



**TRANSPORT  
SCOTLAND**  
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

# **Consultation on Actively Managed Hard Shoulder and Speed Limit Regulations 2021**

## **Consultation Report**

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## Introduction

The 'M8 and M9 Trunk Roads (Newbridge to Hermiston Gait) Actively Managed Hard Shoulder and Speed Limit Regulations' (the 2021 Regulations) create an Actively Managed Hard Shoulder (AMHS) for use by motor vehicles constructed or adapted to carry more than 23 seated passengers over a section of the M8 and M9 motorways.

This will extend from a point south of the Hillwood Rail overbridge (south of Junction 1 of the M9) in an eastbound direction to the Hermiston Gait Roundabout (Junction 1 of the M8). The hard shoulder is continuous along this section, with the exception of the northbound diverge slip road connecting to the A720 upstream of Hermiston Gait Roundabout (Junction 1 of the M8).

In a complementary measure, the Regulations extend the 50 mph speed limit on the M9 to M9 eastbound interchange link road (Junction 2 of the M8) approximately 570 metres further south towards the merge with the M8 eastbound mainline. This measure helps facilitate the AMHS and ensure the safety of vehicles travelling on the connector road.

The provision of the AMHS is expected to reduce journey times and improve journey time reliability for buses, particularly at Claylands (Junction 2 of the M8) and on approach to Hermiston Gait (Junction 1 of the M8), where peak congestion and delays are experienced on a daily basis.

It will support the Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2020 / 2021: [Protecting Scotland, Renewing Scotland: The Government's Programme for Scotland 2020-2021](#) where it was noted that measures to tackle the impact of congestion forms part of a sustainable transport future and that a step change in investment to make bus services greener and more punctual and reliable is being taken. This includes investing in improved bus priority infrastructure to tackle the impacts of congestion on bus services and raise bus usage; and the reallocation of road space on the motorway network to high occupancy vehicles such as buses.

The AMHS will also support Transport Scotland's involvement in 'Project CAV Forth', a globally significant demonstration of UK autonomous bus capability along a 14-mile route across the Forth Road Bridge between Fife and Edinburgh.

The AMHS will deliver on a number of the key themes within Transport Scotland's [Future Intelligent Transport Systems Strategy](#) relating to Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CAV) (deploying ITS infrastructure to support users travelling across the network) and the Environment (using ITS to support the low carbon economy).

## **Consultation on the 2021 Regulations**

A formal written consultation was undertaken with relevant organisations. The consultation was made available to the public on the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland websites. The consultation period was 12 weeks, commencing on 21 October 2020 and ending on 13 January 2021.

During the course of the consultation process, an updated version of the related background information was issued to consultees. The purpose of the update was to provide notice of an amendment to the combined Fixed Plate and Electronic Sign that will be used to indicate a bus lane closure. This amendment uses the 'Bus lane' information sign mounted above the electronic sign rather than bus symbol beneath it.

This change did not have any material effect on the proposed operation of the AMHS and is merely a result of a design approval change aimed at provided additional clarity to road users.

The updated version of the Consultation document can be viewed at [Consultation on the M8 and M9 Trunk Roads \(Newbridge to Hermiston Gait\) \(Actively Managed Hard Shoulder and Speed Limit\) Regulations](#).

## Consultation Feedback

Twelve responses were received to the consultation. Five of these were from organisations and seven from individuals.

The respondents included a local authority, a public transport organisation, a business group and seven members of the public.

Seven respondents, including four of the five organisations, indicated that their response could be published with their name attached whilst one organisation and four individuals wished their name be withheld from the published response. One respondent requested that their response should not be published.

Where permission was granted the responses are published on the Scottish Government website.

## Commentary on the Views Obtained

The general feedback received from organisations was supportive of the intention to introduce an AMHS with four providing a positive response and one neutral.

Within the supportive comments from organisations, respondents highlighted the benefit that the scheme will bring to public transport and the promotion of bus travel in particular. In relation to these proposals it was also noted by two organisations that there were opportunities to extend the use of AMHS both locally, and also to the rest of the Central Motorway network.

The responses received from individuals were generally related to the perceived removal of the hard shoulder facility, or its use as a bus lane, with six respondents expressing concern related to this.

Amongst the responses from individuals reference is made to the use of the hard shoulder as a running lane for vehicles and the impact this has on the availability of the facility in an emergency. The design process for the AMHS aims to mitigate any such issues by retaining the hard shoulder for use in an emergency and clearly signing that this is the case.

Emergency Refuge Areas are also provided along the length of the AMHS to provide an additional area of refuge away from the running lane. Similarly, the speed limit will be limited to 40 mph within the proposed AMHS.

Restrictions to the use of the AMHS mean that only motor vehicles constructed or adapted to carry more than 23 seated passengers are permitted to use the lane and consequently traffic volumes using the hard shoulder will be low.

Operational procedures will also be in place to monitor the conditions of the network that would necessitate a bus lane closure and allow Traffic Scotland to do so when necessary.

This follows the lessons learned from the existing schemes that have been in operation over a period of eight years.

It should be noted that no comments were received specifically in relation to the published update.

## **Conclusion and Next Steps**

The consultation period on the Regulations closed on 13 January 2021 with twelve responses received from a combination of organisations and individuals.

The general response to the consultation from organisations was positive whilst individuals raised concern specifically relating to the use of the hard shoulder as a running lane for vehicles and the impact this has on the availability of the facility in an emergency. The AMHS will not be a running lane for general traffic but restricted to use by buses only. The design retains the facility of the hard shoulder for use in an emergency and provides additional emergency refuge areas.

With due consideration having been given to the views of those who responded, it was not considered necessary to amend the proposed content of the Regulations.



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