



Transport & Mobility Forum

Cork City Council
Roads and Infrastructure
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

Proposal to Extinguish Public Right of Way - Laneway from Fairhill to Mount Agnes Road, Fairhill, Cork

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.

In general, the TMF is very critical about the closure of laneways and the extinguishing of public rights of way. One core element of promoting walking (and cycling, i.e. active travel) in urban settings is permeability of the urban fabric for pedestrians, to provide shortcuts and avoid – in many cases – lengthy detours for getting to local shops and services, schools and bus stops.

In many cases, laneways face opposition from local residents for reasons of antisocial behaviour (a broad notion). In the past, shortcuts and improved connectivity for active travel have been opposed locally for these reasons, counteracting attempts to promote walking and cycling, as laid down in current local and regional policy documents (RSES South, CMATS). One example for this is the refusal of plans to create an additional access to the Blackrock Railway Line Greenway at Rockfield Avenue, as it was proposed in the Part 8 documents (August 2019).

We believe that a higher footfall in such places, induced through increased connectivity for active travel, would actually counteract antisocial behaviour and a result of more ‘eyes on the street’.



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Observation

For the here proposed closure of the laneway at Fairhill, the argument of inflicting detours only applies to a very limited extent, as the detour for walking via the junction of Fairhill and Mount Agnes Rd will only be minimal (ca. 100m). The walking route from Fairhill towards local retail (Lidl) will not be affected, and actually leads to a signalled crossing at the mentioned junction.

Conclusion

While in connection with the proposed laneway closure in Fairhill, the impact on walking connectivity will be very limited, we believe that a general debate should happen about finding a balance between concerns of local residents and delivery of improved connectivity for walking and cycling, as these, according to current policy papers (hierarchy of travel modes), are the travel modes with the highest priority and shall be promoted for urban travel wherever possible. To us it would be unacceptable if a societal problem would serve as a standard argument to block the delivery of a more sustainable travel and transport system on the ground in the City, which is of the highest priority from a transport, environmental and public health point of view.

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/>