

# One Path BS5 - Bristol and Bath Railway Path design release text only version.

## **Introduction**

One Path BS5 is a collaborative design project for the Bristol and Bath Railway Path. It seeks to address issues that sometimes arise on the very busy 1.5 mile stretch of the path between Clay Bottom and Trinity Street.

The Bristol and Bath Railway Path has been meeting the needs of the local BS5 community for over 40 years. It provides a much-loved inner city greenspace to enjoy, travel, rest, socialise and reflect in.

In recent years, the popularity of the path has led to issues of conflict between some path users. Some people have been put off using the path as it's not felt accessible to them.

Sustrans has been working in partnership with Bristol City Council and the communities using and local to the railway path, to find solutions through this project. It is funded by the Department for Transport.

Through a series of workshops, surveys, online and in-person sessions, we have been working with different communities on the changes they want to see on the path.

The aim of this project is to make the path a safer, more inclusive space, where no one is excluded.

## **Community Vision for the Path**

“We are committed to a Bristol and Bath Railway Path that is a safe space: a park, path and place for all users, by foot or by wheel, enabling healthy lifestyles in a green and biodiverse corridor linking the two cities and communities across the West of England Combined Authority.

We will work with all of the communities who use the Bristol and Bath Railway Path to redesign and reshape it so that its value to people, wildlife, its localities and the region as a whole is enhanced and protected for generations to come.”

## **Context**

The Bristol and Bath Railway Path and its associated land in BS5 is an extremely sensitive and challenging location.

As an important green corridor that passes through a dense area of the inner city, the path has many important functions and uses. All of these functions are valuable, they must be understood and respected in any changes made to the path.

The route of the path has seen many layers of history, change and development that contribute both to its value and its complexity.

The land has been reprofiled extensively since its function as a double-track railway, allowing accesses to

be made at more friendly gradients. Physical development and boundary changes make an impact on the land, constraining options for improving the path in certain locations.

## **Prioritising**

The path welcomes a range of people for many different purposes – from leisure and socialising to neighbourhood journeys and longer commutes. This means that we've had to finely balance the designs to make the path more welcoming for all.

Throughout the engagement for this project we've shared various different design options. We've listened to what the engaged communities told us is most important to them to help us narrow down the options.

This means that the designs we're taking forward will deliver the most important elements at the different sites along the path.

We have worked hard to make sure that the improvements help the path to be more welcoming for everyone. They include better accessibility, signage and wayfinding, extra width at some of the busier sections and new, open sociable spaces.

## **Pattern and place**

We invited children at schools within BS5 to show us what makes their local area special through artwork, stories, photos and other creations. The contributions we received informed the design of signage and other

path features. We were able to reflect the diversity, values and identity of the areas surrounding the path in the new designs.

### **A consistent design language**

It is important that changes to the path help guide how the space is used. From what we learned through speaking to local people, we have developed a 'design language' that is used consistently throughout the project area.

This is to indicate how a space works and where extra awareness and slower speeds are especially appropriate.

Places where people join and leave the path are often busy, so they will be highlighted with a lighter surface colour. This may also help some people with visual impairments to navigate the path. Separate space for walking and cycling will be marked with colour at Clay Bottom and the St. Philip's Causeway Underpass.

Sections of the path leading up to key junctions will have an 'intensifying pattern' arranged on the ground to help people understand their speed and encourage them to slow down on approach to the busiest areas.

### **Ecology: plants, trees and wildlife**

We have worked hard to ensure that there is an overall improvement to ecology (plants, trees and wildlife) through this project.

The 19 trees removed in February 2021 have been replaced by 250 new trees as part of the project. Removal of trees has been kept to a minimum. We have only removed them in locations where physical safety, personal safety or accessibility required it.

Elsewhere, any construction that makes changes within the root zone of a tree will involve a 'no dig' construction method, ensuring the tree remains undisturbed.

No-dig construction is the term used for building above the ground level to leave tree roots undisturbed. This is important both for the trees and for the habitat that they accommodate.

### **Habitat creation**

Sustrans has sponsored the planting of a new area of woodland by One Tree Per Child Bristol. The 250 tree whips form part of the mitigation planting for the wider path improvement works. This is over three times as many replacement trees than are required by the Bristol Tree Replacement Standards.

The woodland planting connects the linear woodland along the Bristol and Bath Railway Path to Coombe Brook Nature Reserve. This improves the green corridor connectivity across the landscape. The new area of woodland has been planted with a mixture of native species.

## **Newtown Park – west**

To welcome visitors and passers-by to the park, we will trim back the hedges at the gateway. This will improve visibility and useable width in this busy space.

Further into the park, a new bench and adjacent hardstanding for wheelchair users or pushchairs will provide an accessible stopping and resting place.

We will highlight junctions with colour changes to indicate to people that more complex movements are likely at these locations, so extra care should be taken. We will also include intensifying patterns that are designed to slow people down at junctions.

## **Newtown Park – east**

The eastern end of Newtown Park will be treated in much the same way as the western end, with highlighted junctions and intensifying patterns.

These changes within Newtown Park are part of a consistent approach in the project area.

They will help to indicate where extra care should be taken, as people joining and leaving the path mix and separate from people continuing along it.

## **St. Philip's Causeway Underpass**

This section of the path avoids the busy main road above with an underpass. The path dips down for the

underpass, with a bend either side. This compromises visibility.

The underpass section of the path is currently separated into a raised pavement section and a lower 'cycleway'.

We will widen the eastern approach to the underpass to improve the line of vision into the tunnel.

Either side of the underpass, the existing bollards will be relocated to reduce the bottleneck issue on approach.

As with other parts of the path, the walkway and cycleway will be delineated more clearly with the use of contrasting coloured surfacing. Junctions will be highlighted to show where people are joining and leaving the path.

### **Lawrence Hill - Kingsmarsh House**

This section of path is heavily constrained by tight boundaries, the proximity of private housing and undulating land. These factors limit the changes we can make here.

We will add a new bench and accessible hardstanding for wheelchair users and pushchairs. This will provide a stopping and resting space, set back from the path.

Highlighted junctions and intensifying patterns will indicate areas where people join and leave the linear path, helping people to be more aware of their speed.

## **Lawrence Hill Bridge**

Here, a very constrained section of the path passes under a road bridge. Either side of the bridge, junctions link the path with the road above.

These junctions and the section beneath the bridge will feature a light-coloured surface. This will make people aware that care should be taken of others joining and leaving the path, changing direction or making unexpected movements. The intensifying pattern will be used to remind people travelling at speed to slow down.

## **East of Lawrence Hill bridge**

East of Lawrence Hill bridge, we will widen the path to 4.5 metres, creating extra space that increases comfort for people using the path at busy times.

We will use a no dig construction technique to widen. This will protect the tree roots that are present underneath substantial portions of the path's current verges. Widening achieves a delicate balance of capacity improvement and protection of existing ecology. We will trim hedgerows and trees won't be affected.

We will construct another accessible place to rest and stop, including space for wheelchairs and pushchairs.

## **Brixton Road**

We will widen the section at Brixton Road, to ease capacity issues during the busiest times. We will use the consistent approach of highlighted junctions, to indicate people are joining and leaving the path here.

We will also use intensifying patterns to help people be aware of their speed and encourage them to slow down.

An accessible place to stop and rest, with space for wheelchairs and pushchairs will provide another opportunity to pause in a series of well-spaced benches.

## **Russell Town Avenue**

Changes to the section at Russell Town Avenue are constrained by the bridge infrastructure crossing a live railway. This defines the width of the path and limits the spatial changes we can make. Although we can't change the bridge structure, we can make changes to colour surfaces and the angles of the path at either end of the bridge span. This will help direct people continuing on the path to the northern half of the bridge, and transform the southern half to be a more suitable access point.

We will rebuild the access connecting Russell Town Avenue to the path. This will reduce the steepness of slopes between street level and the path. This should

particularly help people using a wheelchair, people with mobility impairments, people with pushchairs and people for whom steep gradients are a barrier.

The ramps and junctions will be visually highlighted to indicate that more complex movements are likely and extra care should be taken.

### **Easton Community Centre (Owen Square Park)**

At Easton Community Centre, we will create a space that will feel safer and more welcoming, and improve visibility in all directions. The changes will create a social space, and help people pass more safely through the area. There are more details about this below.

We needed to remove the mound, shelter and trees between the access paths and the main path, this will improve physical and personal safety, and accessibility. You can read more about the 250 new trees we have planted to mitigate the impact of this in the section titled 'Ecology: plants, trees and wildlife'

Easton Community Centre is located a short distance to the north west of the railway path. The new space will sit close to the community centre, complementing it with more space for community and social uses.

Away from the main path alignment, seating and planters will welcome people into the space. This will provide a space to stop, relax, enjoy and socialise. Intensifying patterns on approach to the space, will help indicate that slower speeds are appropriate, and a zone

pattern reflective of the inputs of school children will give the space a unique identity.

### **Battersea Road / Chelsea Park**

Here we will highlight the Battersea Road and Chelsea Park junctions. This will show where people are joining and leaving the path, changing direction as they do so. The intensifying patterns will show where people need extra awareness of their speed.

### **Colston Road & Devon Road Bridge to Whitehall**

On this section of the path we will highlight key junctions and approaches in much the same way as elsewhere within the project area. The path will be widened to 4.5m and we will add a new seating place with hardstanding space for wheelchairs and pushchairs. This will replace the existing bench.

### **Whitehall Crossing**

This section of the path will see some minor changes to help the space work better.

We will create a new arm of the junction for people moving between the Johnson's Road / Whitehall School entrance and the path heading northeast. This will reduce pressure on the existing zebra crossing.

There will also be a new seating area at the entrance near to the school. The junction will be highlighted with a lighter colour to indicate that more complex

movements will take place here, with people joining and leaving the path.

We will use the intensifying patterns again to help people understand their speed and encourage them to slow down.

### **Chocolate Factory**

Because of the neighbouring Chocolate Factory construction site and ecological constraints, it is not possible to make substantial changes to the path along the length of this section. We have, however, shared the design approach with the developers, for their consideration as they look to complete their work.

### **Greenbank Road & Rose Green Road bridge**

In this section, we will widen the path to 4 metres where possible. The widening is limited by the need to retain existing hedges and their wildlife habitat.

We will also highlight all the places where people join and leave the path. As elsewhere, intensifying patterns will indicate where people need extra awareness of their speeds.

### **Rose Green Road access and Clay Bottom 'wiggle'**

At Clay Bottom we will replace the old brick access with a new, inclusive entrance to the path. The new access will be at Rose Green Road, further away from the wiggle, and without the steep, sharp bends that prevent

larger powered wheelchairs and adapted bicycles from using the path at the moment. We will also make improvements to two other access points nearby.

We will significantly remodel the double bend, also known as the 'wobble' at Clay Bottom.

On the double bend 'wobble' we will create more space and visibility, to improve physical and personal safety.

This will include separate space for walking and cycling, with a two-way cycle track and wider walking path. We will plant new wild flowers in a central strip, and add seating space for socialising.

We have removed some trees and vegetation to improve physical and personal safety, and accessibility on the bend. You can read more about the 250 new trees we have planted to mitigate the impact of this in the section titled 'Ecology: plants, trees and wildlife'

### **Thank you.**

Sustrans and Bristol City Council would like to thank everyone who has been involved in this project to date. We have received so many valuable inputs from a huge range of people who use or live near the path. This has helped us understand everybody's needs and priorities, and all of this has fed into these designs.