



## Transport & Mobility Forum

### **Cork City Council**

Roads & Infrastructure Directorate  
Roads Design & Construction Division  
City Hall  
Cork

*Via online consultation portal*

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2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020

### **PART 8 Public Consultation – Response**

## **Covid 19 Recovery pathway: Interim Cycle Infrastructure Phase 1 City Hall to Marina**

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Transport and Mobility Forum, Cork (TMF) is a representative group of organisations who have a common interest in sustainable travel \*. The TMF fully supports sustainable modes of travel measures and policies. Sustainable and Active Travel helps reduce congestion on roads, improve air quality, supports a low carbon economy, reduces noise pollution and improves public health.

The current COVID 19 crisis is a tremendous challenge for the entire country (and the world). Recovery from the lockdown for businesses and public life is dependent on safety measures regarding social distancing with new requirements for space needed by pedestrians and cyclists.

As the same rules for social distancing apply for public transport, the capacity of buses and trains are significantly down, meaning to approximately a quarter of passengers can only travel on one bus, compared to Pre-COVID levels. As businesses in the City are opening again, and employees will step-by-step return to their workplaces, cycling (along with walking) gains an unprecedented significance



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for the daily commute into the City (centre). A shift of former bus passengers into cars would bring the roads to a stand-still, and many people in the city don't own a car.

The **TMF therefore strongly welcomes and supports the proposed short-notice set-up of interim cycle infrastructure**. It will provide a safer environment for people cycling into town, for work, shopping or visits, many of them might not have cycled on a regular basis for quite some time and subsequently would be more vulnerable on the roads.

The proposed protected cycle lanes from the Marina to City Hall will extend the existing high quality cycle route on the Blackrock Railway Line greenway into the city centre. This will provide an unprecedented continuous quality cycle route from Passage West via Rochestown, Mahon and Blackrock into the heart of the City, representing the first part of the planned Lee-to-Sea greenway, its most important missing bit from the East.

### Observations

We acknowledge that the proposed cycle lanes are a short-notice interim layout, to be installed within a short time frame and minimal civil works involved. The western part (Victoria Road to Parnell Bridge) is subject to the forthcoming permanent *Docklands to City Centre Roads* scheme, while the eastern part (Monahan / Centre Park Rd) will be part of a later scheme, and is also dependent on the further development of the Docklands. So discussions on a improved permanent layout will happen at a later stage in future.

At this stage, however, special attention shall be given to the **western end of the scheme at Parnell Bridge**. A smooth and safe transition must be given from the proposed lanes to the existing 2-way cycle path on the western side of Parnell Bridge – linking further to Parnell Place and (forthcoming) South Mall cycle paths.

Travelling east, crossing Parnell Bridge and Anglesea St would include passing 3 signalled pedestrian crossings. A synchronising of the pedestrian signals crossing the bend into Anglesea St with those crossing McSweeney Quay would provide a short-cut for accessing the new lane from the centre traffic island. Alternatively, as only one traffic lanes now leads from McSweeney Quay onto Parnell Bridge, the second (RHS) lane on Parnell Bridge (northbound) might also be given over to east travelling cyclists who would then reach the new cycle path already at the northern side of the Bridge.

For **westbound cyclists arriving** at the same junction (on the combined bus lane), **a clear indication** (and maybe an extended dropped kerb) shall be given to mount the footpath before the bend and cross towards Union Quay and the existing cycle path on the pedestrian signal(s). The trained cyclist might just weave into the right-turn lane, traffic permitting.

On this occasion, the existing 2-way cycle path on Parnell Bridge should be freshly marked as the red paint is very washed out and barely recognised (and respected) by pedestrians.

At **Albert Quay / deValera Bridge**, the eastbound cycle lane should be marked across the junction for cyclists' safety (like at neighbouring Clontarf Bridge), as there is a left-turn conflict zone.

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On **Victoria Road**, where perpendicular parking applies near the contraflow (inbound) cycle lane, rubber stoppers should prevent drivers from reversing too far back and into the cycle lane (like on Popes Quay).

At the **Victoria Rd roundabout**, the eastbound cycle lane heading into Centre Park Rd is interrupted, presumably due to a wheelchair car space just before the roundabout. The triangle traffic island at the start of Centre Park Rd might prevent the immediate re-start of the cycle lane there.

Judging from the drawings, the cycle path from Victoria Rd ends abruptly before the pedestrian crossing with a sharp angle towards the motor traffic lane, just after emerging from behind parked cars. This appears as a significant hazard and should at the least have clear road markings alerting drivers of merging cyclists. Red ground marking should also lead the cycle lane into Centre Park Rd, as this left-turn is frequently done by HGV, which is the typical scenario for accidents. The traffic island should soon be removed and replaced by hatched marking to gain space turning into Centre Park Rd.

At the **Marquee Rd / Monahan Rd T-junction**, the creation of a slip-lane for left-turns does not appear to be an optimal solution. Other than in the similar situation at Longford Row / Anglesea St, the main stream of cyclists will likely be right-turns, hence crossing the slip-lane (i.e. conflict zone). The classic left-turn conflict will now happen at higher speeds than at a more rectangular turn. If installed as planned, the real-life situation on the ground shall be closely monitored and reviewed in case.

At the Monahan Rd cycle lane's end **at Kennedy Park**, the stencil markings on the roadway are welcome to highlight a shared use zone. The same would be desirable along the Marina-end of Centre Park Rd for inbound cycling.

As the cycle path will pass many **entrances particularly to commercial properties** (vans, HGVs exiting), large bicycle stencils should be put onto the cycle lane, facing the exiting drivers, for extra awareness and safety.

In relation to the further Lee-to-Sea route to the east, the **Blackrock Railway Line greenway** is subject to forthcoming upgrade works. While these are strongly supported, it is vital at this time that the upgrade works will not involve a temporary closure of the greenway, as it is now needed as essential active travel commuting infrastructure.

### Outlook

We understand that the proposed measures are the first steps for City Council to take in the process of street adaptation and road space redistribution responding to social distancing requirements, as laid out in its updated Discussion Paper of 08/06/2020.

We commend the proposed cycle infrastructure as the first step to ensure that people will get TO the city centre safely.

As public transport capacities are largely reduced due to distancing requirements, walking and cycling will play a more vital role in getting to the city centre, while car traffic will soon come to its limits on



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an even more finite road infrastructure. Hence pop-up cycling infrastructure (lanes on main roads, priorities on designated quiet routes) are an important and very much welcomed step.

We explicitly want to make reference to our recently issued Open Letter “Safer Streets – The Urgent Need to Provide Space for Social Distancing and Active Travel during COVID 19 Restrictions” of 14/05/2020 to Cork City and County Councils with meanwhile over 30 signatory organisations, where we outlined measures that should be taken short-term to support COVID recovery for businesses and public life, but also to be considered for promoting a lasting change in mobility patterns in the city and towns.

As we understand, funds are now being made available from the EU to explicitly promote active travel and fast-track improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure to support COVID recovery measures.

### Conclusion

Extending the existing cycle route along the Blackrock greenway into the city centre – with the also proposed extension along the South Mall (see formally separate submission) – will most likely have a tremendous positive effect on the connectivity of safe cycling infrastructure in the south-east of Cork.

We understand that this will be the **first part of a series of new pop-up cycle infrastructure**, with more routes throughout the city and more capacities for safe bicycle parking in the city centre to come soon.

The TMF is convinced that these measures – however provisional at this stage – will also have a lasting positive impact on cycling in Cork and will contribute to a further modal shift towards active and sustainable travel in the City. While these measures are primarily driven by social distancing requirements, we also see them as a chance to enhance the vibrancy and attractiveness of Cork’s city centre also in the long-term. As all the above is in line with the core aims of the Transport and Mobility Forum, please be assured to have our full support in the public debate.

Should you require any clarifications, please email me at [tmfcork@gmail.com](mailto:tmfcork@gmail.com) .

Kind regards

*Stephan Koch*

Transport and Mobility Forum – Chair

**Note:** *The comments within this submission are solely the view of the Transport and Mobility Forum (TMF) as a whole and not the opinion or view of any individual partner of the TMF.*

\*) A full list of partners in the Transport and Mobility Forum can be found at

<https://transportandmobilityforum.com/partners/>