



Transport & Mobility Forum

Cork City Council
Traffic Operations
City Hall
Cork

Via online consultation portal

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c/o Cork Environmental Forum
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PART 8 Public Consultation – Response

Emmett Place Pedestrianisation

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.

Significantly more space is now needed in the city centre (and other neighbourhood centres) for pedestrians, if the necessary numbers of footfall shall be reached to bring back public life into the city and make it a vibrant place again for shoppers, workers, businesses and visitors alike.

At the same time, the extension of pedestrianised spaces and streets in the city will be an important step to increase the attractiveness of the city centre (and other parts of the city), upgrade the public realm and improve conditions for modes of active travel (i.e. walking and cycling) as a way to get around in the city on a daily basis, safe and convenient for people of all ages and abilities.

The **TMF strongly welcomes the proposed pedestrianisation arrangements** for Emmett Place for the above mentioned reasons. It only bears a limited load of motor traffic and their closure for car traffic



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can significantly contribute to increasing much needed extra space for commercial activity and active travel in the heart of the city centre.

Observations

We assume that the permanent (24/7) road closure on Emmett Place will relate to the section between the Crawford Gallery's car park entrance and Lavitt's Quay, and the reference to Drawbridge Street in this part of the consultation document is an obvious print error.

In relation to the northern section of Emmett Place (to be permanently closed) we suggest that parts of this section shall be marked as a designated 2-way cycle path leading cyclists from Christy Ring Bridge onto Emmett Place, with extended cycle parking facilities and a BikeSharing station in place there.

In connection with the MacCurtain Street public transport improvement scheme, a high quality 2-way cycle path will be built on Christy Ring Bridge (eastern side), to connect the future high quality cycle corridor along the North Channel quays to Emmett Place and into the heart of the city centre. The definition of a designated entry into Emmett Place, together with a toucan crossing across Lavitt's Quay (as suggested in the recent MacCurtain Street public consultation response) would be the consistent addition to cycling infrastructure in the Opera House area.

For providing connectivity into Academy Street, a contraflow cycling facility between Emmett Place and Academy Street should soon complete cycling infrastructure in this area.

Additional safe bicycle parking facilities shall be considered in these areas, as they would enhance accessibility to the city centre by bicycle and existing bike parking facilities are often at capacity already. This would also help to avoid (wide spread) casual bike parking e.g. at sign posts which now will be more of a nuisance and risk than ever as it often creates unnecessary pinch points and bottlenecks for the flow of pedestrians, maintaining the distancing required.

Regarding street furniture, consideration shall be given to mini-interventions using natural material for upgrading the public realm, e.g. timber planters that can serve as public seating or barriers instead of solely technical barrier installations and yellow lines ("tactical urbanism"). This can help to make the new pedestrianised spaces more attractive and create a better sense of place.

Outlook

We understand that the closures of Emmett Place and other city centre streets are the first step 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 Discussion Paper of 04/05/2020. Other streets should follow. This applies to streets both in the city centre, as well as in neighbourhood centres (e.g. Douglas Street) and main active travel arteries leading towards the centre.

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) will be a next important step.

We explicitly want to make reference to our 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 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, allowing for safer active travel for people of all ages and abilities.

Conclusion

We welcome the here proposed permanent road closure and the fact that positive experiences over the summer now lead to a long-term re-dedication of the street. We reiterate to offer our support and expertise while going forward with introducing further short-term and temporary or permanent measures. While these measures are primarily driven by social distancing requirements, we see them as a chance to enhance the vibrancy and attractiveness of Cork’s city centre also in the long-term.

Should you require any clarifications, please email me at tmfcork@gmail.com .

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stephan Koch".

Stephan Koch (Chair)
Transport and Mobility Forum

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/>