



Transport & Mobility Forum

West Cork Greenways - Skibbereen
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Public Consultation – Response

West Cork Greenways - Skibbereen Sections

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 Considerations

The Cork Transport and Mobility Forum strongly supports the provision of interurban and rural greenways. The Drimoleague to Baltimore via Skibbereen Greenway is a particular priority for us, as a continuation of the connection to Cork city and the national Greenway network via Clonakilty junction and Bandon along the alignment of the Old West Cork Railway. We note that the recent report of the VOICE project (*SECAD sustainable communities' project Inter-communities linkages Sustainable Transport Audit*) strongly recommends the prioritization of the development of this route for a Greenway serving the West Cork communities for health, social, environmental, and economic reasons. A copy of this report is attached below.

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Greenways are often considered primarily leisure and tourism focused projects and we strongly support this aspect of Greenway use. However, the utility use of greenways by local residents and commuters/students is also of critical importance. The leisure aspect of greenways requires that they are pleasant inviting places free from motor traffic noise, pollution, and risk, these are also a key consideration for local residents and workers using the Greenway. But the utility use of a Greenway to allow local residents, employees and students use the route as a daily or weekly alternative having to reach the destinations they require reaching in their daily routine also requires that the Greenway has frequent access points connecting directly to residential areas, places of employment/education, services, and amenities. That it is direct and flat and allows cyclists to make fair progress without being impinged upon by pedestrians or impinging upon the pedestrians who also need to be considered as core Greenway users. Sufficient width and clear way marking is key to avoiding cyclist-pedestrian conflict.

Options Assessment – Skibbreen to Drimoleague & Skibbreen to Baltimore

We are **strongly in favour of the Route Option along the old railway** alignment including the use of the disused bridge in Skibbreen town centre. As already stated in our previous submissions, other routings particularly on to existing roads would inflict a detour and the quality of service for pedestrians and cyclists would be compromised by its routing along a main motor traffic artery.

The advantages of route along the existing Railway Line

- A flat direct route.
- Following the desire line, as cyclists and particularly pedestrians are sensitive to unnecessary long detours.
- Direct town to town link allowing accesses to services, shops, amenities and public transport as well as the largest population concentration.
- Creating a protected environment, largely away from (through) motor traffic

In the immediate surroundings of the towns (up to ca. 3-5km from the centre), however, it is of high importance that local services, workplaces and amenities are best served, so that the new active travel infrastructure can unfold the potential for a modal shift for local everyday travel within the towns and their immediate environs. It will be especially here where the utility use purpose is at least equally important as is the leisure aspect.

Such an environment would encourage and attract a broad demographic of residents in the area to walk or cycle in their daily routine, and first and foremost would put even younger children in a position to access the schools independently by means of active travel. The positive side effects of this must not be under-estimated in relation to

- Gaining independence and self confidence
- Acquiring travel habits and skills beyond the private (family) car
- Raising levels of physical activity and hence promoting public health and
- Contributing to a substantial reduction in school run related short-distance motor traffic.

Options Assessment – Skibbreen to Schull

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We don't see one clearly preferred route. Any route should be as flat, direct, and well connected as possible and traffic free without interruption. Any route should also minimise the loss of vegetation, natural habitats and impact on important environmental features.

Conclusion

The Cork TMF strongly supports this project and looks forward to commenting on more detailed plans in due course.

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

Kind regards

Dr Darren McAdam-O'Connell (coordinator)

Stephan Koch (acting chair)

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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/>