



The Tailor's Hall, Back Lane, Dublin 8.
E: Damien.otuama@antaisce.org
T: 01-7077064
M: +353-87-2840799

The County Secretary
Waterford County Council
Civic Offices
Dungarvan
Co. Waterford

Friday, 14 March 2014

Development of a Cycle and Pedestrian Access Route (Greenway) from Dungarvan to Kilmeaden.

Dear Sir / Madam,

I refer to the consultation process on the above scheme.

This submission is being made through the work of the National Cycling Coordinator on behalf of An Taisce and Cyclist.ie, a new position funded under the European Cyclists' Federation Leadership (ECF) Programme 2013-14. See www.ecf.com for more information on the ECF.

1. Strong Endorsement for the Project / Benefits of the Scheme

On behalf of Cyclist.ie and An Taisce, I would like to express strong support for the proposed greenway from Dungarvan to Kilmeaden. This project has the potential to create a truly stunning amenity to link Dungarvan with Waterford city traversing a beautiful landscape and revitalising a historical rail route in a new guise. This project was highlighted in the 2006 South East Regional Report of the Strategy for the Development of Irish Cycle Tourism produced for Fáilte Ireland (Colin Buchanan and Sustrans 2006) and forms part of Euro Velo Route #1.

An Taisce warmly welcomes the construction of high quality cycle routes by Local Authorities, where their impact on the built and natural environment has been thoroughly assessed and where they have been designed and constructed in a manner sensitive to those environmental considerations.

We expect that this route will bring tourism into Dungarvan town and Waterford city and into the towns along the route. It will offer a valuable amenity which should help persuade already-committed visitors to County Waterford to stay a little longer and persuade others

to visit the area for the first time. It has great potential to become a valuable recreational, economic and social resource for the area – in the way that the very successful Great Western Greenway has become for Mayo. Furthermore, for example, it will give those attending local festivals and various events additional ways to spend their time and this will help to nurture strong local cycle hire and guided cycle tour businesses – thus creating further employment in Waterford County.

In line with the aims of the National Cycle Policy Framework (Department of Transport 2009), the proposed cycle greenway should help prompt an increase in cycling and walking in Co. Waterford. The route will appeal to several different types of users:

- firstly, the cycling visitors and locals wishing to cycle all, or at least a significant length, of the Irish leg of the spectacular EuroVelo “Atlantic Coast” Route #1 (European Cyclists' Federation 2013) – Figure 1 below;
- secondly, (local) recreational riders, including families with young children, who may be less experienced and who may wish to avoid the busier, more heavily trafficked roads;
- thirdly, cycling commuters and utility cyclists travelling (in particular) into Dungarvan town, Waterford city and other towns along the route so as to access a range of amenities (shops, leisure facilities, schools, employment centres etc.) via quieter and safer routes.



Figure 1 – Euro-velo Network. Euro-velo Route #1 “Atlantic Coast” runs from Scandinavia to the Algarve via Co Waterford (European Cyclists' Federation 2013)

Furthermore, we would hope that the facility will help reduce car local usage in the area thus helping to relieve local congestion in the surrounding towns. The amenity could also be used creatively so as to get school children back cycling again and developing life-long healthier habits.

2. Making All Roads in Waterford Safe for Cycling – as well as Creating Greenways

One concern we do have with cycleways / greenways is that they can sometimes generate the idea that cyclists have no place on the ordinary roads. There is insufficient attention being paid to improving driving (and indeed cycling) standards on local authority managed roads and consequently, we are now seeing a new generation of cyclists who, whether from parental pressure or their own lack of confidence, will only cycle on traffic-free paths. We see teenagers in some estates – even those without through-traffic or much traffic - where cycling within the estates is confined to the footpath only. One also sees the ridiculous situation where people now drive to somewhere (e.g. local parks) in order to cycle.

So, while greenways and trails have an important role to play as amenities for those who don't feel comfortable in hostile car-dominated traffic, they cannot reduce the need for bicycle equality and safety on the country's roads. Adequate and well maintained hard shoulders, cycle-friendly road design, motorist education and law enforcement, as well as traffic reduction policies, are the most effective way to increase cycling numbers.

3. Biodiversity and Enhancing the User Experience

The route will enable users to enjoy a direct experience of the natural biodiversity of the area. Therefore it will be beneficial to both to biodiversity and to the cyclist / walker experience to retain as many natural features as possible. For example, hedgerows provide important shelter for cyclists as well as for birds and other wildlife.

The report outlines measures for conservation of that biodiversity in the construction and maintenance of the greenway and it is to be welcomed that:

- Vegetation clearance takes place outside of the nesting season, as prescribed under the Wildlife Act. It is important that both clearance and construction works takes place in the period September 1st to February 28th, in order to avoid disturbance of wildlife
- No herbicides will be used
- The removal of hedgerow and scrub will be carried out only where absolutely necessary
- Lighting in the tunnel will be bat-friendly

In addition to these, we suggest that:

- the use of heavy machinery is avoided where at all possible
- hedgerows are left “wild” ie untrimmed wherever possible
- the lighting option in the tunnel is sensor-activated, so that illumination is minimised.

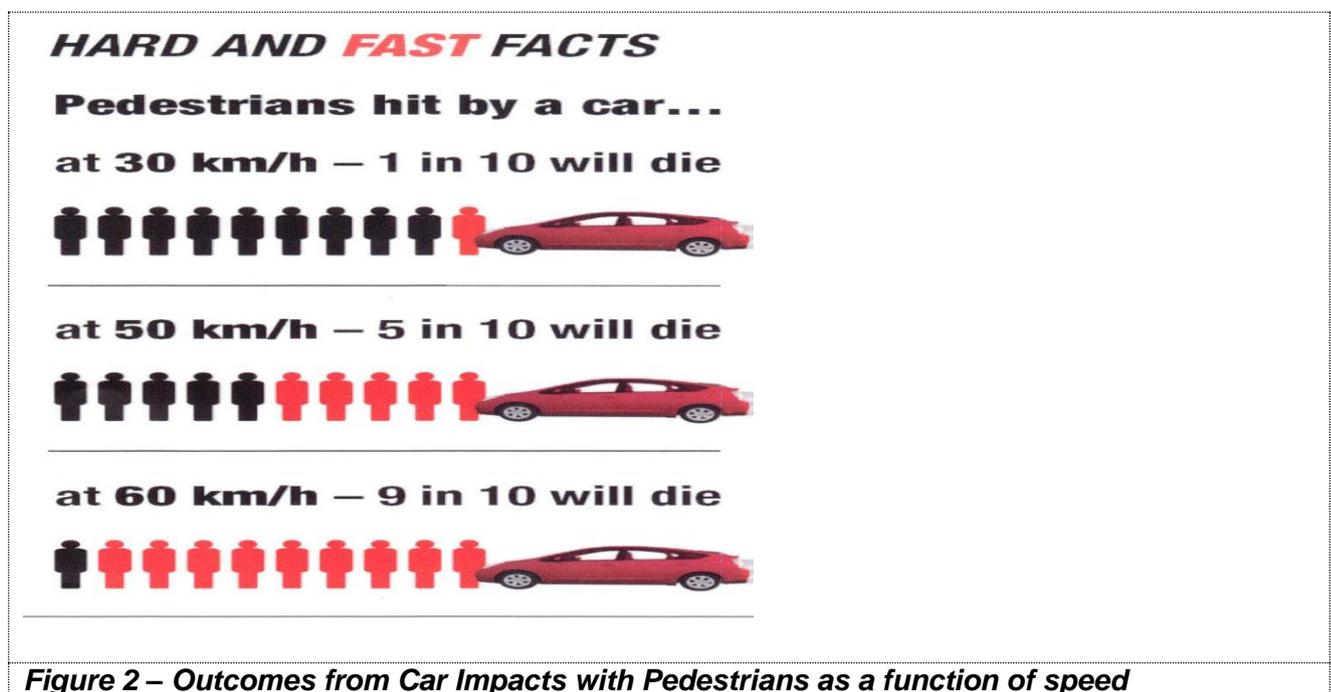
4. Improving Access to and from the Greenway

We strongly recommend that access be provided to as many adjacent developments and destinations as possible in order to maximise the utility of the route. This should, of course, include any bus and rail connections, and features that would be of interest to tourists such as accommodation, food, entertainment, sights, heritage features, attractions etc.

5. Safer 30kmh Speed Limits for Roads in Adjacent Urban Areas

There is an increasing trend to provide 30km/h speed limit zones in urban areas to improve safety and so enhance the urban environment especially from pedestrians' and cyclists' perspectives. The recently published revision of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) encourages the further introduction of 30km/h zones in urban areas, and outlines the safety differences of different speed levels. See the copy (of Figure 4.2) from DMURS in Figure 2 below (T. a. S. Department of Transport and Department of Environment 2013).

Given the likelihood of increased numbers of cyclists and pedestrians accessing the cycle greenway at various access points along its length, it is strongly recommended that Waterford County Council introduce a 30km/h speed limit in these adjacent zones especially in the vicinity of the residential areas, schools, sports grounds and other busy locations (if not already in place).



6. Bicycle Parking along the Route

It is strongly recommended that the opportunity is seized to introduce plenty of (attractive and sheltered!) bicycle parking stands at amenities and in the built-up areas along and next to the proposed facility. Such cycle parking stands will be well received by cycling tourists and by locals.

For details of cycle parking planning and design, see Chapter 5 of the National Cycle Manual (National Transport Authority 2011).

7. Signage

The provision of the cycleway is likely to generate increased cycle (and pedestrian) activity on the surrounding roads. The Local Authority should provide appropriate signage on the adjacent roads to warn motorists of the increased likelihood of encountering (young and potentially inexperienced) cyclists on the road.

8. Public Art

An Taisce acknowledges that very long stretches of cycle route through some surroundings can create a less than ideally stimulating environment. Canal-side and railway line cycle and walking routes can suffer particularly from this weakness. It is for this reason that public art is an essential element of the UK National Cycle Network. It is strongly recommended that the design consultants and the Council reflect on the great potential for enhancing the visual interest and place-making dimensions of the route by incorporating quality public art and other design features into the scheme. See, for example, the website of Sustrans (2014) as per the list of references in Appendix I.

9. Upkeep

An essential part of a successful cycleway is upkeep. A route can easily fall into disrepair with broken glass, litter and uneven surfaces immediately making the track undesirable to the public.

We would like to highlight the need for a maintenance regime to be put in place which is specified and executed in a manner sensitive and appropriate to the environmental considerations.

10. Opportunities to link with Green Schools

The Green School Initiative is a highly publicised, student-led initiative operated by An Taisce. Sustainable travel is an integral part of the programme amongst other aspects of sustainable living. We note that there are a number of schools/colleges directly adjacent to the proposed scheme.

We would encourage you to assess if the schools are involved in Green Schools and, if so, that the cycle route is incorporated into and promoted through the initiative. In this way, it could prove to be an excellent platform to heighten awareness and increase cycle traffic on the proposed route, thus facilitating in its success.

11. Conclusion

An Taisce warmly welcomes the construction of the walking / cycling route between Dungarvan and Kilmeaden (and ultimately to Waterford city) along the identified corridor.

We believe that the facility has enormous potential to help create a wonderful tourism and recreational product for those in South East and to be a critical link in the Euro Velo Atlantic Coastal Route. If carefully linked to local amenities, it could also become a terrific utility cycling route as well.

An Taisce trusts that our commentary will assist Waterford County Council in advancing an effective scheme.

I would be grateful if you could acknowledge receipt of this submission and advise us of any further decisions made in regard to this application.

Yours faithfully,

Damien Ó Tuama,
Cyclist.ie / An Taisce Cycling Coordinator,
The Tailor's Hall,
Back Lane,
Dublin 8.
E: Damien.otuama@antaisce.org
T: 01-7077064
M: +353-87-2840799

APPENDIX I – REFERENCES

- Colin Buchanan and Sustrans (2006), 'South East Regional Report of the Strategy for the Development of Irish Cycle Tourism'.
- Department of Transport (2009), 'National Cycle Policy Framework', (Department of Transport).
- Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (2013), 'Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets'.
- European Cyclists' Federation 'Eurovelo - The European cycle route network ', <<http://www.eurovelo.com/en/images/eurovelo-map>>, accessed 18/July 2013.
- National Transport Authority 'National Cycle Manual', <<http://www.cyclemanual.ie/>>, accessed 16/May 2013.
- Sustrans 'Art on the National Cycle Network', <<http://www.sustrans.org.uk/ncn/map/information/national-cycle-network/art>>, accessed 22/August 2013.