



Transport & Mobility Forum

Cork City Council

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

Via online consultation portal

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PART 8 Public Consultation – Response

Covid 19 Recovery pathway: Interim Cycle Infrastructure Phase 2 South Mall

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 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.



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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 lane along the South Mall will extend the existing high quality cycle route on the Blackrock Railway Line greenway and the just proposed cycle lanes connecting the Marina to City Hall 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

At the cycle path's eastern end, a safe and continuous transition onto existing 2-way cycle path on Parnell Bridge shall be provided. The existing cycle path on Parnell Bridge should be re-painted, as its old paint is fading. Signage how to cross over to the left towards the 2-way path on Parnell Place shall be provided (waiting area for green signal).

Joining the cycle path at the western end from Grand Parade side might in practice happen in two ways:

Cyclists using Nano-Nagle Bridge or the Grand Parade's esplanade are likely to join the cycle path at the pedestrian crossing.

Many cyclists coming down Grand Parade (in the general traffic lane) are likely to join the 2-way-path only at Prince's/Parliament St signalled junction (instead at Grand Parade). The changeover from the left to the right hand side of South Mall to join the cycle path should be facilitated by a bike box (ASL) at the signals South Mall / Prince's St.

Leaving the cycle path at its western end, a safe transition for cyclists from the path merging into the traffic lane on Grand Parade must be provided by ground markings, signage etc.

The existing bike parking rack at South Mall / Grand Parade is likely to be lost and should be replaced (and ideally extended) nearby.

Bike stencils on the ground (and signage) should highlight the 2-way cycle path at junctions with Father Mathew St and Morrison's Quay (2x), facing the vehicles turning into and out of same.

As access from the cycle path to the northern side streets of South Mall is restricted, safe crossings of South Mall shall be facilitated at Pembroke and Prince's St. At Prince's St, the signalling should allow for safe cycling between Prince's St. (depending on street seating???) and the South Mall cycle path.

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.



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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 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 **and completing it along the South Mall to reach the Grand Parade** 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 .

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/>