



## Transport & Mobility Forum

**Cork City Council**  
Roads & Infrastructure Directorate  
City Hall  
Cork

*Via online consultation portal*

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

## **Passage Railway Greenway Improvement Scheme- Phase II**

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). With movement restrictions, the accessibility of close by green spaces for recreation and exercise (walking, cycling, running, etc.) is of paramount importance for the city population – in general, but with particular urgency during the present pandemic situation. At the same time, active travel infrastructure is becoming more and more important, not only for the above mentioned reasons, but also as an alternative to bus travel, given the capacity restrictions (social distancing) and general reservations against travelling with many people together in a confined space, which will prevail for a longer time.

We commend the City Council for its plans to significantly improve the Blackrock / Passage West greenway in the Rochestown area, as this is a severe gap in the continuous greenway, which is also part of the proposed Lee to Sea (L2S) greenway route.



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### General

The **TMF fully support the plans** to fill the gap in the greenway in the Rochestown area to provide a continuous high-quality greenway between Passage West, Mahon, Blackrock and further into Cork city centre. We might, however, have some reservations about the extent of the proposed extension of car parking areas serving the greenway. Please see further down for this point.

While the Blackrock / Passage railway line is referred to as a Greenway, which implies a recreational use in the first place, we want to emphasise that this route is also an important part of active travel (i.e. walking and cycling) infrastructure for commuting purposes, and could hence also be called an 'active travel highway'. This dual purpose should be considered in the entire planning process and be reflected in the design of the greenway.

### Routing Options

Out of the five proposed routing options, the TMF have a **clear preference for Option 2**, followed by the similar Option 1. These routes between the houses on Rochestown Rd (R610) and the foreshore are the most favourable ones regarding comfort and safety of the greenway users, as they are offset from busy Rochestown Road and subsequently provide the most pleasant user experience.

Option 3-5 are far less favourable as they would be directly along the busy regional road and compromise the user experience.

Option 3 would be similar to the status quo with severe safety issues involved relating to the entrance driveways of 12 homes and 2 crossings of a local access road. Further, the footpath of Rochestown Rd would need to be crossed twice. Even if an extra 3m of width would be gained by shifting the road's carriageway to the south, the crossing situations would still remain.

Options 4 and 5 would require cyclists to cross the R610 twice within half a kilometre, which is detrimental to convenience, travel times and safety, as well as the overall user experience. Even though it is assumed that both crossings would be signalised, the inconvenience of waiting times will lead to high levels of non-compliance (i.e. crossing on red, or using the northern side footpath) which in return is detrimental to road safety. These options should subsequently not be further pursued. Should the Council, however, continue the plans with options 4 or 5, we are likely to reject those plans in the further consultation process for the above-mentioned reasons.

### Potential Conflicts

The routing options along the foreshore (Options 1 and 2) imply potential conflicts regarding environmental protection, privacy for the residents and risk of anti-social behaviour. The latter should be addressed by means of adequate design. The intrusion into an ecologically sensitive area (foreshore to Lough Mahon) must be addressed through a nature friendly design and construction. Given the fact that ca. half of the length would use an existing access road to the rear of local houses, these issues appear to be manageable.



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### Proposed Parking

The proposed extension of car parking facilities next to the greenway we see critical. In general, use of the greenway should not require access by car ('driving to have a walk or cycle'), but access from the surrounding neighbourhoods should be facilitated by good quality active travel infrastructure. As this, however, will not be achievable within a short timeframe, parking for accessing the greenway should be facilitated to a certain extent. Further, it appears to be questionable to allocate a large amount of funding for a greenway (i.e. active travel) project to car parking.

Of the three proposed locations, the TMF would **favour the extension of parking at the Rochestown Centra**. While the other two options (extended parking at Harty's Quay) would be directly adjacent to the greenway, and detrimental effects on the greenway user experience would be expectable, the Centra car park would be slightly offset from the actual greenway, with a short access route between them. By its location, the car park at the Centra would also appear to be the least intrusive into the existing landscape.

We suggest that in connection with the car park extension, secure overnight bicycle parking shall be facilitated (lockers, shed) in order to use this new car park as a Park+Cycle facility, where longer distance car commuters can park and take their bicycle to travel towards the city centre.

### Design

Given the dual purpose of the greenway (recreational and commuting infrastructure), we are strongly asking for a path design that will provide some form of segregation between faster moving cycle traffic and slower users (mostly pedestrians) wherever possible.

### Conclusion

The TMF are strongly in favour of improving the Passage West greenway in the Rochestown area, as it will be a significant upgrade to both leisure and active travel commuting infrastructure. It is an important part of Cor's recreational and active travel commuting infrastructure, and its development should aim at being designed to the best standards to be a national light house project, the Lee to Sea greenway. Please be assured that the TMF will support the City Council in this project and will promote it to the general public.

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

Kind regards

*Stephan Koch*

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**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/>