

Transport & Mobility Forum



Cork City Council
Senior Engineer,
Infrastructure Development
City Hall
Anglesea Street
Cork, T12 T997

Via online consultation portal

Transport and Mobility Forum, Cork
www.transportandmobilityforum.com
tmfcork@gmail.com

c/o The Environmental Forum
Bernadette Connolly
Mount Carmel, Kilcolman
Enniskeane, Co. Cork
P47 C578

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Public Consultation – Response

Cork North Docks Public Realm and Transport Infrastructure

[Cork North Docks Public Realm and Transport Infrastructure | Cork City Council's Online Consultation Portal](#)

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for giving the general public and stakeholders the opportunity to feed into the public consultation on the Cork North Docks Public Realm.

The Transport and Mobility Forum, Cork (TMF) is a cross-sectoral representative group of organisations who have a common interest in sustainable travel *. The TMF fully supports measures and policies promoting sustainable and active travel. Sustainable and Active Travel (cycling and walking) helps to reduce congestion on roads, improve air quality, supports a low carbon economy, reduces noise pollution and improves public health, as well as the general quality of life in the city.

As such it is the TMF's aim to support the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG 13 (Climate Action).



Overview

We would like to raise the following points and suggested amendments to the proposed development plans

1. Strong support for the general tone and design of the scheme, which provides a high-quality public realm.
2. Concern regarding the provision for cycling. A design which is highly suitable for a destination is used in an area where that will instead see a significant amount of commuter cycle traffic transiting through the area rather than acting as a destination. This will cause conflict with pedestrians, diminishing the positive aspects of the public realm, and frustrating cyclists who expect to be able to make reasonable progress on longer commutes.
3. Some small elements of the design of the road for motor traffic where it appears to prioritize vehicle throughput in a manner more typical of a suburban distribution road rather than a city street.
4. There should be provision to facilitate the possible future inclusion several aspects of social infrastructure to maximise appeal, inclusivity and accessibility, including a bus stop, and TFI bike stand.

Observations:

Waterfront Promenade and Public Realm:

We welcome and strongly support the attractive welcoming and inclusive public realm proposed particularly for the Waterfront Promenade. This will be a welcoming area which can act as a destination and community centred space in the heart of the city, as well as acting as an attractive relaxing yet practical route for pedestrians. The new park and promenade offer an attractive and relaxing space for leisure cyclists. It does not however offer an appropriate through route for utility cyclists, such as commuters. We will address this issue in the next section.

Cycling provision:

The proposed route will be and currently is used by a wide variety of cyclists, leisure cyclists passing through, as well as those for whom it's a destination, cyclist who will begin or end their journey in close proximity to the proposed scheme, as well as an increasing number of utility cyclists for whom it will be part of longer time critical journeys such as the commute to work. Our priority should be to cater for the most vulnerable cyclists, but we must also provide routes which are reasonable and practical for utility cyclists which do not excessively impede progress or engender conflict with pedestrians.

The Western Greenroute is a well-designed high-quality facility which caters for all of the above types of cyclists more than adequately and we strongly support its unaltered construction.

Commented [TD1]: Seems very focused on the cycling infrastructure aspect of the development .



The cycle provision for the rest of the scheme along the Waterfront Promenade is a highly attractive well-designed facility suitable for leisure cyclists and as a destination but is unsuitable as a through route for utility cycling.

Westbound experienced and confident utility cyclists will be able to use the bus lane on the main carriageway while leisure cyclists and inexperienced utility cyclists or those lacking confidence will be well-catered for by the proposed design along the Waterfront Promenade. However, there is no provision for confident or experienced utility cyclists heading eastbound, they will be required to either slow down and manoeuvre to avoid pedestrians, or if they continue to proceed at what would usually be a reasonable speed inevitably come into conflict with pedestrians. In reality the confident experienced utility cyclist will be unnecessarily delayed by slowing down to a pedestrian pace to share the space with pedestrians while a small number of irresponsible cyclists will cause serious conflict with pedestrians.

The most appropriate solution in this case is to proceed with the planned alignment and design on the Waterfront Promenade to cater for less confident and leisure cyclists heading westbound and as a destination for cyclists, while more confident cyclists passing through can use the bus lane. For eastbound cyclists a contraflow cycle lane along the street alignment away from the Waterfront Promenade must be provided.

Road layout:

The carriageway should be designed as an urban street rather than as a suburban road, a place where pedestrians should feel welcome to step onto the road and motor traffic should be moving slowly, conscious of and actively engaging with pedestrians under the constant impression that they are a guest on a city street rather than on a road when higher speeds are acceptable. This slower more respectful traffic in turn requires less separation from cyclists and pedestrians to make them feel welcome, while generating less noise and pollution, making the entire area a more welcoming space for pedestrians, encouraging longer dwell times and attracting less induced traffic demand.

While we welcome the presence of trees and permeable absorbent channels, narrow grass verges between footpath and carriageway are entirely inappropriate on a city street. Primarily because it gives the impression that there is a firm division between pedestrian spaces and a space purely for high-speed motor vehicles turning the street from a space of connection into a hostile road dividing the community, while subconsciously encouraging higher speeds and more aggressive driving. Such narrow grass strips also offer no recreational or nature benefit in an area which should prioritise as high a density of positive public and private use of space as possible. One of the main reasons why trees are so welcome on city streets and suburban roads is because they can shield pedestrians from some of the noise, pollution and intimidatory speed of motor vehicles, however noise and other unwelcome by-products of traffic rise exponentially with speed overwhelming the positive effects of trees means ensuring low speed design, particularly design to ensure that the street visually appears as a street rather than a suburban distributor road has to be the highest priority.

Limiting road capacity into the city centre is vital in avoiding congestion in the city centre and we note that traffic will only be able to access the Street from The Lower Glanmire Road via a single lane (plus bus lane). In our opinion the provision of a second general traffic lane (in addition to the welcome bus lane) is unnecessary and unwelcome, this space would better used to provide a contraflow cycle lane, more pedestrian/recreational space, or even more development land.

We would strongly suggest that as stated above that the space allocated to one of the general traffic lanes should be reallocated to a contraflow cycle lane. See our suggested Carriageway and edges sections figure below.

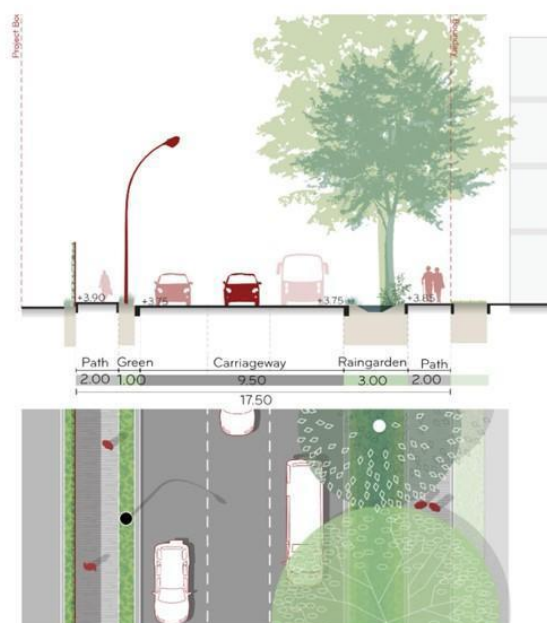
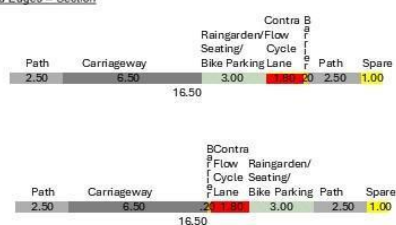


Figure 34: Carriageway and Edges – Section

Suggested
alternative
Carriageway
and Edges
Sections



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Spatial Design and Social Infrastructure

One of the core priorities of the TMF is to create spaces that encourage physical activity. As there are none in the inner city, we welcome the inclusion of an outdoor fitness area like many that have been created and welcomed by communities around Ireland, however we have some slight concern that there is less detail included in the consultation on this area than on other aspects of the scheme. We believe that a substantial well-designed outdoor fitness area will make the park a destination as well as fitness and recreation hub for the city. The inner city is covered in concrete pedestrian areas but lacks dedicated green spaces for biodiversity and connecting people to nature. We are acutely aware that a lot of Cork City is built on reclaimed land in particular the dockland areas in question we welcome the inclusions of some natural areas in this plan and feel that every effort should be made to ensure nature thrives rather than treating it as an aesthetic after thought and every effort should be made to expand the area put aside for nature.

Social infrastructure such as a TFI bike stand, covered bus stop, more inclusion of connected green spaces and recreational fun and fitness areas would ensure that this new development is appealing and accessible to people of all ages and abilities.

We would be obliged to further participate in the discourse and planning processes around this and other Active and Sustainable Travel improvement schemes as we feel that TMF can provide valuable input into the process. Please do not hesitate to contact us at any time at tmfcork@gmail.com.

Kind regards

Darren McAdam-O'Connell

Transport and Mobility Forum – Coordinator

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/>