

## The George Street Trial – what it is & where it has come from...

On 29 October 2013 the Transport & Environment Committee of the City of Edinburgh Council gave approval for the introduction of a one way system on George Street, as an initial 12 month experiment, following on from the success of a similar experiment in last year's Festival. There will also be a two way cycle path and additional space for pedestrians and local businesses to use. These measures will be implemented using a 12 month Experimental Traffic Regulation Order.

A public consultation will begin in week commencing 17 March(ought to start 21/3/14), and will run for three weeks. A link to the consultation will be available online when the consultation begins.

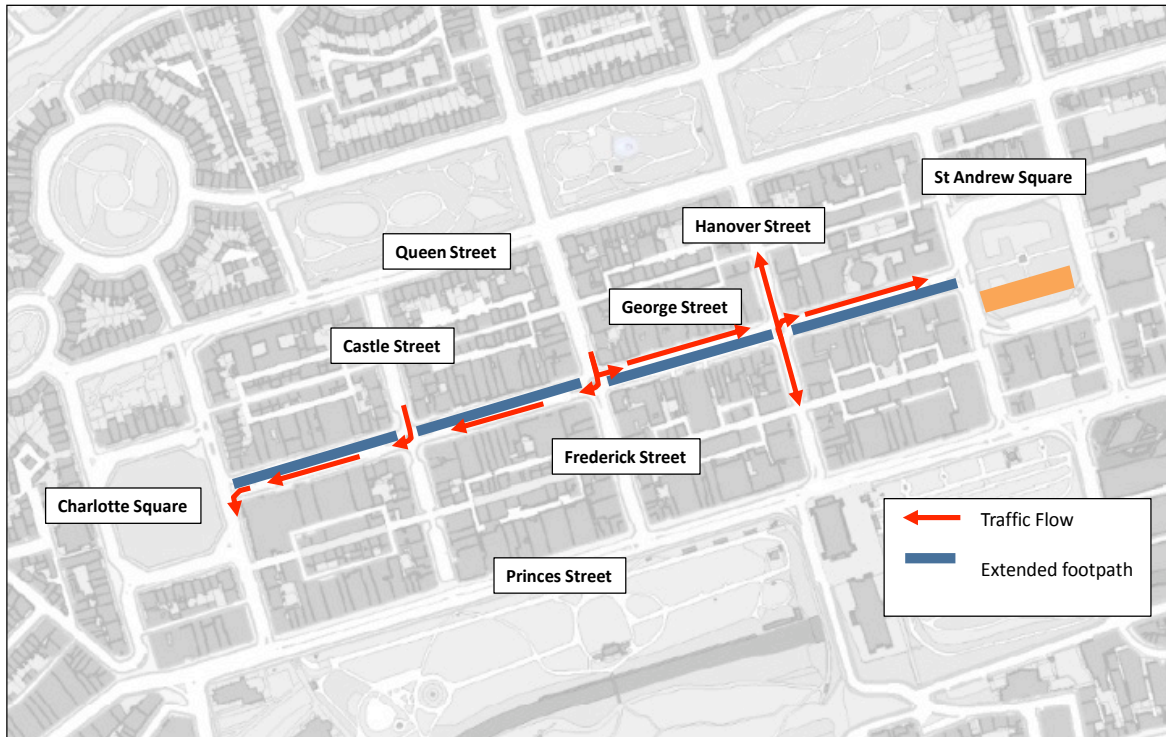
### **What's proposed for the street:**

Traffic will still be able to move on one side of George Street. Starting at Frederick Street, all traffic will be able to travel eastbound (towards St Andrew Square) on the north side of the street, for example in front of the Opal Lounge & the George Hotel.

Traffic will be able to move westbound from Frederick Street to Charlotte Square on the south side of the street, travelling in front of Hollister and the Roxburghe Hotel for example.

The other side of the street will be closed to traffic (for example in front of the Dome, the Assembly Rooms, Cento Tre and Tigerlily). The non-traffic side of the street will be a mix of pedestrianised space and a 2 way cycle path. [\(please see traffic flow map, below\)](#)

## George Street – One Way Traffic Proposal : Traffic flow



### What you will notice...

**Cyclists** will notice the introduction of a dedicated two-way cycle path, travelling the length of George Street. If the 12 month experiment is successful this would become part of the National Cycle Network. The cycle lane will be on the pedestrianised side of the street, and will be located in the lane that is currently a traffic lane closest to the central reservation car parking area.

**Car parking** will be maintained in the centre of the street, on a drive-in reverse-out basis, and will broadly retain the existing levels of residents' permit bays, motor cycle parking, disabled bays and pay-and-display parking. Rubber kerbs will be introduced at ground level to prevent cars nudging into the adjacent cycle lane. Attractive planters will also be used to separate parking from cycling space, and (importantly for many) there will be no metal barriers used on the street.

**Pedestrians and shoppers** will notice that there is more pedestrian space on each of the four blocks. This pedestrianised space will be used similarly to how it was during the Edinburgh Festival last summer, as a space for people to walk, for exhibitions, public art, performance, and decking to support an emerging café culture in the street. The Council's proposal is purely about the plan to pedestrianise the space, not its precise use. Any businesses wanting to use this space will need to apply for planning and licensing permissions separately, requiring separate consultations.

**Local Businesses** will notice that loading to premises on the pedestrianised sides of the street will be accommodated mainly from the centre of the street (from 7-10am), or from the lanes where businesses have an existing lane access. Kerbside loading facilities will also be provided on the live carriageway side of the street and these would be available to businesses on either side of the street. This is broadly in line with the one month experiment during the Festival in 2013. Some pay-and-display parking spaces will be reserved for loading from 7-10, becoming parking spaces from 10am onwards. The central reservation will be permeable, allowing for easy access for shoppers and pedestrians. No metal barriers will be used, just attractive planters and rubber kerbs.

**Local Residents** will notice that all existing residents' parking bays have been maintained in the design. The impact on traffic in the local area will be constantly monitored throughout the trial.

**Bus services** Most bus services will be maintained on their present routes. Lothian Buses services' 41 & 42 westbound will be the main local services that are required to re-route, and discussions are ongoing to find an acceptable solution. Services run by Stagecoach, FirstBus and CityLink that previously stopped at the Dome or Assembly Rooms will now re-route via either Queen Street or Princes Street. The Council will work closely with all bus providers and passengers to ensure that any route changes are fully advertised and explained.

**All interested groups** will have the opportunity to participate in an ongoing evaluation & monitoring process. Because this is being run as an experiment the Council will commission a passenger survey, that will help inform future transport decisions in the city centre. The views, ideas and experiences of all interested groups will be sought throughout the 12 months of the experiment and shape the use of the street. Any clear issues that emerge can be addressed during the 12 month experiment.

A Road Safety Audit will be undertaken on the final design, once consultation feedback and comments have been taken into account and shaped the design process. The one way system ought to be in place in July 2014, and will run from this year's Festival until next summer's Festival in 2015.

Examples of research activities & questions people would like to see included in the research:

- Traffic counts to take place in May 2014 (to establish a baseline of traffic movement in the city centre at a time when trams are running at their full timetable)
- Traffic counts to take place in principal streets and on surrounding residential streets so that the impact of any displacement of traffic may be monitored frequently (at least monthly).
- Traffic counts to take place on George Street, Frederick Street, Castle Street, Hanover Street, the Mound, Queen Street, York Place, St Andrew Square, Charlotte Square, Heriot Row, Abercomby Place, Albany Street, Drummond Place, Great King Street, St Colme Street.
- The current entry and exit arrangements for general traffic on George Street are not going to change by much from the current arrangements (for example exit-only at Charlotte Square, will remain as it is, with a reinstatement of recent exit-only arrangements at St Andrew Sq)

- This is not expected to create significant or noticeable traffic displacement. However, if the modelling is proved incorrect, and if there is significant displacement such as happened when York Place was closed during tram works, then the above approach will capture this impact very quickly. It will highlight the impact when compared with the agreed baseline data from May 2014, and will allow the Council to move quickly to put alternative arrangements in place to rectify the situation.
- Other questions people would like to see raised:
  - Car Parking on George Street – how far would people be prepared to walk?
  - Bus passengers – where do people move round the city centre, any changes required?
  - Taxis – location of ranks
  - Cyclists – experiences of the cycle path, cycle storage
  - Pedestrians – use of the new space, especially castle st to st andrew square: public art?
  - Businesses – customer parking, customer access, permeability, attractiveness of the street