



Transport & Mobility Forum

Cork City Council

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Via online consultation portal

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Public Consultation – Response

Mary Street, Douglas Street and White Street Public Realm Enhancement Scheme

[Part 8 Planning Notice - Mary Street, Douglas Street & White Street Public Realm Enhancement Scheme | 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 Mary Street, Douglas Street and White Street Public Realm Enhancement Scheme.

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 support this project in the strongest possible terms.

We feel that the public realm proposed is some of the highest quality, best designed, and most appropriate proposed in Cork city. The prioritization of pedestrians and cyclists ahead of motor traffic is exactly what we need to see in the city and that it will have a positive effect on the city far beyond the edge of the proposed scheme.

Our main points in this submission

1. Strong support for the public realm improvements and increased green space proposed.
2. Strong support for the focus on active travel particularly pedestrian and cyclist permeability throughout the community.
3. Concern to ensure that the filtered mobility, particularly the provision of facilities for contraflow cycling proposed in the scheme are retained as part of the project.
4. The need for some provision of contraflow cycling on Sullivan's and George's Quays to allow the full benefit of the filtered mobility for cyclists within the proposed scheme to be realized.

Observations:

Public Realm and public space

Community's streets historically were and should always be a social space where the community can connect and enjoy, meet their friends and neighbours, where community activities can take place, and where businesses can thrive. Unfortunately, over the course of the 20th century this community space was taken over by motor vehicles with streets being all about the movement of motor traffic rather than being a destination in themselves. This proposed scheme will do an excellent job at returning the streets of the South Parish to the community without hindering the ability of the community and those who visit for work, recreation, or business to get around the community.

We feel that the public realm improvements and the provision of appropriate, dedicated, and well-planned space is some of the best we have ever seen. In a compact urban setting where space is at a premium. As proximity to friends, neighbours, retail, services and employment is key to producing a walkable and liveable community where everything is within walking distance and removing the need for a car. To achieve this, space must be used efficiently, public space must have a social, active, or an environmental use, to make a positive contribution to the community. Too often green space is simply wasted space covered in grass which offers no recreational, social, active or environmental benefit, but rather just lower density and pushes friends, neighbours, services, and employment further away without offering any positive contribution to the community. We strongly support the approach taken in this scheme where the needs of the community for open space of varying types were assessed and

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the appropriate type of open space provided, ensuring the efficient provision of necessary open space to allow the community to thrive.

Community Permeability and Filtered Mobility:

Permeability for pedestrians and cyclists in an urban context is key to providing a walkable community where everything is easily accessible on foot or by bike and the car is never a necessity. We strongly support the well thought through planning of this scheme to allow excellent permeability through the community for pedestrians and cyclists. Pedestrians are at all times prioritized ahead of motor vehicles and we support this in the strongest possible manner.

Cycling provision:

Cyclists are to be provided with a far safer and more pleasant environment. While this will come at some small reduction in the speed and efficiency of transit through the community by the fastest and most confident cyclists, particularly cycle commuters, this is more than compensated for by the safer and more pleasant environment for all cyclists and the vast improvement in conditions for pedestrians and the community as a whole.

The key importance of contraflow Cycling:

Key to the success of the scheme is the proposed provision of contra flow cycling on all the one-way streets. It is absolutely key to the success of this project that this is retained, as an inability of cyclists to proceed in a contra-flow direction on a number of those one-way streets would dramatically hinder the permeability of the community for cycling creating a situation where rather than very significantly improving access for cyclists, important existing cycle routes would be seriously compromised. We strongly support the inclusion of provision for contraflow cycling on all one-way streets within the scheme.

Permeability issues where the scheme connects with the Quays:

While recognizing that Sullivan's Quay and George's Quay lie outside the scope of this project it is key to the success of this project that cyclists proceeding from Southgate Bridge and Nano Nagle Bridge be able to enter either Drinan St. or at least Meade St. Otherwise cyclists trying to enter the community from the northwest, as well as all cyclist heading from the Western city centre and the entire northwest of the city to the Southeast, particularly the Douglas and Turners Cross direction, will face serious detours.

While ultimately, we would like to see contraflow cycle lanes all along the South Channel Quays, we recognize that this is both outside the scope of this present scheme and that there are significant

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issues at either end of Sullivan's key with a narrow road cross section preventing the easy provision of contra-flow cycle lanes. However, the provision of a short section from the existing contra-flow lane at Nano Nagle Bridge to ideally Drinan St. (or even just Meade St.) is all that is necessary to ensure the required permeability, as this 10-20m stretch has more than adequate space to allow the construction of a contraflow lane without any significant changes to the existing road layout.

At George's Quay, however, there will be the opportunity to use the space currently used by the bus lane to include a two-way (i.e. also eastbound contra-flow) cycle path, as the New Bus Network (BusConnects) will not see any bus routes using George's Quay anymore.

Similarly, it would be ideal if cycling traffic exiting White St. at Buckingham Place (George's Quay) could be provided with a lane to allow them to access Union Quay heading in a North-easterly direction. This would avoid significant detours for cyclists heading from the Barrack St./Tower St. direction over towards City Hall and onto the Marina.

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/>