



Transport & Mobility Forum

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Pre-Draft Public Consultation – Response

Carrigaline TPREP Transportation and Public Realm Enhancement Plan

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.

General:

The TMF welcome the opportunity to feed into the pre-draft consultation to the Carrigaline Transportation and Public Realm Enhancement Plan (TPREP). While the planned scope for actual physical re-design of streets and public realm is not known to us, we assume that most of the re-design construction measures will concentrate on the Main Street area and its surroundings. We would suggest, however, that further physical changes are planned for in the medium term and some localised interventions be done short-notice.



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Due to COVID travel restrictions, this submission is largely informed by desktop research, primarily using Google Satellite, and some input (anecdotal evidence) from local residents.

Carrigaline is known to be one of the most car-dependent communities in Ireland. It developed over recent decades as a commuter town into nearby Cork City and to the large pharmaceutical plants in Ringaskiddy. Most of its 15k population lives in typical low-density housing estates that are interlinked to one another and the town centre and local services (e.g. schools) to a varying degree (connectivity, permeability).

Local retail and other everyday services almost exclusively concentrate on a small area along the Main Street, i.e. the ca. 300m section between the roundabout at the church and Carrigaline Court Hotel in the North and Dunnes Stores in the South.

We understand that the planned western relief Rd between the R611 Kilmoney Rd in the south and the R613 Ballea Rd (two arms) with an access to the Supervalu car park in the north will be built soon, which will be acknowledged in the consideration of future traffic flows.

Active Travel

All current planning documents on national, regional and local levels (RSES South, CMATS, DMURS) suggest a clear hierarchy of road users that cities and towns should be planned for, and that should be promoted for daily travel. In this hierarchy, Active Travel (i.e. cycling and walking) comes first, followed by public transport, commercial motor traffic (deliveries etc), and only then private car traffic.

We urge that this hierarchy of road users be reflected in the plans for Carrigaline, and clear targets and timelines shall be formulated to what degree a modal shift away from car dependency and dominance, towards sustainable travel modes shall be achieved. Distances to be travelled inside Carrigaline will hardly exceed 2-3km, so a large part of trips within Carrigaline should be done by means of active travel.

Large scale employment in the Ringaskiddy area is at a cyclable distance to Carrigaline. In connection with TPREP, cycling gateways towards Ringaskiddy shall be planned for in connection with an inner-urban active travel network in the town.

The positive effects of active travel on public health and carbon emissions are widely known and their vital importance does not need to be further emphasised here.

Connectivity

A detailed analysis of connectivity for active travel between all residential areas and local trip attractors, i.e. schools, retail and services as well as bus stops, shall be conducted at the outset of the TPREP process, resulting in an in-depth gap analysis of cycling and walking links and subsequently a target active travel network plan to be established.



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Carrigaline appears to be a *mixed bag* regarding connectivity and permeability. While some areas are well interconnected to other parts of the town, other areas see severe gaps in walking and cycling links that in return have led to a cementation of car use, even for short distances.

Two bad practice examples must be mentioned here:

There is no connection for walking or cycling between the Herons Wood and Bridgemount areas in the north-east, leaving the only possible connection e.g. to the schools along Cork Rd via this heavily trafficked main artery road, inflicting substantial detours (see further down).

In the south, the recent new housing development along Fuchsia Avenue, despite good active travel infrastructure locally, is not safely accessible on foot from the rest of Carrigaline, as neither Rose Hill in the west, nor Ferney Rd in the east have footpaths for substantial parts of the way. The only walking connection possible would be a retrofit connection between Fernlea and Nos 27/28 Fuchsia Avenue (see fig. 3), which is in no way foreseen in the layout of the local residential cul-de-sac, but the only place where a path would not be entirely blocked by residential private property. It is hard to understand how in the late 2010s, a major housing development as part of a 15k population town, lacking entirely of walking connectivity, has received planning permission.

Schools:

A large factor for inner urban traffic is the daily travel to school. There is a concentration of 3 schools along the R 612 Cork Rd (eastern relief road), two schools in the south east (Ferney Rd / Fuchsia Ave), and the Holy Well NS in the north-west.

Access to the schools around Cork Rd is said to result in high car traffic volumes and severe disruption due to uncontrolled parking at drop-off and collection times, which causes severe disruptions for through passing motor traffic, often resulting in detours taken through the Main St (!).

The two schools in the south-east are in a peripheral, almost out-of-town location with a limited degree of accessibility on foot or by bicycle.

Holy Well primary school, although situated in the heart of the surrounding community, appears to be only accessible by a spur road from the busy R613 Ballea Rd from the south.

A detailed plan for safe and convenient access to these schools by means of active travel must be part of the TPREP, with targeted local interventions improving permeability that have a high potential of resulting in far higher levels of cycling and walking to these schools.

Public Transport / Bus Stops:

While Carrigaline is now connected to Cork and Crosshaven with a high-quality bus route (220), and with a direct route to Ringaskiddy (225), easy and direct access to the bus stops is vital for the uptake of public transport services.



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In connection with TPREP, an accessibility audit to all bus stops should be carried out and necessary interventions should be made to guarantee the shortest possible access routes from all surrounding neighbourhoods. Bus stops should be in a welcoming and pleasant environment, and should ideally become a “place” in their neighbourhood.

A bad practice example regarding accessibility is the bus stop at Heron Woods, that seems to be entirely cut off from its catchment area to the west.

To improve the options of multi-modal travel, secure bicycle parking shall be provided at key bus stops in Carrigaline to facilitate bike and ride options. A secure place for overnight bike parking at a central bus stop should also be considered to facilitate bus commute from Cork City and cycling to work e.g. in Ringaskiddy.

Cycling and Walking routes

Connectivity for cycling and walking must be improved between housing estates, to schools and the Main Street. This must be promoted through a high-quality walking and cycling infrastructure on key routes. Connections between housing estates shall lead to the offer of defined “quiet routes” that avoid busy main roads. Local on-street sign-posting along with awareness campaigns should accompany and support a shift to more local active travel.

Main Street:

Carrigaline’s Main Street (between the church and Dunnes Stores) should be significantly enhanced in terms of Place Making, to better serve as the heart of the town and its main commercial, retail and services area.

Motor traffic on the Main Street should be limited to buses, taxis, deliveries and essential access, i.e. for disabled parking spaces. Access to large scale on-site parking to the west (esp. for Supervalu) shall be directed to the future western relief road. Walking and cycling must have the highest priorities in the Main Street. Sufficient cycle parking facilities must be provided here.

The street scape should be developed into a pleasant public space, where people love to walk, shop, meet or linger. Motor traffic should have a minor importance there, which should also be reflected in a redistribution of street space and subsequently the removal of a classic carriageway. Remaining motor traffic will be limited to 30km/h or less.

Public seating and urban green, particularly street trees, should become a key feature of Carrigaline’s Main Street, with on-street parking and loading bays reduced to a minimum possible.

In addition, **a green spur should be developed along the north bank** of the river between the Main Street and the R612 Cork Rd, linking to the playground (public playgrounds should be part of every housing estate, and be considered as part of TPREP), community centre and the three schools. This should see a green area with dedicated cycling and walking facilities, and be free from parking to a large extent.



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Speed limits:

As Carrigaline mainly consists of a cluster of housing estates, the default speed limit for all traffic should be 30km/h. Exceptions should only be the arterial main roads (primarily R-roads). In the vicinity of the three schools at Cork Rd, 30km/h should also apply here locally.

Lee to Sea (L2S) strategic greenway:

Carrigaline will be a major crossing point for the proposed Lee to Sea greenway. Running from the Inniscara dam in the west across Cork City to Crosshaven in the east, it crosses Carrigaline along the former railway alignment north to south in its eastern part. This route is also part of the greenway route CL-GW1 defined in the Cork Cycle Network Plan.

The alignment is kept clear from development within Herons Wood (between The Walk and The Oaks), it travels further south along Mulberry Lawn (see suggested active travel link below), along the R611 Cork Rd, passing the schools there, further south across the bridge at Lidl, to then join the existing Crosshaven greenway. The L2S could become a prime north-south connection of active travel infrastructure also within Carrigaline, with a spur into the Main Street just north of the bridge (see above).

Within TPREP, measures should be taken to keep this alignment free and to prepare the future set-up of the L2S greenway through the town of Carrigaline. It should be built on the eastern side of the R611 Cork Rd in order to avoid unnecessary crossings of this busy road. For large parts, the alignment appears to be free from built obstacles (structures) and the necessary land should be safeguarded and secured. Alterations in some key locations (junction at the playground, bridge) are mentioned below in this submission. As an urgent measure, the gap of safe cycling infrastructure between the bridge at Lidl and the start of the Crosshaven greenway at Kilnagleary (ca. 1km) should be closed.

Local interventions:

In order to achieve the above-mentioned goals, a short, non-exhaustive list of local interventions will be given that we regard as vital for the success of TPREP and promoting sustainable travel in Carrigaline:

Main Street redesign (see above)

Link between Herons Wood and Bridgemount areas: Both estates (including the new Shannon Park area in the north) have no connection for cycling and walking between each other. All travel between Herons Wood and the south, including the nearby schools, needs to happen via the R611 Cork Rd, or Fernhill Road, a country road at the town's eastern edge. For connecting the north to the south, a foot and cycle path needs to be built between Firngrove Mews and Mulberry Lawn (see Annex, fig. 2). Using the former railway alignment (assumed to be in public ownership, and part of the proposed L2S greenway), this appears to be the only possible connection that is not blocked by private housing properties. A connection here appears to be of immediate urgency to enable active travel between the eastern parts of Carrigaline, including access to the schools along Cork Rd.

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Widening of the eastern bridge (R612, near Lidl) for walking and cycling: The bridge carries the main motor traffic load between Crosshaven, Carrigaline, Ringaskiddy and Cork, and cannot provide any space for a safe and comfortable cycling and walking connection across the river. It is yet a vital connection to essential retail (Lidl), the two southern schools and the link to the Crosshaven Greenway (part of the Lee to Sea strategic Greenway). A sufficiently wide crossing of the river (by either widening the bridge or building a separate structure for active travel east of the road bridge) is essential to provide a safe and high quality segregated active travel route between the northern and south-eastern parts of Carrigaline.

Junction R612 / R613 Church Rd (near the playground): This junction is one of the key junctions in Carrigaline. Its present layout with numerous lanes and slip roads is hostile to pedestrians and cyclists, while yet it is a crucial point for inner urban connectivity. In terms of placemaking, this junction must be regarded as a *non-place*. A re-design of this junction with higher priority and more space given to pedestrians and cyclists seems inevitable. The possibility of a re-design as a Dutch style roundabout (with continuous two-way segregated cycle path and footpath around, with priority across all arms) should be investigated.

Active travel corridor along R611 Cork Rd: As mentioned above, the Cork Road should be developed into an attractive and safe walking and cycling corridor (part of L2S greenway), preferably to the east of the carriageway, to provide a high quality segregated walking and cycling route linking the north-east to the local schools, the playground and community centre further south, and to the green spur into the Main Street just north of the river.

New Western Relief Road: Being the third connection across the river in Carrigaline, the new road should also include a safe, segregated walking and cycling path to connect the north-west to the south-west.

Access to Holy Well primary school: This school is situated in the heart of the north-western residential area, but appears to be a prime bad practice example of poor accessibility on foot and by bicycle (see above), as its only access is from the south. Bordering in the north to a prime east-west walking route across the residential area (Weston Park Estate, Glenwood Ct, ...), it has no access from same. In connection with TPREP, contact to the school should be made in order to establish a direct access to the school from the north. This small intervention would hold large potential to significantly increase the numbers of pupils walking to school from the immediate neighbourhood.

Local retail:

Local retail and services in Carrigaline seem to be almost exclusively concentrated in the Main Street (one exception being Lidl). The entire northern half of Carrigaline for example (north of Church Rd / Ballea Rd) appears to have no local retail whatsoever, apart from a petrol station and a car dealership, underlining the town's reputation for car dependency. Following the idea of the 10min town (RSES), further local grocery outlets (e.g. Centra-type) or news agents should be planned for in the residential areas. One suitable location for this e.g. appears to be opposite Cogan's Toyota dealership, where the west-east walking route along Glenwood Grove meets the R611.



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Upgrade of existing walking routes:

Following the past concept of housing estates and frontage free collector roads, some of these roads can be upgraded to become a more pleasant place to walk and cycle. One example would be Waterpark, a north-south going road in the east (see fig 1). Being a good quality walking route from an engineering perspective (green, well-lit, segregated footpath), it is yet a hostile environment for pedestrians with its tunnel effect caused by continuous back garden walls along long stretches of this road, with no “eyes on the street”. A re-design following recommendations of DMURS should be considered in such cases.

Conclusion:

We welcome the start of the TPREP process for Carrigaline and the opportunity given to feed into the planning process at an early stage.

As Carrigaline is an example of how planning has gone wrong in the past decades, creating a largely car dependant community, there are good opportunities now to correct planning mistakes from the past and improve conditions for more sustainable forms of everyday travel, particularly within the town. We trust that in line with all relevant current planning policies and strategies, our recommendations here will find entry into the draft TPREP document and Carrigaline can become a showcase town where active travel can be promoted, connectivity retrofit and general travel conditions be improved by targeted interventions. The Carrigaline TPREP has the potential to serve as a showcase how to make a Celtic Tiger dormitory town futureproof in terms of place making and active and sustainable travel.

We are looking forward to being part of the further development of the Carrigaline TPREP.

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

Kind regards

Dr Darren McAdam-O'Connell (chair)

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/>

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Figure 1: Westpark

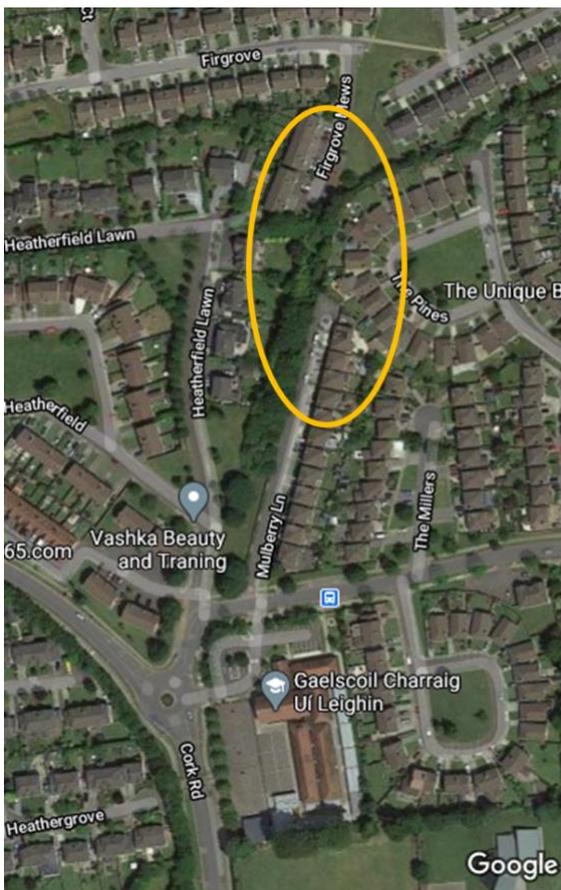


Figure 2: Missing link Herons Wood / Bridgemount



Figure 3: Fuchsia Avenue / Fernlea