

Senior Engineer
Cork City Council
Infrastructure Development.
City Hall,
Cork

14 June 2022

RE: Mahon Cycle Scheme

Dear Sir or Madam,

Cork Chamber represents 1,200 members together employing 100,000 people throughout Cork city, metropolitan area and county. Our vision is to be a world-leading Chamber of Commerce, delivering on a progressive economic, social and sustainability agenda at the heart of a vibrant business community.

As such, we are determined to ensure that our 203-year-old Chamber continues to create a positive legacy. Our direction is guided by our formal pledge to uphold the United Nations Sustainable Development (SDG) goals, five of which have been identified by the Chambers Ireland network, and stronger integration with our local community and the principles of sustainability, resilience, inclusion, equality and diversity.



Thank you for the opportunity to feed into the Mahon Cycle Scheme consultation. The Chamber has examined the Mahon Cycle Scheme and has a series of recommendations and observations that we believe will improve planning and delivery of a comprehensive and well-connected cycle network.

Urban Permeability & Filtered Mobility

Cork Chamber commends the Mahon Cycle Scheme and its significant role in encouraging active travel and facilitating plans in the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028 and the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy to increase the cycling modal share to 10% by 2028. The success of this scheme is one important piece of the puzzle in supporting Cork's designation to achieve climate

neutrality by 2030 but also to improving connectivity and accessibility for all throughout our city region.

The East-West link is very positive and offers good mobility for cyclists and pedestrians, as it takes account of urban permeability and offers a safe traffic free route for non-motorists.

For those considering switching their primary travel mode to cycling, safety and confidence is a key concern that often wards off this activity. Filtered urban permeability should at all times be the primary focus of a community cycle scheme to improve the safety for cyclists, as seen in the east-west link. Simply retrofitting and creating cycle lanes on roads that have been primarily designed for motorists offers little to no safety assurance for cyclists.

There are opportunities for this scheme to further increase permeability, for example at Castle Road. Cork Chamber encourages city council to introduce segregated cycling infrastructure at every possible turn and traffic calming measures to improve the quality of cycling along this road, with the goal of increasing permeability throughout.

Additionally, it is unclear in the scheme whether or not existing barriers to permeability, such as gates, will be removed or kept open at night to ensure cyclists can travel at all times and not be limited to certain hours. It is essential that such filtered mobility is not impeded and that all transport arteries are kept open at all times to increase the attractiveness of cycling.

Shared Spaces & Junctions

Cork Chamber is concerned with the excessive use of shared spaces for pedestrians and cyclists at the following junctions: Skehard Rd/Ringmahon Rd, Ringmahon Rd/Ave De Rennes, Ringmahon Rd/Castle Park, Ringmahon Rd/Skehard Rd, and Skehard Rd/Ballinure Rd.

According to the National Cycle Manual, published by the National Transport Authority, shared infrastructure spaces are disliked by pedestrians and cyclists and should be avoided in urban settings as they can result in “reduced Quality of Service for both modes”¹. Further, the Principles of Sustainable Safety suggest that walking and cycling mode paths should be segregated as often as possible, to improve the safety conditions for non-motorists.

This is of particular concern at junctions, where cycle accidents in urban areas are most likely to occur. The Principles of Sustainable Safety need be further applied to junctions to improve the safety for all and the flow of traffic. Protected junctions can make junctions safer for all road users, separating pedestrians, cyclists and motorists as they travel through it. If cycling is to become mass transit in Cork, routes must be designed to cater for larger numbers of cyclists.

The Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council’s planned cycle scheme from Dundrum to the N11 has adopted Dutch-style design principles with protected junctions² (Figures 1 & 2). We urge that best practice examples and case studies like these be considered in the design of the scheme and that any junctions with shared pedestrian and cyclist areas are redesigned to prevent pedestrian and cyclist conflicts.

¹ <https://www.cyclemanual.ie/>

² <https://irishcycle.com/2022/05/09/planned-cycle-path-between-dundrum-and-n11-features-adapted-dutch-style-junction-design/>

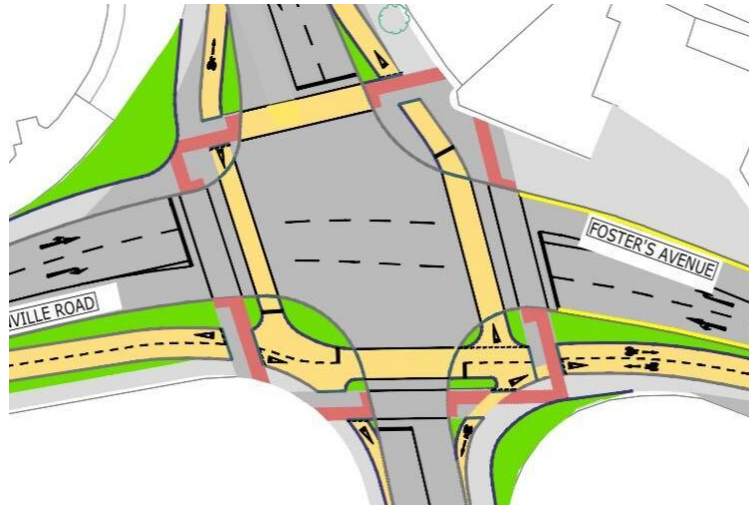


Figure 1: Proposed protected Goatstown Junction



Figure 2: Visualisation of proposed changes to Goatstown Junction, proposed by DLRR Council

Illegal Parking

At present, there are no measures in place in the scheme to prevent illegal parking of cars on cycle lanes. This is an issue throughout Cork City, including areas on Skehard Road with existing cycling infrastructure.

Not only is this a safety issue for pedestrians and cyclists, but it is also affecting people with limited mobility, prams, and children. Further, the lack of measures does not contribute towards discouraging people from using private cars as their primary travel mode. Simply addressing this issue through enforcement has its own short-comings as it is limited to the working hours of the wardens from 8am to 5pm.

Considering the urgency of the objectives that this scheme contributes towards, we recommend that the council open a public consultation on illegal parking and implement measures to prevent illegal parking on cycle paths.

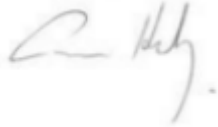
Conclusion

Cork was once a city with more cyclists than motorists on the road, until the decline of cycling culture in the 1960s and 1970s. However, with momentum re-building through cycling infrastructure

improvements and an enabling policy framework, along with Cork's designation as one of the 100 Climate-Neutral Smart-Cities by 2030, the rebirth of our active travel culture is possible if we only give it the right environment to grow.

Cork Chamber welcomes the design of this community cycling scheme and asks that all recommendations are fully considered.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Conor Healy".

Conor Healy
CEO