

CORK CYCLING CAMPAIGN



member of



25-May-2023

Cork Cycling Campaign

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Bus Connects Cork


National Transport Authority Suite 358
1, Horgan's Quay, Waterfront Square,
Cork

Re: Cork Cycling Campaign – Bus Connects – B – Mayfield to City

Dear Sir or Madam,

The Cork Cycling Campaign is a voluntary group promoting utility and recreational cycling in Cork City and County. Founded in 1999, the Campaign advocates for improved conditions for Cork's cyclists and strives for recognition and promotion of cycling as a serious form of transport. Everyday cycling is of inestimable benefit to mobility in Cork: it is rapid and efficient, it contributes to a better urban environment, it improves the health of its users, and improves quality of life for all.

As a sustainable mode of travel, cycling has a central role to play in mitigating climate change by helping society transition to low energy mobility. Cork Cycling Campaign has been the voice of people cycling in Cork for 20 years; we have over 500 members and over 4,000 followers on social media, and engage regularly with the media on transport questions. The Campaign is part of Cyclist.ie, the Irish Cycling Advocacy Network, and European Cyclists'


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Federation (ECF). We are a key stakeholder in discussions on transport strategy for the region.

Introduction

The Cork Cycling Campaign welcomes BusConnects and its ambitious delivery of enhanced pedestrian and cycling infrastructure across our city and county. In recognising the potential that cycling offers as a low-carbon alternative to vehicular traffic, BusConnects should enable cyclists across this city to be able to make journeys in a safe and efficient manner. We recognise the hard work of the design teams to adhere to existing guidance on design of cycling infrastructure and hope that all suggestions made as part of this submission are welcomed as contributions which do not negate the tremendous efforts of all involved to date. That said, the submissions below are feedback compiled directly from local cyclists and pedestrians utilising these roads daily. We look forward to further engagement beyond this consultation and throughout the realisation of the plan. We hope that, in collaboration, we will see a more beautiful Cork that is safer and healthier for all.

The Cork Cycling Campaign enthusiastically participated in the first round of submissions for BusConnects last year. We would urge a further look at those submissions; they contain an in-depth look at all aspects of design as well as suggestions for placemaking, improved accessibility and adherence to the National Cycle Manual. For the purposes of the second round of submissions, we will focus on key changes made to the plans in the revisions of Emerging Preferred Routes.


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Thematic Overview

1. Ensure that at every junction, it is possible for a cyclist to make any legal manoeuvre and to join any existing cycling infrastructure where possible. The National Cycle Manual adheres to Principles of Sustainable Safety of which one is legibility. Legibility necessitates that “all potential conflicts are obvious and the resolution of the conflict is mutually understood by all road users” and that “all road users know where to position themselves” (Section 1.1.3). A sudden discontinuation of cycling infrastructure at a junction also runs contrary to the need for coherence as identified in Article 1.2.2 which asks designers to consider;
 - a. Continuity of Route: It is illogical to discontinue cycling provision near busy destinations to accommodate or maintain other traffic flow
 - b. Junctions: Cycling routes approaching, going through and exiting junctions should be obvious.
 - c. Where there is no dedicated cycle infrastructure, cyclists still need to be accounted for as road users. Given the pockets of high-density housing throughout the city, and the vision in the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS) of almost twenty million cycle trips annually, many will live off the preferred cycle routes. We, therefore, recommend the use of Advanced Stacking Locations (ASLs) and advanced bike signals throughout the scheme.

2. All integrated cycle lanes must prevent encroachment by motor vehicles by the provision of permanent segregation including kerbs and bollards where verges and street furniture such as planters are not possible. Section 1.1.7.1 of the National Cycling Manual which states that all lanes should be “self-enforcing” and is of particular significance given the frequency of illegal parking and occupation of existing cycling infrastructure in Cork and believe that this will be key to the realisation of a functional, and therefore usable, cycle network.


3. The National Cycling Manual (Section 4) recognises the importance of delivering a cycling network which is designed correctly - noting that route planning should include “the cycle routes are properly aligned, are wide enough, offer the appropriate QOS, and choose the optimum balance between the various modes and road functions”. Quality of Service can be achieved by designing routes which provide advantage to cyclists in terms of time, directness, parking availability, sociability and health. We believe this can be achieved in these new networks by

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prioritising the provision of two way, off road fully segregated cycle tracks in urban areas which supply a large number of schools and community infrastructure.

4. We discourage the use of shared spaces as they create conflict points between cyclists and pedestrians. It can be unclear to both parties and prevents passing with ease. According to Section 1.9.3 of the National Cycling Manual, shared spaces “are disliked by both pedestrians and cyclists and result in reduced Quality of Service for both modes. With the exception of purpose-designed shared streets, shared facilities should be avoided in urban areas as far as possible.” Equally, the CMATS would like “to provide a coherent, safe and attractive cycle network that will support a shift from the private car to cycling for employment and education trips”. The Cork Cycling Campaign advocates on behalf of those who commute daily via bicycle and are in agreement that shared spaces are not fit for purpose and result in reduced safety and functionality for cyclists.
 - a. Section 4.1 of the Rural Cycleway Design (offline and Greenway) gives specific guidance on when shared use is appropriate. Given the population density of the metropolitan area of Cork then full cyclist and pedestrian segregation should be considered across the network.


5. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Cork City Council has introduced new cycling infrastructure which has transformed our city. Efforts to pedestrianise areas of the city, new cycling lanes and the private car ban on Patrick Street have all helped to support a less congested, more walk and cycle friendly city. However, a lack of enforcement for those breaking the car ban and illegal parking and occupation of cycle lanes remains a source of great frustration and risk for the cyclists of the Cork Cycling Campaign. Equally, the replacement of removed bollards has been costly for our city council. The campaign is therefore advocating for strict enforcement in to include;
 - a. Permanent physical segregation of cyclists by using kerbs, verges or steel bollards - self-enforcing infrastructure,
 - b. Camera supported enforcement including the provision of an online submission portal to allow the public to upload their media (video and photographs) of infractions to an enforcing body,
 - c. Increased penalties and fine, and
 - d. Reintroduction of towing for those illegally parking on cycling infrastructure.

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6. The Cork Cycling Campaign welcomes Quiet Street Treatment, or Urban Quietways in areas of the city unsuitable for cycle tracks or lanes. Where necessary, the Cork Cycling Campaign have offered alternate routes to be considered and the advantages they offer over other routes. Utilising local knowledge of these roads and its traffic, all efforts have been made to ensure that urban quietways are fit for purpose and, most importantly, will deliver the growth of cycle trips envisioned under BusConnects.

7. Cork Cycling Campaign acknowledges and respects the rich history of our city. As such, we will be supporting the retention of historic structures including buildings, walls, laneways and any other sites of significance. We are invested in delivering a sustainable transport system which enhances our natural beauty and colourful past and therefore we welcome BusConnects' commitment to tree replanting where removal occurs.


8. The Cork Cycling Campaign notes the presence of a small but vocal minority of individuals who have raised objections *without* offering alternative solutions. While the campaign, as a committed group of volunteers, understands the importance of grassroots organising, we would equally express concerns about any group claiming to be representative of their community as a whole whilst focusing on single issues. We would invite *all* residents of our city to consider the reality of the climate crisis, the capacity of our roads and the importance of securing an efficient public transport service fit for purpose for future generations of Corkonians. Both cyclists and bus users are present throughout the city and its suburbs and are worthy of consideration in infrastructure development. Equally, while the campaign acknowledges the potential disruption to residents, only a bold plan can achieve the modal shift required to secure Cork's future prosperity. Change has to take place everywhere. Plans should therefore be considered on their merit, and not simply relocated on the basis of influential objectors.

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STC B Mayfield to City
Emerging Preferred Route

Feedback: Key Changes


1. The campaign welcomes, as per our previous submission, the introduction of bus gates along Old Youghal Road, Ballyhooley Road and Summerhill North. We believe they will be essential for the success of High Frequency Routes. While acknowledging the space constraints along this route, local residents have repeatedly observed delays caused by the meeting of two buses or HGVs combined with non-observance of parking restrictions as well as disregard for existing right turn bans - for example at O' Mahony's Avenue. It is therefore **essential** that all bus gates and turn bans be:
 - a. Operational *all day*, and not just during peak hours
 - b. Be appropriately enforced with cameras and self-enforcing segregation as per point 5 of the Thematic Overview.
2. As previously raised, gradients on York Hill will render it unsuitable for cyclists. As previously proffered, the Cork Cycling Campaign would instead recommend a route from Leitrim Street, through Hardwick Street and up Wellington Road.
3. The campaign welcomes the introduction of appropriate pedestrian infrastructure in St. Luke's, additional crossings on Ballyhooley Road and Old Youghal Road and traffic calming measures proposed for Old Youghal Road.
4. The erasure of cycle lanes along Wellington Road will mean this road **will not** be suitable for cyclists. With five schools, a childcare facility and a college, safe cycling infrastructure is desperately needed along this road. Cycling infrastructure will ensure children can safely cycle to school and are segregated from aforementioned Heavy Goods Vehicles accessing the city. We would recommend the restoration of cycling infrastructure with urgency to protect cyclists in the area. Having no safe, segregated cycleways from the city to St. Luke's, Mayfield, Ballyvolane, the Glen and other suburbs is unacceptable. A left turn ban from Summerhill North onto Middle Glanmire Road will increase the traffic volumes on Wellington Road, too. We would urge an urgent review of Wellington Road and Middle Glanmire Road plans with the above given due consideration.

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5. Painted bike symbols are not a replacement for appropriate, segregated cycling infrastructure and will seriously impact any potential for growth of cycling and active travel in the area.
6. The plans reflect an inconsistent width of road throughout Wellington Road as well as erroneously marked parking near York Hill.
7. The Cork Cycling Campaign, as per our previous submission, supports the introduction of a quietway along Middle Glanmire Road and would therefore heartily support the infrastructure along Colmcille Avenue. However, we note with concern:
 - a. As previously identified, Middle Glanmire Road hosts a number of schools, disability support services, elderly living facilities and sheltered housing. We believe that a quiet street treatment will enable those attending school, residing in the area and attending day services to safely walk along the scenic and historic road. However, in order to ensure that the road is not used as a shortcut to the city from Dunkettle Roundabout by HGVs, strategic one way sections need to be introduced. The plans define 'Quiet Street Treatment' as "directing cyclists along streets with minimal general traffic other than car users who live on the street" but there appears to be no speed or traffic reductions indicated in the plan whatsoever.
 - b. The campaign would refer to Point 8 of the Thematic Overview in discussing local opposition to cycling infrastructure - the opposition is myopic, focusing on the loss of a maximum of 4 trees rather than the broader benefit in the addition of safe cycling infrastructure for the area. Colmcille Avenue is suitably wide to facilitate segregated cycle tracks, the vast majority of houses have off-road parking and the bus service will increase in frequency, not decrease. Cars have been repeatedly obstructing footpaths in the area, risking safety of all road users and preventing those with disabilities from safely traversing the neighbourhood. As above, we believe that the sacrifice of ad-hoc parking will ultimately benefit the wider community, and especially those who use active travel and public transport to commute to school and work. Brian Dillons GAA Club, the Tank Field and Gaelscoil Gort Álainn are all accessed most conveniently on a bike via Colmcille Avenue/Iona Drive.
8. The campaign notes the following issues which have continued in the current plans highlighted in our first submission:

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- a. The pedestrian crossing on Old Youghal Road near Mayfield Sports Complex is not safe due to its placement. The apex of the hill just before the crossing and the high speed of cars along the route means that drivers will only have visibility for approximately twenty metres before reaching the crossing. We would, therefore, recommend again that it be relocated to *before* the turn off to Mount Brosna.
 - b. Traffic calming measures are important, especially for stretches of the Old Youghal Road, to include smaller corner radii, narrowing of road, raised tables for pedestrian crosses and the introduction of street furniture to naturally enforce deceleration.
 - c. There are a number of car parking spaces along Old Youghal Road placed inside the cycle track. We recommend that the cycle track be located inside the parking and appropriate buffering be placed to prevent potential conflicts between drivers and cyclists as per Section 2 of the Thematic Overview.
 - d. The campaign advocates for the provision of Advanced Stacking Locations, a 2m cycle track width, cycle signals and the reduction of shared spaces for ease, convenience and safety of cyclists.
9. There is no mention of three major infrastructure projects due to link with Corridors A and B; The Eastern Gateway Bridge, Pathfinder and Docklands Development. These are not presented in any of the literature for Corridor B, though they feature in Corridor A. The delivery of a cycle lane on the North Ring Road from Silversprings Hotel to Colmcille Avenue - as proposed in these projects - would vastly improve the interconnectivity of suburbs like Glanmire, Mayfield, St. Luke's and the city. Consistency in the literature is vital for a full understanding of BusConnects delivery.

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Summary

1. Ensure bus gates and physical infrastructure are enforced at all times, and not simply during peak hours to maximise compliance.
2. Provide increased segregation to enforce no right turn at O' Mahony's Avenue.
3. Provide a true quietway on Middle Glanmire Road - ensuring no through road from North Ring Road to St. Luke's Cross.
4. Restore two-way, segregated cycle tracks on Wellington Road.
5. Place cycle lanes inside parking on Old Youghal Road.
6. Relocate the Toucan Crossing to before the entrance of Mount Brosna.
7. Ensure that plans are appropriately linked with other Corridors, especially Corridor A and that literature for all remains consistent.

We hope the above insights will prove useful throughout the remainder of the consultation process and look forward to a cooperative relationship going forward.

Yours sincerely

Louise O' Donnell

Vice-Chairperson & Northside Infrastructure Liaison

Cork Cycling Campaign