

Edinburgh Tram Inquiry Office Use Only

Witness Name: Stuart Conway HAY

Dated: 9/11/16

THE EDINBURGH TRAM INQUIRY  
Witness Statement of Stuart Conway HAY

Statement taken by Raymond Gray on 11 October 2016.

My full name is Stuart Conway HAY. I am aged 40, my date of birth being [REDACTED]. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

My current occupation is a Director with Living Streets Scotland, which is a registered national charity.

Statement:

1. I am currently employed as a Director with Living Streets, 5 Rose Street, Edinburgh. I have been with Living Streets as a Director since 2014. Living Streets is part of a national charity. We are involved in promoting walking to reduce congestion and pollution. The charity also strives to be active in local projects where walking areas can be improved for pedestrians. Living Streets is subscribed to by local activists and volunteers who assist with collating information in respect of pedestrian issues with roadways.
2. Living Streets would not actively look to become involved in a project such as the trams. It would look to engage in the consultation process to highlight the needs of pedestrians and the effect work may have on them. As I was not employed with Living Streets at this time I had no contact with the Trams Project in an official capacity either through the consultation period or local meetings. I am aware that my predecessor Keith Irving did have some contact with both City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) and the Tram Project.

Aside from media reports concerning Living Streets comments on specific design issues with North St Andrews Street. I could not comment further on any dialogue or outcomes as this information is not known to me.

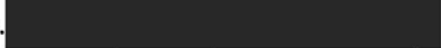
3. As an Edinburgh resident I was aware of the Edinburgh Tram Project since the beginning of the consultation process. I am not sure of the exact period when this process began. I was supportive of the tram project as it offered an alternative transport facility and was environmentally friendly. I had an expectation that the tram system would incorporate the need for suitable pedestrian access and egress to and from the tram stops.
4. When I joined Living Streets in 2014 the tram project had been completed. I did however have concerns regarding the layout of a number of the stops on the tram route. In addition I wanted to identify the effect, if any, the trams had on pedestrian crossings along the tram route. I ascertained that a number of pedestrian crossings were impacted by their proximity to tram stops. These crossings were situated close to the stops at York Place, St Andrews Square and Princes Street. It appeared to me that there was a bias towards the trams and they were being given precedence over all other road users. A number of our activists volunteered to undertake studies in relation to the time pedestrians were held by the stop signal at crossings on the tram route. Two examples of this, at York Place and Waverley Bridge, ascertained times of 3 minutes 40 seconds and 4 minutes 19 seconds respectively for the stop sign to change in favour of pedestrians whilst trams were passing or approaching. In my experience this encourages risky behaviour by pedestrians who become frustrated and take chances crossing when it is potentially not safe to do so.
5. In relation to the actual tram stops I feel that these were badly designed for access by pedestrians given that 80% to 90% of users would be walking to the stop. This does not seem to have been considered at the planning stage. There are also a number of issues with egress from the trams. It appears very little, if any, consideration has been given to passengers routes from the

trams. An example of this is at Bankhead, in the west of Edinburgh where passengers must navigate multiple staggered crossings to reach key destinations. At Gyle Central there is a lack of direct walkways leading from the stop to key destinations. This has caused the creation of manmade paths on the grass areas (deleted) due to passenger foot fall as people alight from trams and walking to their destinations.

6. There are also failings in the actual locations of a number of tram stops. The Gyle Shopping Centre stop is a prime example of this given its lack of proximity to the main entrance. Passengers must navigate through a car park but the route has not been well signposted. Walking routes to the trams could also be better publicised in key destinations such as Edinburgh College and the Sighthill Napier University Campus. This is another missed opportunity to encourage to car users to use a cleaner form of travel to tackle congestion and pollution. The availability of convenient free parking in close proximity to these destinations makes walking to the tram stops comparatively less attractive than continuing to travel by car.
7. I am of the opinion that the trams project did not use resources that were available to them in respect of potentially better services for pedestrians and the improvement of streets more generally. Around 2010 the Scottish Government produced a policy document named 'Designing Streets'. This provided guidance as to what factors should be considered by planners when altering or designing new streets in terms of both place making and movement. I see very little, if any, evidence that the trams project used this guidance during the construction of the tram line. I would hope that if, as proposed, the line is extended down Leith Walk this policy is adopted. There is also a need to consider the location of cycle routes such as on North St Andrews Street where insufficient pedestrian space results in people straying onto the fast downhill cycle lane. This conflict was flagged to the tram designers but the concerns of Living Streets were not addressed.

8. Sheffield is an example of where a tram system similar to Edinburgh was constructed. In Sheffield the tram is better integrated into key city centre pedestrian areas. There many examples on the continent where trams function more sympathetically with the pedestrian environment. Access to tram stops is easier with fewer roads to cross via multiple-stage controlled crossings. I believe that the tram designers were intent on taking forward a engineering project, and failed to properly understand the street environment and the needs of pedestrians, including those seeking to board trams. This narrow approach to design was flawed in its lack of focus on 'place making' and regenerating streets.
  
9. As a director with Living Streets I periodically attend meetings with the roads and traffic management departments in Edinburgh. I also have meetings with local councillors from time to time. On occasions nonspecific issues for pedestrians in respect of the trams may be highlighted. These matters are generally acknowledged during these meetings and I would say I have a good relationship with councillors and officers. However, the scopes to address some of the more fundamental issues with the street design are difficult to resolve. Living Streets Edinburgh local group continues to press for improvements to crossing times on Princes Street and York Place, but so far the council has either been unable or unwilling to give pedestrians appropriate priority in terms of waiting and crossing times.
  
10. In conclusion I am very supportive of the tram project and what it has provided in relation to an alternative and high volume mode of public transport access to the city centre. I do think the on street design could have been much better in terms of providing safe and convenient access to stops. This is especially prevalent in the city centre but similar issues are also visible at Bankhead, the Gyle Central and Gyle Shopping Centre. The evidence I have provided to the enquiry is to help record the failings in the approach to pedestrian movement requirements, so that future projects can learn key lessons.

I confirm that the facts to which I attest in this witness statement, consisting of this and the preceding four pages are within my direct knowledge and are true. Where they are based on information provided to me by others, I confirm that they are true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

Witness signature. .

Date of signing..... 9 / 11 / 16

