



Transport & Mobility Forum

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PART 8 Public Consultation – Response

Pedestrian and Cycle Route from Ballinacurra to Midleton

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 (walking and cycling) helps reduce congestion on roads, improve air quality, supports a low carbon economy, reduces noise pollution and improves public health.

The **TMF welcomes and supports the proposed plans outlined in this scheme in their provision of active travel infrastructure in Midleton.** This scheme helps realise the objectives outlined in national (NDP, NPF, Climate Action Plan, SDGs), regional (RSES South) and local (CMATS, County Development Plan) plans, policies and strategies. We commend Cork County Council for its vision for the East Cork area and look forward to the positive impact this and other complimentary schemes (Midleton-Youghal Greenway, Bury's Bridge to Carrigtwohill cycleway, the N25 Transport Corridor upgrade and the Midleton Town Urban Regeneration Scheme) will have on the local community and hinterland.

There is great potential for Midleton to become a model town in County Cork for sustainable mobility and high quality public realm and this scheme is an essential step towards that goal. Its rail connection to key employment areas such as Carrigtwohill, Little Island and Cork city offers commuters an alternative to long and stressful commutes via the N25. With its high density of schools, 4 secondary and 6 primary, as well as its relatively flat topography, it has the potential to have high levels of active



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travel. Investing in Active Travel infrastructure delivers excellent value for money, delivering many benefits to the local community in terms of public health, improvements in air quality, the reduction of congestion and carbon emissions related to car transport. The TMF recognises the strategic importance of Midleton as a large Cork Metropolitan town targeted for future population growth. In order for this growth to be sustainable it must be of a compact nature (NSO 1, NPF) and well served with sustainable transport and active travel options (NSO 4, NPF).

We believe this scheme can help to substantially transform travel patterns in Midleton and will maximise the future transformative impact the Midleton-Youghal Greenway is expected to have. We especially support the design objectives of connecting existing services (schools, train station, retail) as well as having an eye to the future with the connection to the start of the Midleton-Youghal Greenway and future residential developments at Waterrock, Charleston and Maple Woods.

Observations / Suggestions

Use of Shared Paths

Whilst we agree that shared facilities might be appropriate at locations where footpaths are wide and the volume of pedestrians and cyclists is low, e.g. in low-density towns and cities, and suburban or recreational areas, we strongly advocate for segregating pedestrians from cyclists where possible. This is particularly important on greenway paths which will undoubtedly also be important elements of commuting infrastructure and not just for recreational use. Even if active travel volumes are low before the intervention, they will inevitably increase once the infrastructure is in place and usually result in higher volumes and a need for retrofitting segregation. We have witnessed this along the Blackrock Greenway in Cork City which is currently being widened from 3m to 5m due to conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists. Where asking for shared facilities to be segregated, we can refer to National Cycle Manual 1.9.3:

- Shared facilities are disliked by both pedestrians and cyclists and result in reduced Quality of Service for both modes.
- With the exception of purpose-designed shared streets, shared facilities should be avoided in urban areas as far as possible.
- Where shared facilities cannot be avoided, there are a number of considerations as follows that will help both cyclists and pedestrians to be aware of the other's presence:
 - Pedestrians should always have priority, reinforced by signage.
 - Cyclists should consider themselves as 'cycling on the footpath'.
 - Segregate pedestrians and cyclists vertically and/or horizontally.
 - Delineation markings should not be used as they give cyclists an incorrect sense of a dedicated cycle space. Painted white lines separating the 'walking side' from the 'cycling side' are not recommended. Even with good signage, pedestrians frequently disregard these lines and will walk or stand on the cycling side.
 - Sufficient width of footpath and cycle track will help both modes to travel in comfort.
 - Sufficient width to facilitate evasive action and/or avoidance of potential conflict.

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- Shared facilities next to vehicular traffic should have a minimum combined width 3.0m. This means that the Bailick Road 3m track with a wall at one side will need to have 3m width, plus 0.65m for the wall, rendering their proposed 3m combined design "below minimum standard"
- Visually Impaired: Visually impaired pedestrians rely on having a longitudinal kerb to demarcate the edge of the footpath. The kerb provides a tapping edge to help them negotiate their way along the footpath. Importantly, the level change tells them which surface is the footpath and which is the road, cycle facility or other surface. The principle of "Up = Safe" is of fundamental importance to the visually impaired.
- Soft or Light Segregation: 'light' or 'soft' methods for separating cyclists from traffic, utilise a variety of different forms of intermittent features, such as blocks, planters, or bolt-on delineators, bollards or marker posts, or enhancement of conventional lane markings, such as rumble strips or reflective studs. 'Light' methods require less space and can therefore be used without interfering with drainage. By virtue of not creating a continuous barrier, 'soft' segregation enables cyclists to leave or access the separated cycle lane should they need to do so and presents cheaper installation costs and lower maintenance costs per linear metre. Fig 1 below shows an example commonly used in Copenhagen of an understated but effective step-down method of soft segregation where paving is cleverly used to show a visual demarcation.



Fig 1- Example of 'soft' segregation in this case a step down, in Copenhagen

Some comments on the proposed Design

Market Green to Train Station Greenway:

- The proposed Greenway is a very welcome piece of attractive active travel infrastructure and will be a core element of the Middleton walking and cycling network.
- In relation to the issues with mixed pedestrian / cycling facilities, we refer to the above points and would ask for a widening of the path where possible and a soft segregation between cyclists and pedestrians, as this greenway will have an important function as active commuting infrastructure namely to and from the train station where commuters will either

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park their bikes or carry them on the train. Further, adequate lighting would be essential for use after nightfall (esp during winter) and seating shall be provided as resting places for physically less fit users (e.g. the elderly).

- The off-road Greenway proposed west of the Owenacurra river from the retail park should provide Greenway access to the Train Station without the need to join the Northern Relief road. We agree with the proposed linking up to the future Water Rock Greenway via a toucan crossing on the Northern Relief Road, but it is far more necessary to link the Greenway with the train station south of the Northern relief road.
- The main road access via the R626 to the train station is too narrow to ever provide safe, segregated cyclist access and so, the off-road option is essential.
- The Greenway should branch off after the proposed underpass and run parallel to the train line (via a cyclist and pedestrian bridge over the tributary) joining up to the start Midleton-Youghal Greenway at the train station. This section of the greenway would form part of the the proposed secondary cycling route running parallel to the train line between Midleton and Carrigtwohill as outlined in the Cycle Network Plan (blue route in Fig. 2).
- As an alternative, a spur should be planned from the greenway to the east to connect via a light pedestrian and cycle bridge into the housing estate east of river (Millbrook Lawn / Mill Rd) and reach the train station via McSweeney Terrace on the southside. This would also improve local connectivity to the area south of the station.
- The provision of 2-way cycle paths along the Northern Relief Rd is generous, convenient and finds our full support.
- The large-scale junction of the Norther Relief Rd with the R626 is challenging for pedestrians and cyclists. Having shared facilities around the entire junction will lead to conflict (see above) and should be avoided where possible. This is especially relevant in the south western corner of the junction, where space could be available to continue the cycle path to reach the crossing of the southern arm. While the defined ramp for cyclists joining the carriageway in the eastern arm, a similar ramp should be provided coming from the east, as well as for joining the cycle paths going into the Northern Relief Rd. More trained cyclists – travelling east-west might stay on the carriageway to only join the cycle path exiting the junction.
- Regarding this junction in general, it should be considered transforming it into a 2-lane roundabout. The space required, as well as the distances to be travelled by pedestrians and cyclists won't be significantly larger, but from both an active travel and urban design perspective, it would be more favourable. This trend is being followed in many other countries.

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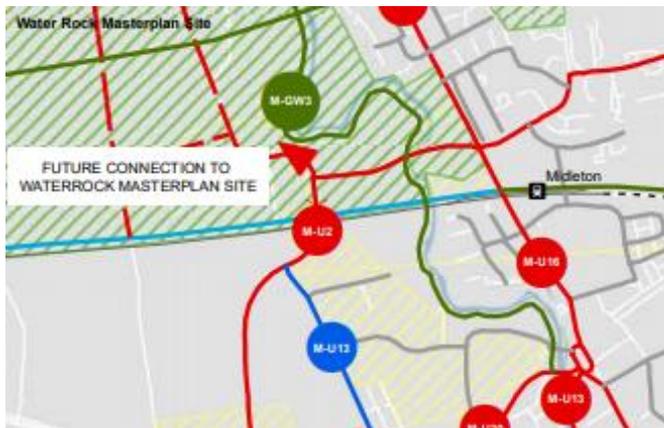


Fig. 2- Note the Blue route running parallel to the train line which is outlined to be a secondary cycling route on the Cork Cycle Network Plan.

Market Green/Cork Roundabout

- There should be Segregation at the raised table toucan crossings combined with traffic calming on the approach roads to the roundabout to enable a clear and safe path from the greenway to the Riverside way.

Riverside Way to Bailick Road

- The junction of Riverside Way / New Cork Road at the Gyratory looks challenging and very fragmented, especially for pedestrians crossing it coming from the Main Street. A crossing of the left-turn lane into Cork Rd is missing. The transition of Riverside Way into the Gyratory should be 'cleaned up' and a zebra crossing, including one single traffic island, should be considered a few metres south, at northern end of parking.
- Removing the parking at the beginning of Riverside Way should be considered to reduce the bend and to widen the cycling and pedestrian path. As an alternative, the mixed path should be led straight on towards the toucan crossing instead of having it making the strange 'question-mark-shaped' bend. The length of the ramp required to cover the level difference should be sufficient.
- The proposed mixed-use path along Riverside Way should be widened where possible to allow for two-way, (soft) segregated cycling as well as a separate footpath.
- Upgrade toucan crossing at the Aldi/Church Lane junction to segregated toucan crossing
- Upgrade the crossing after the Riverside way/Broderick St/Baillick road junction to a toucan crossing.
- Alternatively, consider a slightly larger re-design here: Cycling infrastructure from Broderick St southbound is rather unsteady and changes twice within ca 100m (2-way segregated cycle path, mixed use area, change to eastern side of the road). The 2-way cycle path should instead extend to the T-junction and consider moving pedestrian crossing (turn into toucan) to just south of T-junction, and have it as a raised table. Maybe the entire T-junction /

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toucan crossing / entrance on eastern side area should be turned into one entire raised table area.

- Riverside Way / Kennedy Park entrance: It is unclear why the mixed path takes a 90° angle instead of following roads bend. Vehicle numbers out of Kennedy Park are assumed to be small.
- Apply a 30km/h speed limit along Riverside way using signage and physical calming measures if necessary.
- As a note here: The announcement of a forthcoming cycle link through Kennedy park to the west is very welcome, as this would have a tremendous network effect, linking to the western greenway.

Bailick Road to R630

- Widen and segregate the proposed mixed-use path where possible. Consider the removal of footpath on the opposite side of the road to enable more space to be allocated to the side with walking and cycling paths and enable segregation and two-way cycling paths.
- Upgrade the proposed uncontrolled crossing at the Dark road junction to an uncontrolled/controlled raised table crossing. This would not only provide for a safer crossing but also work to slow traffic along the Bailick road.
- Upgrade the uncontrolled raised table crossing from the northern to the southern side of the Bailick road to a toucan crossing
- Apply a 30km speed limit along the Bailick road and Dark road using signage and physical measures

R630

- Regarding the southbound cycle track in the approach to R629 junction, consider running it alongside the existing footpath (offset from road) which is separated from the road by a large green buffer. This would not only provide for a safer, more pleasant cycle but also better connect the cycle track to the proposed raised table crossing at the Cloyne Road (R629) junction.
- Provide a continuous segregated cycle track running behind the proposed wheelchair friendly bus stop (see Fig. 3) on R630 (south of Bailick road junction) similar to the proposed Bus Stop design location south of the Dark road junction (or for northbound, get c-lane onto carriageway / bus bay at the bus stop)



Fig 3. Segregated, continuous cycle track running behind the bus stop

Ballyannan Greenway

- We commend the high quality Ballyannan Greenway planned and feel it will attract a high number of users due to its pleasant setting as well as its link to the Gaelscoil on the west and the Bailick road route to the east.
- We recommend it is segregated for reasons outlined before.
- We recommend that the Ballyannan road needs a dipped kerb and parking protection. The Greenway here needs priority E-W, as a raised-table crossing. The N-S road should not have priority here.
- It is essential that a raised table crossing is installed at the western end to the school.
- Provisions should be made for a connection to a future (and badly needed) separate walking / cycling bridge across the N25 just east of the Oatencake junction (bridge)

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Additional measures

A scheme as ambitious as this will require a holistic approach in order to achieve the intended modal shift to active travel. Although outside of the legal process of this public consultation, here is a list of additional hard and soft measures that should be considered in connection with a scheme such as this.

- 1) **Speed Limits:** As part of this scheme, a 30 km/h speed limit should be applied throughout Midleton town and area of scheme, e.g. between the N25 and the railway line. Traffic calming measures such as signage, speed humps, speed cushions, speed tables and pavement build-outs and varying road surface materials should be used to 'engineer in' low speeds. This is even more necessary at 'safety critical locations' such as school entrances.
- 2) **Large-scale cycle parking:** High quality, secure bike parking should be installed throughout Midleton. Secure bike storage such as bike cages should especially be installed in Midleton train station. Secure (i.e. locked) long-term bicycle parking should as well be considered around the Main Street to serve for employees in town-centre businesses.
- 3) **Bike pump and repair stands** should be installed in strategic locations.
- 4) **An active travel hub** should be established in a prominent location in the town or at the entry point to the Midleton-Youghal greenway in Midleton train station. They would provide a large number of public bicycles (free or cheap hire) to encourage cycling amongst a particular target audience. These would be offered in conjunction with programmes offering cycle training, bike maintenance and regular community led cycles.
- 5) **Comprehensive cycle route signage:** As part of this scheme, clear thorough signage should be installed along the routes from end to end so new users can easily find and follow it.
- 6) **Area-wide school cycle facilities:** Considering the high density of schools in the area, this scheme should include a budget to provide bike training and bike shelters at all schools. Whilst the Green-Schools Travel programme is funded to meet this need, it is limited in its support of schools either on their 2 year travel theme or in a very limited way as a maintenance programme. The Dept. of Transport and Cork County Council should provide additional funding to the Green School Travel programme to work with all Midleton schools once the infrastructure is in place. Alternatively, the proposed Active Travel Hub could support schools and provide cycle training to parents and children and offer led cycles on the new routes.
- 7) **Area-wide workplace cycle facilities:** Cycle facilities at workplaces throughout a project target area should be considered, provided by a programme of small grants to employers. This would enable employers to install safe dry cycle parking, clothes drying rooms, lockers, showers, and other on-site facilities. Again, whilst the NTA Smarter Travel Workplaces operates at this level, it does not work with all employers in the area.
- 8) **Automatic cycle counters** should be installed to measure the impact of planned interventions.



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Conclusion

We welcome and fully support the proposed scheme. The scale and the quality of the designs, despite a number of critical details, are impressive and we are convinced that such a comprehensive scheme, along with the proposed additional measures, will have a significant positive impact on active travel throughout Midleton.

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/>