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ITP/14042/Consultation

Consultation on the proposed changes to Lower High St.,Watford

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes.

We welcome the proposals, as having the ability to cycle the full length of the High St. has been a leading issue for SPOKES members for the last 15 years.

We have supported the issues raised in the South West Hertfordshire Cycling Study & believe for a traditional town centre to continue attracting people it must be attractive, friendly, easily accessible and not congested. Street clutter should be kept to a minimum, particularly with railings & signs.

We believe pedestrians & cyclists & disabled people should have a priority over motor vehicles, car-parking should be in official car-parks, but all parties should be catered for.

On behalf of SPOKES (a local cycling group with over 200 members) I make the following comments.

1. We support the proposal to have a contra flow cycling lane southward down the High St from Kings St. to the Ring Road. Vehicle parking should not be allowed on the east side at any time. The cycle route through the junction at Water Lane should be level with the road & separate to that for pedestrians.
2. At the junction with the Ring Road we do not believe it is sensible to mix pedestrians & cyclists at the Toucan crossings. We suggest cyclists should be able to cross the Ring Road in the bus lanes, as there are low traffic volumes crossing the Ring Road. This would prevent conflict with pedestrians & save money.
3. South of the ring road, on the Lower High St. east side we note the proposal to have a shared use footway. This road is lightly used, but the walkway heavily used. We suggest cyclists could be safely accommodated on the road with a no-parking restriction. We would only be happy with a shared use path if it were at least 4.2metres wide and at stepped levels. Consideration would have to be given to moving the bus stop or arranging a safe way around it, conforming to current good practice. Consideration should be given to a 20mph limit on this road as this would allow safer cycling, with little inconvenience to motorists.

4. For the Lower High St. west side we suggest cycling should be on the road, which should have parking restrictions & a 20mph limit. We are not convinced that using the service road & Toucan crossings is sensible, as this would cause conflict with pedestrians. It is safer to use the restricted bus lane. This will also be cheaper to install.
5. No comment.
6. No comment.
7. We agree that King St. should become 20mph (as all roads within the Ring Road should be) Consideration should also be given to having a contra flow cycle lane in the easterly direction from a Toucan Crossing on the ring road by Ladies Close.

Additional suggestions

- a. Consideration should be given to making the parallel footway to the Ring Road from High St. Station to Ladies Close into a shared use path.
- b. At the junction on the Lower High St. with Local Board Rd. (NCR6) the existing arrangement does not serve cyclists or motorists well, so we suggest extending the shared use path on the east side to the Tesco junction, as this is opposite Local Board Rd. & often used by cyclists, as the Toucan Crossing is clumsy & time consuming to use.

In making these comments we note the guidance in the following documents:
Sustrans – Handbook for cycle-friendly design.
Cyclenation – Making space for cycling.
Dept. for Transport – Local Transport Notes 1/08 & 2/08.

I hope you find these comments useful. I would like to discuss these issues further, as they are considered crucial for future cycling in Watford.

Roger Bangs

for SPOKES South West Hertfordshire Cycling Group