

SURVEY OF 'GREEN MAN' WAITING TIMES AND 'GREEN MAN' PHASE LENGTHS

(ORIGINAL REPORT OCTOBER 2020; *TABLES SINCE UPDATED*)

Living Streets Edinburgh Group (LSEG) has for years been concerned about the long waiting times at many pedestrian crossings across the city, as this can discourage 'everyday walking' – and can be a road safety risk. This concern has come into stronger perspective with (i) the new National Transport Strategy's 'Sustainable Travel Hierarchy' which makes pedestrians and other pavements users the top priority on our streets, and (ii) the need for Covid-19 social distancing and the associated 'Spaces for People' programme. Many of the most crowded pavements are those at signalled crossing points, where pedestrians gather, waiting to cross. A commitment to explore enhanced pedestrian priority at pedestrian crossings was made in the initial 'Spaces for People' report of 14 May 2020, but we have seen no further mention of this in reports since.

LSEG volunteers have undertaken surveys of 10 pedestrian crossings at signalled traffic intersections and 13 'mid-block' pedestrian crossings at various locations in north and south Edinburgh. The results in the two tables on pages 3-6 illustrate:

- an enormous variation in **maximum Green Man (GM) waiting times at signalled traffic intersections** (from c. 25 seconds to c. 285 seconds) – even allowing for possible crossing mechanism faults, the variation suggest significant inconsistencies and failings in relation to (a) meeting pedestrian demand / footfall, (b) road traffic v. pedestrian volumes, and (c) the need for social distancing at waiting points on narrow pavements;
- an enormous variation in **maximum Green Man (GM) waiting times at mid-block crossings** (from c. 15 seconds to c. 95 seconds, excluding one outlier which may reflect a crossing mechanism fault) – the variation suggests significant inconsistencies and failings in relation to (a) meeting pedestrian demand / footfall, (b) road traffic v. pedestrian volumes, (c) the need for social distancing at waiting points on narrow pavements, and (d) the previously understood Department for Transport guideline that mid-block crossings should not involve a wait longer than 30 seconds (for safety reasons);
- as regards the **length of the GM phase at signalled traffic intersections**, this was consistently only c. 6-8 seconds, which is an exceedingly short period for less mobile people to cross the road – and does not appear to reflect the varying widths of carriageway to be crossed;
- as regards the **length of the GM phase at mid-block crossings**, this was consistently only c. 15-17 seconds (including the flashing GM phase where applicable, and as little as 8 seconds for green man only), which is a very short period for less mobile people to cross the road – and does not appear to reflect the varying widths of carriageway to be crossed.

Our conclusions from this necessarily quick survey are as follows:

1. The pattern of GM waiting times at both signalised traffic intersections and mid-block crossings has presumably evolved over many years, and, perhaps partly as a result, is now highly inconsistent – and in a significant number of cases involves an unreasonable length of waiting time, both in terms of walking convenience and road safety. Some of the busiest footfall crossings have very low volumes of vehicle movements (eg Leith Street), but this is not reflected in the waiting times.
2. It is clear that the GM waiting times as a whole should be thoroughly reviewed and overhauled in the light of the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy and the need for social distancing, and we would expect GM waiting times in general to be substantially reduced. These should also be geared better to the pattern of footfall, eg when school students are out on the streets (before school, after school and at lunch times - for example, the longest wait time at Gilmore Place/Viewforth junction was Friday lunchtime, when pavements were full of Boroughmuir HS children).
3. While the lengths of the GM phase at signalled traffic intersections and at mid-block crossings are generally consistent, they are often too short – and should generally be lengthened (as well as account being taken of the varying widths of road to be crossed).
4. Pedestrian crossing mechanism faults would be less of a problem if these could be detected automatically and quickly rectified.

Living Streets Edinburgh Group

UPDATE October 2021:

In response to public interest, we have updated and significantly added to the following tables and comments. We will continue to add more records of signal timings as we receive them. If you would like to record the crossing times at a junction or pedestrian crossing, please look at the 'Methodology' following the tables and send us what you find!

Thanks to our volunteers for providing us with the information in the tables, including Claire, Margaret and especially Hilda!

Location description	Crossing type	Auto-mated?	Maximum waiting time for GM	Length of GM phase (approx)	Date	Time of day	Notes
<i>Crossings at signalled traffic intersections</i>							
Leith Street/Calton Road	Traffic signals	No	c. 285 seconds	not recorded	Saturday 12/9/20	11.00	Needs automating? Very busy but people not pressing button for green man?? [since fixed]
Great Junction Street (Foot o' the Walk)	Traffic signals	No	110 seconds	6 seconds	Saturday 14/11/20	12.00	Very busy crossing to Kirkgate
South St David's Street at Princes St	Traffic signals	yes	100 seconds	10 seconds	Friday 20/11/2020	12.30	
Leith Street/Greenside Row	Traffic signals	No	c. 105 seconds	not recorded	Saturday 12/9/20	11.00	
Howard St (Inverleith Road)	Traffic signals	Yes (?)	c. 100 seconds	6 seconds	Friday 25/9/20	13.00	
EyrePl/RodneySt/Broughton Rd/Canonmills	Traffic signals	Yes	c. 100 seconds	6 seconds	Friday 25/9/20	12.00	

Clermiston Road at St John's Road	Traffic signals	?	88 seconds	5 seconds	tbc	tbc	tbc
Ferry Road/Granton Road (south side to refuge)	Traffic signals	No	c. 85- 65 seconds	6 seconds	Friday 25/9/20	13.00	No pedestrian crossing across Ferry Rd on western arm
Kerr St/Hamilton Place/Saunders St	Traffic signals	Yes	c. 75 seconds	8 seconds	Sunday 20/9/20	10.00	
Leslie place/Deanhaugh	Traffic signals	Yes	c. 75 seconds	8 seconds	Sunday 20/9/20	10.15	
Gilmore Place/Viewforth	Traffic signals	No	c. 60 seconds	6 seconds	Friday 25/9/20	13.30	Very busy with Boroughmuir/Bruntsfield schoolchildren
Gilmore Place/Viewforth	Traffic signals	No	c. 40 seconds	6 seconds	Monday 21/9/20	16.00	
Gilmore Place/Viewforth	Traffic signals	No	c. 25 seconds	c. 6 seconds	Sunday 20/9/20	15.00	
High Street/South Bridge	Traffic signals	Yes	30 seconds / 60 seconds (alternating)	10 seconds	Sunday 28/2/21	13.00	no traffic entering/exiting to the west (uphill) part of the Royal Mile: Green Man should be on permanently?
South Bridge / Chambers Street / Infirmary Street	Traffic signals	Yes	105 s	15 s	Tuesday 9/2/21	9.30	No audio
South Clerk Street / Bernard Terrace / Hope Park Terrace	Traffic signals	No	75 s	8 s	Tuesday 9/2/21	10.00	Sign says automated - but it was not
South Clerk Street / West Preston Street / East Preston Street	Traffic signals	No	234 s	6 s	Tuesday 9/2/21	10.15	Sign says automated - but it was not
Causewayside / West Preston Street / Lord Russell Place	Traffic signals	Yes	114 s	8 s	Tuesday 9/2/21	10.30	

Summerhall / Melville Drive / Hope Park Terrace	Traffic signals	No	197 s	11 s	Tuesday 9/2/21	10.45	No audio
Brougham Street / Home Street corner (Tollcross)	Traffic signals	Yes	87 s	26 s	Saturday 13/2/21	10.00	No audio
Home Street / Tollcross (west side)	Traffic signals	Yes	72 s	41 s	Saturday 13/2/21	10.00	Island
West Tollcross	Traffic signals	Yes	105 s	8 s	Saturday 13/2/21	10.30	No audio
West Tollcross	Traffic signals	Yes	92 s	8 s	Monday 15/2/21	15.45	No audio
Earl Grey Street (south end) / Tollcross (west side)	Traffic signals	Yes	92 s	8 s	Monday 15/2/21	15.30	Island
Earl Grey Street (south end) / Tollcross (east side)	Traffic signals	Yes	60 s	40 s	Monday 15/2/21	15.30	No audio
Lauriston Place / Tollcross (north side)	Traffic signals	Yes	90 s	10 s	Monday 15/2/21	15.30	No audio
Lauriston Place / Tollcross (south side)	Traffic signals	Yes	50 s	50 s	Monday 15/2/21	15.30	No audio
Brougham Street (north end) / Tollcross	Traffic signals	Yes	83 s	17 s	Thursday 18/02/21	10.15	No audio
Earl Grey Street	Traffic signals	-	-	-	Saturday 27/2/21	10.00	No pedestrian crossing lights
Fountainbridge / Lothian Road	Traffic signals	Yes	70 s	42 s	Saturday 27/2/21	10.00	No audio
Lothian Road / Fountain-bridge	Traffic signals	Yes	90 s	22 s	Saturday 27/2/21	10.15	Crossing east to west feels unsafe with traffic from East Fountainbridge passing alongside

East Fountainbridge / Lothian Road	Traffic signals	Yes	36 s	76 s	Saturday 27/2/21	10.30	No audio
Lothian Road / Morrison Street / Bread Street (south side of junction)	Traffic signals	Yes	100 s	13 s	Thursday 25/2/21	11.10	No audio
Lothian Road / Morrison Street crossroads:							Five sets of GM lights changing at different times
Morrison Street / Lothian Road	Traffic signals	Yes	63 s	50 s	Thursday 25/2/21	11.00	No audio
Lothian Road / Morrison Street / Bread Street (north side)	Traffic signals	Yes	139 s	14 s	Thursday 25/2/21	10.50	PHC taxi turned left out of Morrison St on red light, driving through Lothian Road GM phase
Bread Street / Lothian Road (north side)	Traffic signals	Yes	102 s	11 s	Thursday 25/2/21	10.40	No audio
Bread Street / Lothian Road (south side)	Traffic signals	Yes	23 s	90 s	Thursday 25/2/21	10.30	No benefit of long GM phase - must still wait for north side Bread Street crossing GM phase
Lothian Road / Princes Street (west side of crossing)	Traffic Signals	Yes	69 s	43 s	Wed. 24/2/21	15.15	Wait on central traffic island for GM phase on east side of crossing.
Lothian Road / Princes Street (east side of crossing)	Traffic signals	Yes	102 s	10 s	Wed. 24/2/21	15.15	No audio
South Charlotte Street (south end)	Traffic signals	Yes	102 s	10 s	Wed. 24/2/21	11.15	See comments below No audio
Princes Street / South Charlotte Street	Traffic signals	Yes	53 s	59 s	Wed. 24/2/21	11.00	When trams pass, GM wait is longer but GM phase does not increase
Princes Street / South Charlotte Street	Traffic signals	Yes	53 s	59 s	Wed. 24/2/21	11.00	When trams pass, GM wait is longer but GM phase does not increase
Princes Street (east end)	Traffic signals	Yes	89 s	24 s	Tuesday 16/2/21	9.45	No audio

North Bridge/Princes Street	Traffic signals	Yes	89 s	24 s	Tuesday 16/2/21	9.30	No audio
Foot of the Walk / Leith Walk / Great Junction Street / Duke Street	Traffic signals	Yes	114 s	6 s	Friday 19/2/21	12.00	All crossings have GM phase simultaneously. Constitution Street closed for tram works
Easter Road / Duke Street	Traffic signals	Yes	111 s	9 s	Friday 19/2/21	12.15	Three crossings with simultaneous GM phase
Lochend Road / Vanburgh Place	Traffic signals	Yes	112 s	8 s	Friday 19/2/21	12.15	Two crossings with simultaneous GM phase, which starts 5 seconds after Easter Road/Duke Street
Great Junction Street / Ferry Road junction:							Five sets of GM lights changing at different times
Great Junction Street (west side of crossing) / Ferry Road	Traffic signals	Yes	63 s	25 s	Friday 26/2/21	11.00	No audio. Two sides of crossing not together
Great Junction Street (east side of crossing) / Ferry Road	Traffic signals	No	261 s	8 s	Friday 26/2/21	11.00	No audio. Two sides of crossing not together
North Junction Street (west side of crossing) / Ferry Road	Traffic signals	Yes	53 s	11 s	Friday 26/2/21	11.15	No audio
North Junction Street (east side of crossing) / Ferry Road	Traffic signals	Yes	43 s	14 s	Friday 26/2/21	11.15	No audio
Coburg Street (west end) / Great Junction Street	Traffic signals	-	-	-	Friday 26/2/21	11.30	No pedestrian crossing lights
Barnton	Traffic signals	to follow					
Portobello Road (north side)	Traffic signals	Yes	71 s	20 s	Mon 8/3/21	11.50	Timings variable
Portobello Road (south side)	Traffic signals	Yes	57 s	54 s	Mon 8/3/21	12.00	

Portobello High St/Brighton Place/Bath Street	Traffic signals	No	82s	6s	Wed 1/09/21	12.45	See comments below
Fairmilehead	Traffic signals	to follow					
Craighleith shopping centre/ Queensferry Road	Traffic signals	Yes	140s	11s	Thursday 16/9/21	14.15	No audio See comments below
South Groathill Rd/Queens- ferry Rd	Traffic signals	Yes	143s	14s	Thursday 16/9/21	14.30	No audio
Meadow Place Road/ Lady- well Rd	Traffic signals	to follow					
Fountainbridge / (west of) Ponton Street	Traffic signals	No	100 s	8 s	Friday 14/5/21	15.00	(Long green man time (60 s +) across Ponton St)
Fountainbridge / (east of) Ponton Stree	Traffic signals	No	100 s	8 s	Friday 14/5/22	15.00	(Long green man time (60 s +) across Ponton St)
Fountainbridge / Semple St (eastward to island)	Traffic signals	No	70 s	N/A	Friday 14/5/23		2 stage crossing off pedestrian desire line to cross Semple St
Jock's Lodge junction	Traffic signals						No audio. Timings vary: possibly de- pends on cameras at junction monitor- ing vehicle flow?
London Road (south side)	Traffic signals	No	98 s	7 s	Mon 8/3/21	11.15	GM phase too short
London Road (north side)	Traffic signals	Yes	43 s	23 s	Mon 8/3/21	11.30	Timings variable
Restalrig Road South	Traffic signals	No	128 s	6 or 7 s	Mon 8/3/21	11.40	Red Man light faulty on east side of crossing - not illuminating (Green Man working ok)
Willowbrae Road	Traffic signals	Yes	92 s	20 to 30 s	Mon 8/3/21	12.10	

Niddrie Mains Road / Craigmillar Castle Road / Peffermill Road / Duddingston Road West	Traffic signals	No	119 s	9 s	Mon 8/3/21	12.30	Audio
<i>'Mid-block' pedestrian crossings</i>							
Ferry Road (at Stewarts Melville Rugby ground)	Puffin	-	c. 265-360+ seconds	-	Friday 25/9/20	13.00	timing abandoned after 6 minutes! Faulty? (Update - since fixed)
St John's Road (White Lady)	Puffin	-	90 seconds	c. 5 seconds	18/11/20	-	
St John's Road (White Lady)	Puffin	-	5 seconds	c. 15 seconds	10/08/21	-	New reading - crossing appears to have been reconfigured (improved!)
St John's Road near Station Road	Pelican	-	80 seconds	c. 6 seconds	18/11/20	-	
Raeburn Place (South of Raeburn Street)	Temporary signal (SGN works)	-	c. 78 seconds	8 seconds	Sunday 20/9/20	10.30	
Morningside Road, south of Morningside Park	Pelican	-	c. 50 seconds	c15 seconds (including flashing GM phase)	Wednesday 16/09/20	12.45	
Morningside Road, south of Falcon Avenue junction	Pelican	-	variable – c. 40 seconds to c. 95 seconds!	c15 seconds (inc flashing GM phase)	Wednesday 16/09/20	13.00	

Morningside Road, south of Springvalley Gardens junction	Pelican	-	c. 40 seconds	c15 seconds (inc flashing GM phase)	Wednesday 16/09/20	13.00	
Comiston Road, at South Morningside Primary	Pelican	-	c. 40 seconds	c17 seconds (including flashing GM phase)	Sunday 27/09/20	12.30	
Comiston Road, north of Comiston Gardens junction	Pelican	-	variable – c. 30 seconds to c. 50 seconds	c17 seconds (including flashing GM phase)	Sunday 27/09/20	12.30	
Bruntsfield Place, north of Bruntsfield Gardens junction	Pelican	-	c. 30 seconds	c. 15 seconds (including flashing GM phase)	Wednesday 16/09/20	11.15	
Bruntsfield Place, north of Whitehouse Loan junction	Puffin	-	c. 25 seconds	c. 15 seconds	Wednesday 16/09/20	11.00	
Bruntsfield Place, south of Leamington Terrace	Puffin	-	c. 25 seconds	c. 15 seconds	Wednesday 16/09/20	11.15	
3 Bellevue Terrace PI (E)	Puffin	-	c. 20 seconds	not recorded	Friday 25/9/20	12.00	
Mansfield PI (E)	Puffin	-	c. 20 seconds	not recorded	Friday 25/9/20	12.00	No audio working
Mary's Place (Raeburn Place)	Puffin	-	c. 13 seconds	c. 8 seconds	Sunday 20/9/20	10.30	
Clifton Terrace (Haymarket)	Puffin	-	c. 100 seconds	not recorded	Friday 25/7/21	9.15	

Fishwives Causeway/Sir Harry Lauder Road	Toucan	-	27s	5s	Wed 1/09/21	14.00	vehicles observed going through red light
Ferry Road (east end)	Puffin crossing	No	0 s	n/a	Friday 26/2/21	11.30	GM phase lasts as long as it takes to cross the road

Volunteer Comments

Tollcross, Lothian Road, S Charlotte St, Princes St (E) Updated February 2021

From east side to west side of Tollcross is a walk of about 85 paces. However to cross from the corner of Brougham Street / Lauriston Place to West Tollcross takes up to 3 minutes 45 seconds (225 seconds) because each crossing has different Green Man phases. To walk from Lauriston Place / Brougham Street to Earl Grey Street (Methodist Central Hall) took 4 minutes 50 seconds (290 seconds). This is a distance of only 90 paces.

Crossing the north end of Home Street at Tollcross necessitates being stuck on a small traffic island in the middle of the road for 37 seconds, surrounded by traffic moving in both directions, waiting for GM phase (crossing from east to west). At no point are both sides of this crossing illuminated with Green Man (in Green Man phase).

At the south end of Earl Grey Street, Tollcross it took 2 minutes 7 seconds (127 seconds) to traverse, because the crossings either side of the central island are on a different phase. The distance is only 30 paces. The longest wait is crossing from west to east: people on foot are stuck on the central island awaiting the east side Green Man phase.

West Tollcross requires a wait of up to 1 minute 45 seconds to cross a distance of just 10 paces. The pavement outside Omni Pharmacy on the south side of the crossing is too narrow and becomes congested with people waiting to cross.

The traffic signals for vehicles joining Lothian Road from Morrison Street seem unclear and confusing for motorists. The sequence of signals is that firstly the middle lane (straight ahead) gets a green arrow and the main lights stay red. Then the main lights go green and vehicles turning left or right may proceed. Within one minute of arriving at the crossroads, I witnessed a motor car (PHC taxi) driving through while the main lights were red, unaware that the green arrow was for vehicles travelling ahead only. This vehicle turned left and drove straight across the GM phase of the Lothian Road crossing on the north side of the crossroads. I was in the middle of the crossing at this point, and it was a minor miracle that nobody was injured. Fortunately I could see the vehicle turning because I was facing Morrison Street, but anyone walking in the other direction would not have seen the vehicle.

At the south end of Hope Street near where it joins Queensferry Street, there is a crossing marked on the road but no pedestrian lights. If crossing from outside Ryan's Bar (2-4 Hope Street) it is not possible to see when traffic will start moving from the left, and it is also difficult to see traffic from the right.

The crossing time at the south end of South Charlotte Street is inadequate for the numbers of people wishing to cross. The sequence of the traffic signals here is evidently designed around motor traffic rather than people on foot, since the GM phase at the adjacent Princes Street crossing is much longer, even though more people cross South Charlotte Street than Princes Street at this junction. The long wait between GM phases at South Charlotte Street results in pedestrians losing patience and attempting to cross during the GM wait time, which can be highly dangerous at this busy junction. Similarly, frustrated with the long wait time, people attempt to cross at the Princes Street end of Lothian Road which is extremely hazardous with two lanes of traffic speeding in both directions.

Between Lothian Road and Charlotte Square there are two sets of traffic signals close together. It feels like a race track, with motor vehicles travelling at high speed to 'beat the lights'.

The distance from New Register House to Waverley Gate (2 Waterloo Place) is only 50 paces, yet it takes up to 2 minutes 38 seconds (158 seconds) to traverse because the two crossings are on a different phase at the east end of Princes Street and north end of North Bridge.

Gt Junction Street Updated: 11/08/2021

The junction of Ferry Road with Great Junction Street is busy and unpleasant with heavy lorries from the docks turning the corner of North Junction Street and Ferry Road. The traffic noise and exhaust fumes create a hostile and confusing environment. Vehicles pass extremely close to the pavement corners. There is a miscellany of different types of crossings and phases at this junction.

The distance to walk from one corner of the junction diagonally across to the far corner is about 40 to 50 paces but takes up to 160 seconds due to the multiple crossings and the Ferry Road puffin crossing being situated so far from the junction. The position of the Ferry Road puffin crossing creates a dangerous pinch point for cyclists heading west from Great Junction Street. By the time the cyclist has got as far as the puffin crossing, vehicles from the main traffic lights are trying to squeeze past the cycle at the traffic island bottleneck.

Portobello (Updated September 2021)

Junction of Portobello Road / Seafield Road East / King's Road / Portobello High Street / Sir Harry Lauder Road: At this five-road intersection there are 14 separate pedestrian crossings, all operating on different phases. Total cycle for motor vehicles was 122 to 127 seconds.

Timings of individual crossings do not reflect how long pedestrians have to wait, since the different GM phases make it impossible to cross a whole road in one go. Therefore collected timings for various traverses. Data collected Thursday 2/9/21 from 13.00 to 14.00 and Friday 3/9/21 at 11.30.

Crossing from the corner of Portobello Road and Seafield Road East (Lauder Lodge Care Home) to the south side of Portobello High Street took 5 minutes and 30 seconds; and then 4 minutes and 20 seconds to return. From King's Road (Sugar House Café) to Inchview Terrace (south side) took 5 minutes in either direction. The shortest crossing time on foot was 2 minutes 10 seconds from Inchview Terrace across Seafield Road South to King's Road, however the average crossing time was 3 minutes 52 seconds. These are short distances but hampered by multiple crossings.

An additional complication is that not all of the pedestrian crossings are automated. There is no indication which are automated and which are not, so people may wait longer than necessary because pressing the button usually makes no difference.

There is a particularly dangerous flaw with the timings that means cars sometimes drive through pedestrian crossings while on the GM phase. This happened on the crossing on east half of Sir Harry Lauder Road, which is next to the south-west corner of Portobello High Street.

Vehicles turning right (south) from Portobello Road into Sir Harry Lauder Road drove through pedestrians during the GM phase, possibly because the vehicles came through their signal on amber and did not have time to drive from the end of Portobello Road onto Sir Harry Lauder Road before the pedestrian signal changed to GM phase.

Vehicles heading south from Seafield Road East also drove through pedestrians during their GM phase, partly because traffic was backed up on Sir Harry Lauder Road, causing a tailback at the junction. In these circumstances, pedestrians were on the crossing at the same time as motor vehicles while the GM was illuminated. The same problem occurs on the south-west half crossing of Portobello High Street. This dangerous driving happened several times during the hour of observing the crossing. It would be even worse at peak traffic flows during the morning and evening rush hours. It appears to be exacerbated by vehicles not complying with the amber signal as they leave Portobello Road or Seafield Road East.

Craigleith

Total cycle time varied from 2 minutes 10 seconds to 2 minutes 35 seconds, maybe depending on volume of traffic. Total number of pedestrian crossings - 11

All the pedestrian crossings are automated except at west side of junction where there is a puffin crossing for Queensferry Road. This is 50 metres further away from the junction than the traffic lights.

There is a danger point for pedestrians crossing the entrance to the shopping centre car park, with potential for accident or injury. Cars turning from Craigleith Road into the shopping centre may drive across the green man phase of this junction if they come through their signal too late. Observed several cars driving through the green man phase here, so either the signal timings are wrong or motorists are driving through after their light has changed from green to amber (or red).

(Updated September 2021)

Method:

Maximum wait time for Green Man: seconds from when crossing phase finishes (i.e. Red Man comes on) to next Green Man appearing.

Length of Green Man phase: sounds from Green Man appearing to Green Man going off (ie do not count 'blank' time, or until the time that the light turn green for traffic, which will be longer)