedestrian crossing points increased; two-way vehicular flow maintained; alternative onward cycle route (<b>Appendix 4</b>) provided to link to High Street via Eastgate underpass or via Falcon Square and Inglis Street.</p>	
<p><b>Benefits</b></p>	<p><b>Risks</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides increased space and improved environment for walking and wheeling on Academy Street.</li> <li>• Alternative segregated cycle route provides safety for cyclists.</li> <li>• Greatly improves accessibility for disabled and impaired users on Academy Street.</li> <li>• Delivers significant public realm improvements for Academy Street</li> <li>• Offers potential for greater mix of uses of the street, e.g. street Café.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly unlikely to secure funding from Places for Everyone.</li> <li>• Limited alternative funding options.</li> <li>• Requires kerb-segregated cycle route along High Street, introducing barrier to cross- street movement and potential for increased cycling/pedestrian conflict (See <b>Appendix 5:</b> Sustrans' response to High Street cycle route option).</li> <li>• Construction on Falcon Square would require third-party landowner negotiation and agreement Requires kerb-segregated cycle route along High Street, introducing barrier to cross-street movement and potential for increased cycling/pedestrian conflict (See <b>Appendix 5:</b> Sustrans' response to High Street cycle route option).</li> </ul>

8.3 Due to the feedback received from the public about perceived lack of benefits of these options for active travel, and feedback from the funding administrator (See **Appendix 5**: Sustrans' response to High Street cycle route option) about the limited potential for these options to be eligible for further funding, a second option (Option B) is presented below:-

<p><b>Option B:</b></p> <p>Footpaths widened to maximum possible, pedestrian crossing facilities increased along length of street; motorised vehicle access restricted to deliveries, public transport and blue-badge holders to minimise the through traffic allowed to pass through the city centre. Comprehensive re-signage of alternative traffic routes and available parking opportunities to access the city centre. Enhanced restrictions on surrounding residential areas whilst encouraging motorists to make better route choices on arterial and circulatory routes. Visualisations shown in <b>Appendix 6</b>.</p>	
<p><b>Benefits</b></p>	<p><b>Risks</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aligns with national and Council Policy and aspiration to encourage change to a lower carbon transport and a better city centre environment.</li> <li>• Provides increased space and improved environment for walking and wheeling on Academy Street.</li> <li>• Cyclists can use the road space safely as the vehicle numbers are below 2000 v/day</li> <li>• Greatly improves accessibility for disabled and impaired users on Academy Street.</li> <li>• Delivers significant public realm improvements for Academy Street</li> <li>• Offers potential for greater mix of uses of the street, e.g. street Café. Restrictions will bring Motorised vehicle volumes to safe levels for sharing spaces with people cycling, meeting Cycling by Design standards, and therefore offering greater potential for securing Scottish Government funding to construct.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential for impacts and concerns from affected businesses and other stakeholders.</li> </ul>

## 9 Next Steps

9.1 Following a decision on options presented, officers will progress with identifying appropriate funding.

9.2 If Option B is preferred, officers will progress with an application to Scottish Government for funding to take forward technical design and construction subject to stakeholder engagement, statutory consultation and Traffic Regulation Order processes.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

Date: 14 November 2022

Authors: Brendan Dougan, Project Officer (Active Travel)

Background Papers: [Scotland's National Transport Strategy 2](#)  
[Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2](#)  
[Inverness Strategy Update CIAC Paper](#)  
[Cycling by Design Guidance](#)  
[Highland Council Meeting 9th May 2019](#)  
[Inverness One City One Vision](#)



# ACCESSIBILITY & CONNECTIVITY

## PRIORITISING PEOPLE OVER CARS: ACADEMY STREET



The temporary widening of pavements on Academy Street has provided the opportunity to assess the impact of this on vehicular movement.

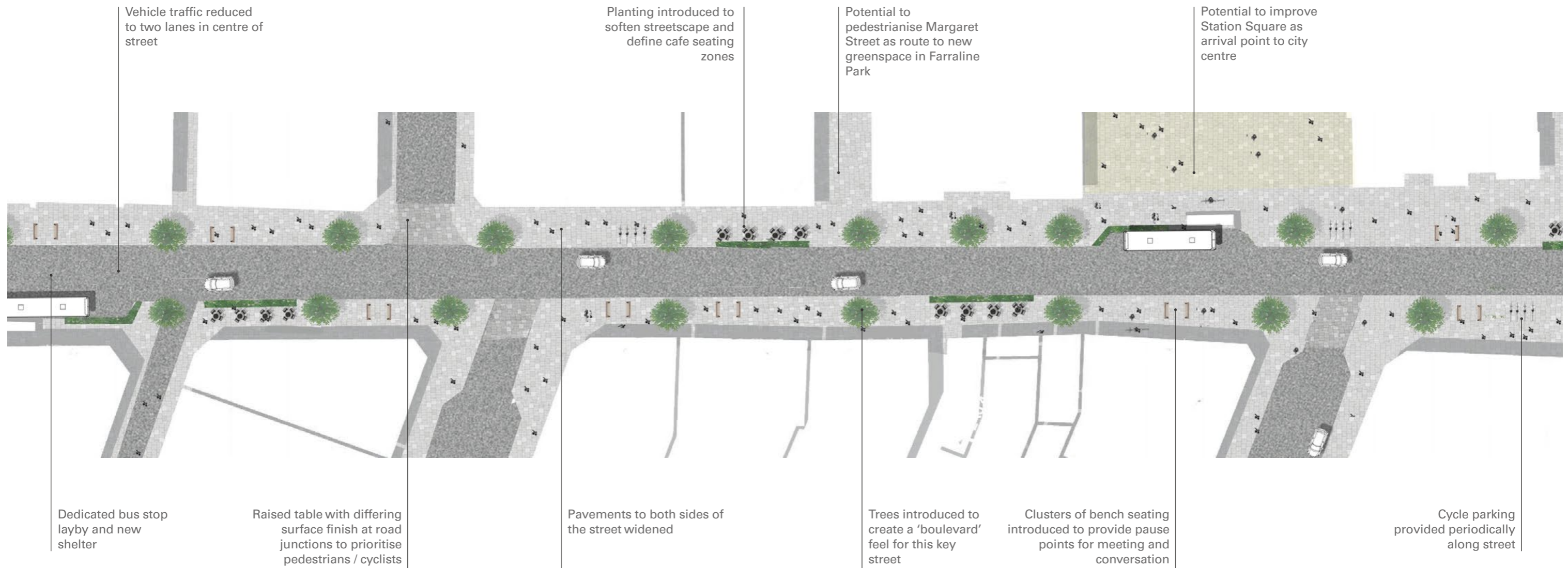
Reducing Academy Street to two lanes still permits traffic to pass through the centre of the city but gives more space to pedestrian and cycle movement.

More generous pavement will allow greater space for pedestrians and wheelchair users and more seating areas for both benches and cafe tables to benefit existing food & beverage businesses and allows

the introduction of street trees and planting to soften the space and assist in improving air quality.

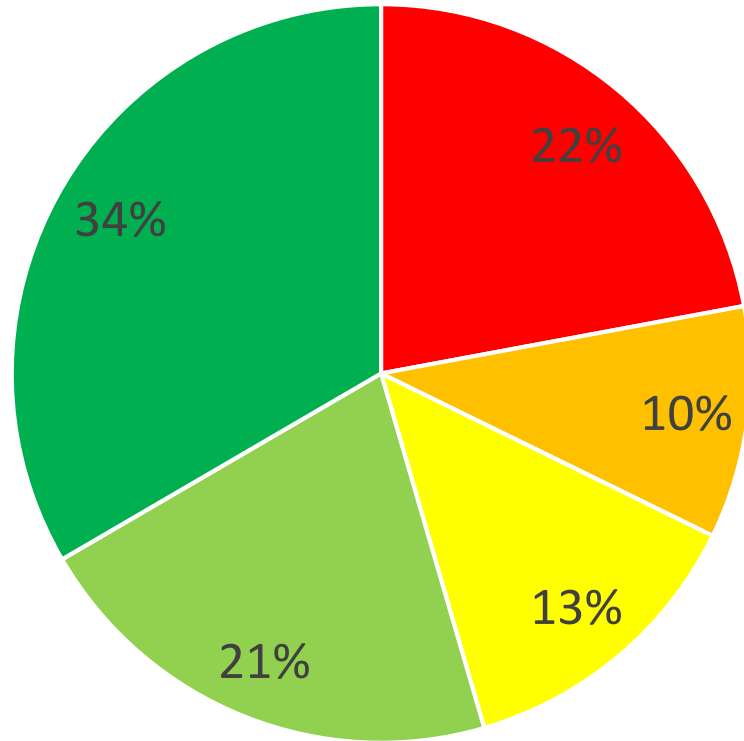
Provided traffic volumes can be reduced to less than 2000 vehicles per day, cycling by design standards can be met for on-carriageway cycling.

An out of hours servicing strategy, similar to those used in most cities prevents the need to create wide service vehicle bays that reduce available space for people movement.



# Contributions Sentiment from Commonplace consultation

Contributions Sentiment



■ Negative

■ Mostly negative

■ Neutral

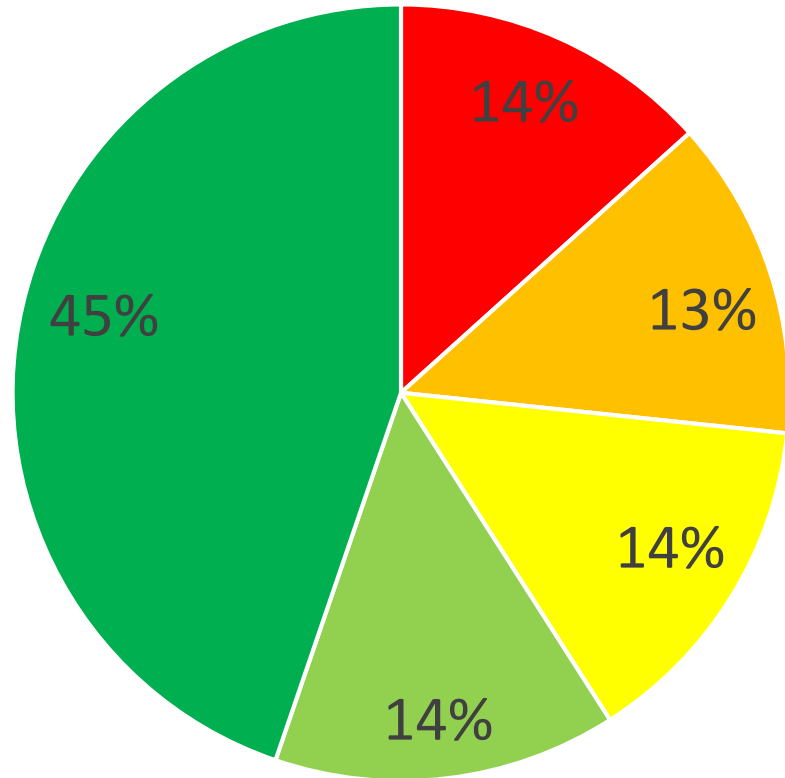
■ Mostly positive

■ Positive

- Received a total of 521 responses.
- Shows overall support with 68% of responses between positive and neutral range.

## About the Project

Overall, how do you feel about these proposals?

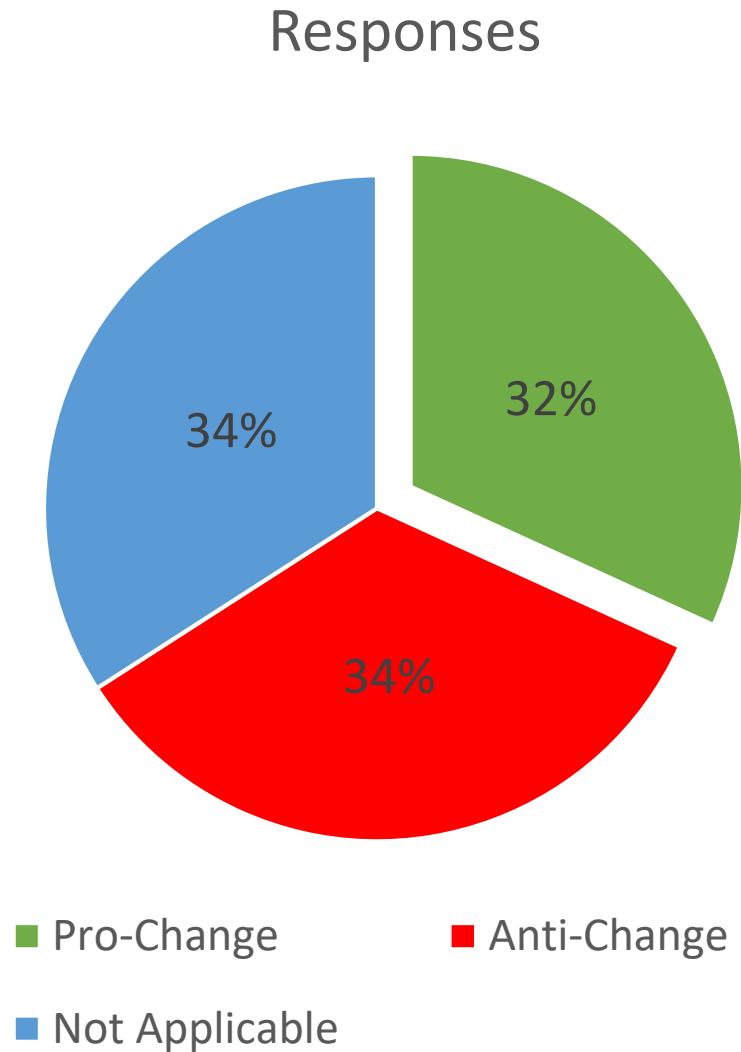


■ Unhappy    ■ Dissatisfied    ■ Neutral  
■ Satisfied    ■ Happy

## Respondent feelings regarding proposals from Commonplace portal

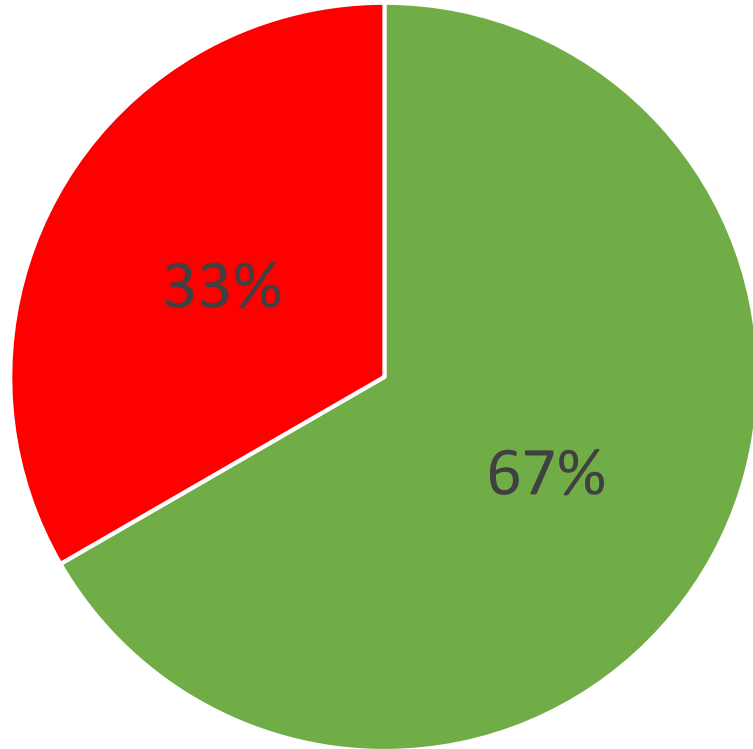
- Total of 105 responses.
- Of this group, 73% express feeling happy, satisfied or neutral regarding proposals.

## Breakdown of responses in Unhappy to Neutral Range.



- Sum of of 44 responses (41% of total).
- 32% expressed desire for more radical change.

## Business Support for Pavement Widening

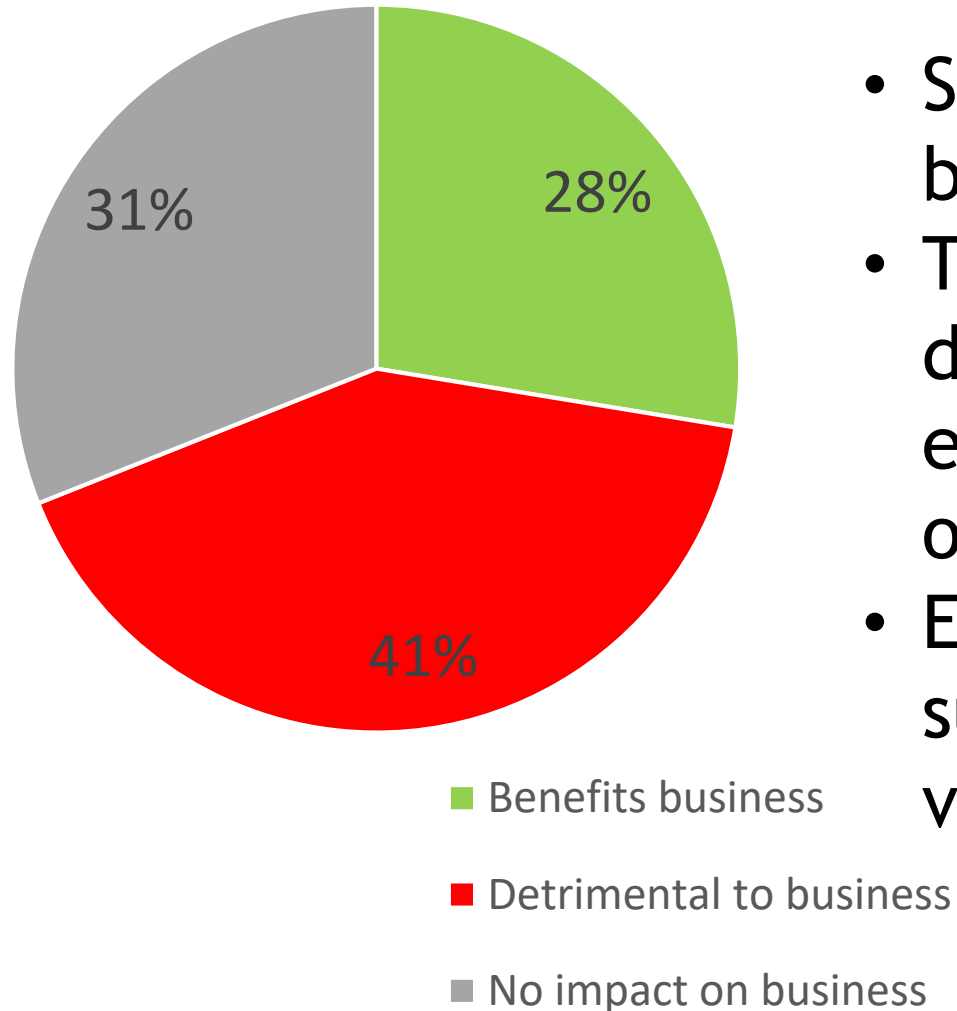


■ For ■ Against

## Business survey results: Pavement widening

- Survey responses from 30 businesses on Academy Street.
- Two thirds (67%) in favour of pavement widening.
- Evidences business support for pavement widening.

## Business attitudes towards traffic volumes



## Business survey results: Perceived impact of traffic volumes.

- Survey responses from 30 businesses.
- Traffic perceived to have detrimental or negligible effect on business by 72% of respondents.
- Evidences business support to reduce traffic volumes.

## Summary of engagement activity regarding the proposed redesign of Academy Street

### Digital engagement:

<https://academystreetproposals.commonplace.is/> has been live since May 2022, both explaining the proposal for Academy Street and providing people with the opportunity to give feedback.

As of 20<sup>th</sup> October 2022, the platform has attracted:

- 6,167 visitors
- 496 respondents
- 1,071 contributions
- 500 news subscribers

Five news updates have been published to the platform regarding opportunities to meet the project team either in person or online to find out more about the proposals. One news update also shared a recent traffic survey conducted on Academy Street.

### Social media

The Highland Council's social media channels were used to encourage the public to find out about the proposal for Academy Street as well as opportunities to find out more and provide feedback.

### Direct email

At the very start of the project in May, emails were sent to specific stakeholders highlighting the proposal, the link to <https://academystreetproposals.commonplace.is/>, a survey for businesses and, where appropriate, the first engagement event. In the case of protected characteristics groups, telephone follow ups were also carried out.

The following organisations were contacted:

### *Businesses*

- Inverness BID
- Visit Inverness Loch Ness
- Victorian Market
- Eastgate Shopping Centre
- FSB
- Inverness Chamber of Commerce
- Marks and Spencer

### *Transport*

- Stagecoach
- Network Rail
- ScotRail

- Inverness Taxi Alliance
- Inverness Taxis
- Inverness City Taxis
- Capital Taxis
- Taxis Inverness
- Inverness Premier Taxis
- Sneckie Taxis
- A2B Taxis
- Airport Taxis Inverness
- Inverness Airport Transfer
- Critical Mass
- Kidical Mass

#### *Political stakeholders*

- Elected members of the Highland Council (Ward 14, Inverness Central)
- Crown and City Centre Community Council

#### *Miscellaneous*

- Inverness City Heritage Trust
- HIE - Travel and Transport
- UHI - Student Services

#### *Cycling groups*

- Hi Bike Inverness
- Inverness Cycle Club
- Velocity Café
- Cycling UK Highland
- Culbokie Community Cycle Club
- Mums on Wheels
- Highland Bikes
- The Highland Cycle Campaign
- Bikes of Inverness
- Monsterbike

#### *Protected characteristics groups*

- RNIB
- Sight Action
- Autism Rights Group Highland
- Alzheimer's Scotland
- High Ability
- Cheshire House c/o Leonard Cheshire
- Highland Disability Sport
- Shopmobility Inverness
- L'Arche



- Corbett Centre
- Lifeways Inverness
- Capability Scotland
- Advocacy Highland
- The Richmond Fellowship Scotland
- Highland Pride
- Inverness Access Panel
- The Highland Deaf Children's Society
- Autism Initiatives
- Centred (formerly Birchwood Highland)
- Scottish Huntington's Association
- Strathnairn Community Access & Transport Association (SCATA)
- Rape and Sexual Abuse Service Highland (RASASH)
- Inverness Women's Aid
- Women in the Highlands Project
- Deaf Services Drop-In

## **Leaflets**

Leaflets were distributed to businesses and residents of Academy Street regarding the proposals for Academy Street along with a QR code to access <https://academystreetproposals.commonplace.is/> and view the designs and provide feedback.

Different leaflets were also distributed to businesses on the High Street, Inglis Street and Bridge Street regarding the two alternative cycle routes with an explanation of potential changes that would need to happen to the High Street to segregate pedestrians and cyclists and an invitation to a drop-in session at the Eastgate Shopping Centre in October to find out more.

## **Engagement events:**

In total, six engagement events were held between July and October, four of them face-to-face and one online.

### Inverness BID Business Breakfast

This event took place on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2022 at Rose Street Foundry and was attended by many city centre businesses, some of them based in Academy Street. 65 delegates attended, representing around 50 businesses.

Malcolm Macleod, Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy at The Highland Council, and Garry Smith, Principal Designer, presented the proposed design for Academy Street and questions were taken from those in attendance as well as from businesses who were unable to attend but had emailed questions in advance of the event. A follow-up of the key issues discussed was also circulated to members by Inverness BID after the event.

### Event with protected characteristics groups

This was held at the Spectrum Centre on 19th July 2022. This was attended by 12 people who had the opportunity to meet Garry Smith and find out about the proposal and raise any concerns.

### A group event for local cyclists

This evening event was held at Velocity Café on 31st August 2022. Garry Smith presented the proposal for Academy Street and explained that the funding for the vision for Academy Street was contingent on identifying a viable alternative cycle route across the city. The two options (Eastgate Underpass and Falcon Square) were presented to the cyclists in attendance.

The event was attended by 32 people and was oversubscribed with interested parties directed to join an online event the following day.

### An open public event hosted via Zoom

This evening event took place 1st September 2022 and was attended by 23 people.

### A drop-in event at the Eastgate Shopping Centre

This all day event took place on 7<sup>th</sup> October. Easels with visuals for the proposed design of Academy Street and the two suggested alternative cycle routes (Eastgate Underpass and Falcon Square) along with visuals of potential modifications to the existing High Street cycle route (based on Cycle by Design guidance) were available to see. Garry Smith and Brendan Dougan were on hand from The Highland Council to answer questions, joined by consultants on this project from Whale-like-fish. An estimated 100 people came to the drop-in session including members of the public and businesses from the city centre, mainly High Street, Bridge Street and the Eastgate Shopping Centre.

### Meeting with Lochardil and Drummond Community Council

A presentation and question time on the proposals was held at Green Drive Hall on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022 by Brendan Dougan. This was at the invitation of Lochardil and Drummond Community Council who hosted this as their first agenda item for their September meeting. This was attended by 15 Community Council members and was supplemented by detailed handouts, shared links to the Commonplace portal and contact details for the project team.

### **One-to-one meetings**

The following organisations had individual meetings (in person or over the phone) with representatives from the project team which included Garry Smith, Adam Sutherland and Brendan Dougan from The Highland Council and/or Helen Ross and Eilidh Marshall from Whale-like-fish:

- Stagecoach
- Marks and Spencer

- Eastgate Shopping Centre
- Inverness Taxis
- Shopmobility Inverness
- Alzheimer's Scotland
- Boots

### **Coverage in local media**

In total, three press releases were issued to local media during the consultation period and one journalist from the Inverness Courier attended an event (Velocity café in August).

35 pieces of coverage have appeared in local media including:

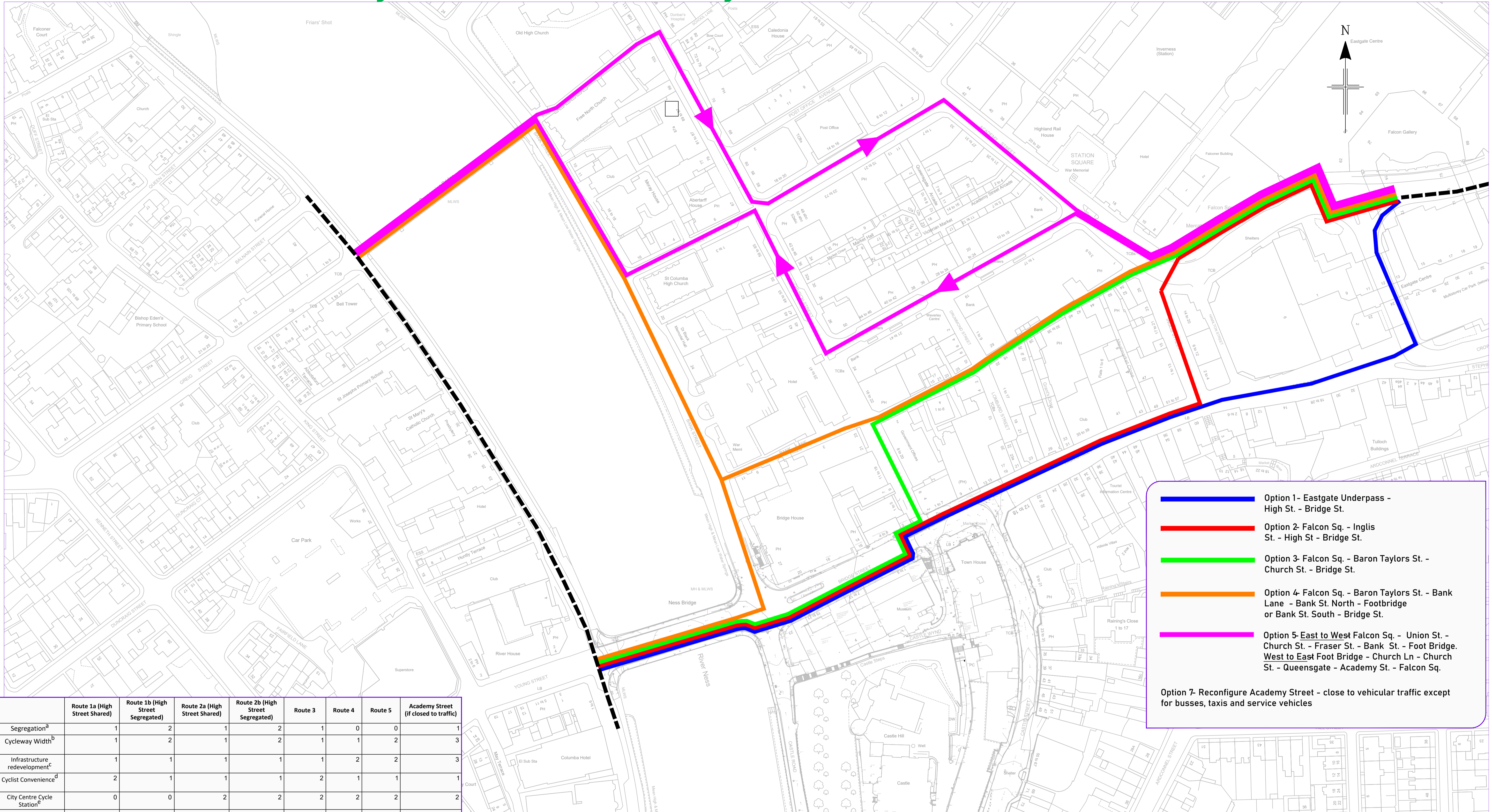
- The Inverness Courier
- The Press & Journal
- The Highland News
- The Highland Times
- BBC Radio Scotland (Highlands and Islands bulletin)

Links to online coverage can be found here and copies of articles that appeared in print are available upon request:

- <https://thehighlandtimes.com/views-being-sought-on-proposed-designs-for-academy-street/>
- <https://www.inverness-courier.co.uk/news/views-sought-on-proposed-designs-for-academy-street-281228/>
- <https://www.inverness-courier.co.uk/news/poll-what-do-you-think-of-proposed-designs-for-academy-stre-281303/>
- <https://www.inverness-courier.co.uk/news/plans-unveiled-for-the-800-000-revamp-of-academy-street-in-281330/>
- <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/highlands-islands/4535899/academy-street-inverness-sustrans-highland-council/>
- <https://www.ross-shirejournal.co.uk/news/plans-unveiled-for-the-800-000-revamp-of-academy-street-in-281469/>
- <https://www.ross-shirejournal.co.uk/news/poll-what-do-you-think-of-proposed-designs-for-academy-stre-281470/>
- <https://www.inverness-courier.co.uk/news/plans-unveiled-for-the-800-000-revamp-of-academy-street-in-281404/>
- <https://www.inverness-courier.co.uk/news/watch-inverness-businesses-give-their-views-281580/>
- <https://www.inverness-courier.co.uk/news/interactive-graph-plots-how-the-public-are-beginning-to-get-281551/>
- <https://www.inverness-courier.co.uk/news/visualisation-check-out-the-before-and-after-of-academy-str-281714/>
- <https://www.inverness-courier.co.uk/news/questions-over-new-academy-street-layout-amid-hundreds-of-co-281725/>

- <https://www.inverness-courier.co.uk/news/revamp-plans-for-academy-street-well-received-by-firms-281728/>
- <https://www.inverness-courier.co.uk/news/poll-results-overwhelming-majority-back-the-planned-overhaul-282097/>
- <https://www.inverness-courier.co.uk/news/public-feedback-sought-over-city-cycle-route-changes-285580/>
- <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/highlands-islands/4709743/highland-council-garner-public-opinion-on-cycle-route-proposals/>
- <https://thehighlandtimes.com/public-invited-to-events-about-proposed-city-centre-cycle-route/>
- <https://www.highland.gov.uk/news/article/14753/public-invited-to-events-about-proposed-city-centre-cycle-route>
- <https://soundcloud.com/bbc-highlands/highland-bulletin-1730-260822>
- <https://www.inverness-courier.co.uk/news/public-views-given-on-cycle-proposals-286855/>
- <https://thehighlandtimes.com/drop-in-event-for-proposed-city-centre-cycle-route-to-be-held-at-eastgate-shopping-centre/>
- <https://www.inverness-courier.co.uk/news/drop-in-event-for-proposed-city-centre-cycle-route-289535/>
- <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/inverness/4868122/highland-council-hosts-further-information-event-for-city-centre-cycle-route-proposals/>
- <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/inverness/4922224/half-a-billion-pounds-earmarked-for-inverness-city-vision-projects/>

# Places for Everyone - Academy Street



- █ Option 1- Eastgate Underpass - High St. - Bridge St.
- █ Option 2- Falcon Sq. - Inglis St. - High St. - Bridge St.
- █ Option 3- Falcon Sq. - Baron Taylors St. - Church St. - Bridge St.
- █ Option 4- Falcon Sq. - Baron Taylors St. - Bank Lane - Bank St. North - Footbridge or Bank St. South - Bridge St.
- █ Option 5- East to West Falcon Sq. - Union St. - Church St. - Fraser St. - Bank St. - Foot Bridge. West to East Foot Bridge - Church Ln - Church St. - Queensgate - Academy St. - Falcon Sq.
- - - - - Option 7- Reconfigure Academy Street - close to vehicular traffic except for busses, taxis and service vehicles

	Route 1a (High Street Shared)	Route 1b (High Street Segregated)	Route 2a (High Street Shared)	Route 2b (High Street Segregated)	Route 3	Route 4	Route 5	Academy Street (if closed to traffic)
Segregation <sup>a</sup>	1	2	1	2	1	0	0	1
Cycleway Width <sup>b</sup>	1	2	1	2	1	1	2	3
Infrastructure redevelopment <sup>c</sup>	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	3
Cyclist Convenience <sup>d</sup>	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1
City Centre Cycle Station <sup>e</sup>	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2
Funding (Sustrans) <sup>f</sup>	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>

## Cycleway - Alternatives

--- Existing Cycle route

a) 2 points for fully segregated, 1 point for segregated in parts or shared with busses/taxis, 0 point for no segregation  
 b) 3 points for full width achieved (3m width for 300 cycles per hour 2 way), 2 point minimum for minimum achieved (2m width for 300 cycles per hour 2 way), 1 point for shared use with pedestrians, 0 points for less than minimum widths  
 c) 3 points for minimal redevelopment - i.e. signage and road markings, 2 point for minor redevelopment i.e. kerbing, surfacing, signage and road markings, 1 point for major redevelopment i.e. road realignment, traffic signals, utility works, kerbing, surfacing, signage and road markings  
 d) 3 points for under 5 stops (pedestrian crossings or traffic lights), 2 points for 5 to 10 stops, 1 point for over 10 stops  
 e) 2 points for provision of cycle station, 0 points for no cycle station  
 f) 3 points opportunity to be funded through Sustrans funding bid, 0 points not likely to obtain external funding



07 November 2022

Dear Members,

### **Places for Everyone funding conditions for 'Accessing Inverness', Academy Street**

The aspiration of the 'Accessing Inverness' project is to create appropriate active travel infrastructure through Inverness. Sustrans Places for Everyone-funded infrastructure designs must follow the street user hierarchy as set out by the Scottish Government, prioritising walking, wheeling, and cycling above private motor vehicles. Designs must also follow best practice guidelines including Cycling by Design and Roads for All.

Currently, Academy Street designs improve walking provision but prioritise motor vehicles above cycles, although this arrangement does not follow the Scottish Government street user hierarchy. An award condition set by Places for Everyone was therefore to provide an alternative cycle route through Inverness city centre. High Street was identified as the most suitable corridor, in light of the fact that Academy Street was not an available option.

Although High Street is currently part of the National Cycle Network, it does not meet current best practice. With an increasing population, and as one of the most visited cities in the UK, there is high conflict between people walking, wheeling, and cycling. According to research available in Cycling by Design, in a shared city centre space, people walking, wheeling, and cycling may come into conflict up to every 18 seconds, and at least every 3 minutes. The shared space also has significant equalities implications, as reiterated by multiple Highland accessibility groups in their report, [Putting Inverness Streets Ahead](#).

The most appropriate provision for active travel on the High Street, if this remains the only option for cycle provision, would be to formally segregate people walking and wheeling from people cycling. In addition, segregated cycle provision would also need to extend to Ness Bridge at Huntly Street to complete the corridor.

This would include reallocating space, and changing the kerbing, surfacing, signage, lining, drainage, amongst other details. This would all require an extensive options appraisal which would have implications for the overall Inverness City Active Travel Network programme.

A more appropriate option to provide safe and direct provision for cycling would be to revisit Academy Street which could then remove the condition to provide an alternative corridor on High Street. In this circumstance, Places for Everyone would welcome a further application to improve provision on the High Street as a separate project.

Kind regards,

Emily Gait

Places for Everyone Grant Manager



View west towards Victorian Market Entrance



View west at Filling Station