

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

DRAFT TRALEE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT
LOCAL AREA PLAN 2018 - 2024

**KERRY CYCLING CAMPAIGN
OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

May 2018

About the Kerry Cycling Campaign

The Kerry Cycling Campaign was established in 2014. The aim of the campaign is to ensure Kerry's cyclists have a strong voice, in order to make Kerry a better cycling environment for sustainable transport, recreation and tourism.

The main objectives of the campaign are as follows:

- Highlight opportunities for improving and promoting cycling as an enjoyable, healthy and sustainable mode of transport for all.
- Provide proactive input to Local Authority infrastructure projects highlighting best practice from a cyclist point of view.
- Campaign for cycling related tourism and recreational projects in the Kerry.
- Liaise with and support state agencies, as well as commercial and voluntary organisation in the promotion of cycling initiatives.
- Provide a platform for cyclists in Kerry.
- Coordinate with other national and regional campaign groups in order to have issues which affect Kerry cyclists addressed at a national level.

Kerry Cycling Campaign is affiliated with Cyclist.ie – The Irish Cycling Advocacy Network

Commentary on Cycling as a Means of Transport in Tralee

Tralee currently has a great demand for cycle infrastructure. According to the 2011 census reports, at 4.4%, Tralee urban had the highest proportion of commuter cyclists in the state after the cities of Dublin and Galway. It is worrying that despite an increase nationally in cycle commuting of 43%, the percentage of cycle commuters in Tralee actually declined over the same period to 3.1%.

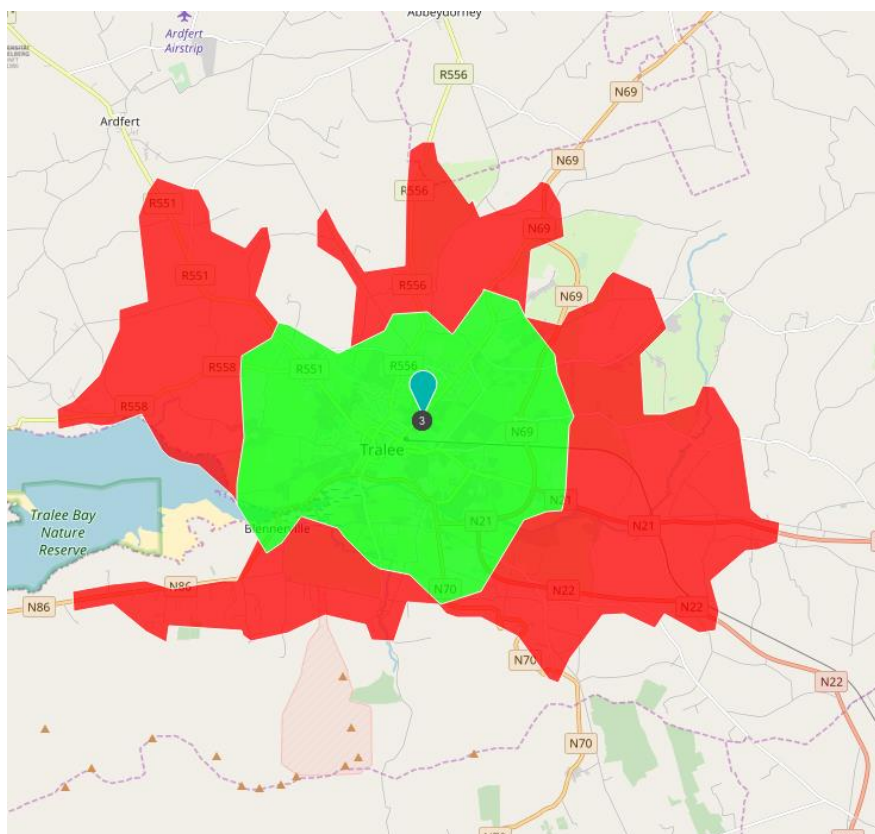
Tralee town's cycle infrastructure leaves a lot to be desired, especially in the case of dedicated off-road cycleways. This issue is highlighted in the *Tralee Transportation Strategy*:

“The existing cycle lane provision is disjointed and lacks the connectivity needed for a high quality cycle network.

The primary cause of concern with regards to cyclists and pedestrians is that the current infrastructure is inadequate. It is felt that there is a lack of off road cycleways and pedestrian routes.”

The town of Tralee also has one of the highest inflow of commuters of any town in the country (5,148) coupled with the fact that over 65% of all commuter trips in the county are under 30 minutes, the development of quality cycle infrastructure could play a pivotal role in the realisation of the government target that 10% of all commuting trips be by bike by the year 2020.

As a town, Tralee is ideal for cycling, flat and relatively compact, as the map below shows all the entire urban area (green) is within a 15 minute cycle

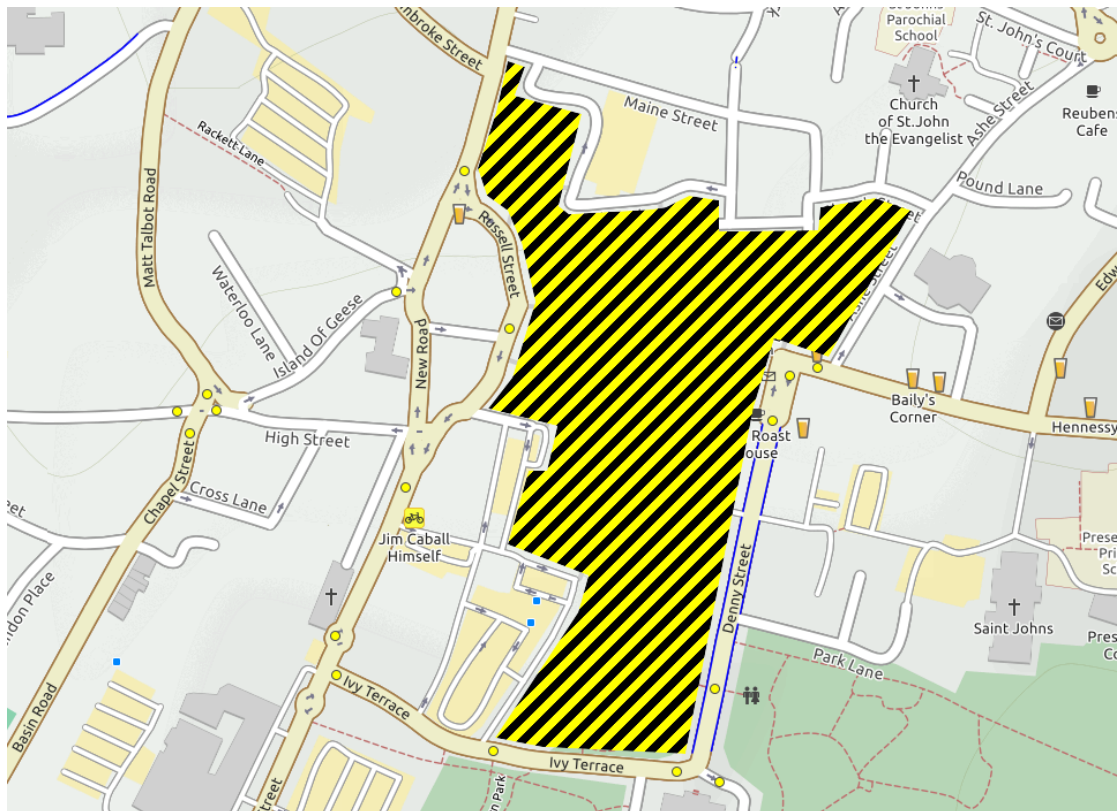


The development of Tralee over the previous decades, similar to other Irish towns and cities has had the effect of dissuading people from walking and cycling, meaning the car has become the norm as a mode for even the shortest trips for the most basic purposes such as the local shop or school run.

If the town is to grow and prosper it is essential that it is made more accessible and that the person is the focus rather than the automobile, the Scottish Town Centre Toolkit puts it well:

“Where there is competition for limited road space, the golden rule should be to favour the pedestrian, the cyclist, public transport and the private car - in that order. All transport modes are necessary to make town centres attractive, accessible and active, but the aim should always be to make town centres people-friendly. “

While there has been great improvement in accessibility in the town centre for pedestrians over the last couple of years mainly due to the Tralee Active Travel Town Project the same cannot be said for cyclists, not only is cycling prohibited in the town centre, but it is also impermeable as shown in the image below, this impermeability is further exasperated depending on the direction of travel due to one way streets e.g. Russell Street, Ashe Street etc.



Recommendations.

The Kerry Cycling Campaign believe that specific planning and development objectives in relation to sustainable mobility are necessary in order to effect change during the life of the proposed plan. Section 2.1.2 of the Draft Tralee District Local Area Plan outlines the strategic high level goals and it is notable that 2 of the 10 shared goals relate to sustainable mobility & a transition to a low carbon society. We have reviewed the draft document and observe that the proposed objectives both at strategic & settlement level do not adequately address the shared goals of the National Planning Framework in relation to sustainable transport.

The following specific recommendations are made and justifications for the recommendations are outlined.

Section 2.1.4 Overall Strategic Development Objectives

Recommendation 01: Insert an additional overall strategic development objective as follows:

Facilitate the development of walking & cycling routes and smarter travel initiatives, such as the use of electric vehicles, in order to promote sustainable mobility.

Recommendation 02: Modify objective OS-07 as follows:

Provide for the development of the area in a manner which is environmentally sustainable, **promotes a modal shift to sustainable transport** and protects its social, cultural, environmental and economic assets for future generations.

Recommendation 03: Modify objective OS-11 as follows:

Facilitate improvements to the town and village centres, with an enhanced streetscape, appropriate shopfront design and provision for improved street lighting, public footpaths, **facilities for cyclists** and street furniture.

Reason for the recommendations: The 12 no. draft objectives do not currently address the issue of sustainable mobility.

Section 2.6.5 Cycle Paths / Walkways / Greenways

While this section highlights the benefits that dedicated cycle paths, walkways and greenways can deliver in terms of tourism and recreation there is no mention of the potential for their use for commuter transport to work, school, shopping etc. or utility cycling. It is also important to ensure connectivity of these routes to shops, schools and other facilities such as public transport stations/stops.

Recommendation 04: Modify objective TR-R-AI-07 as follows:

Facilitate the interconnection of existing and proposed **cycle paths & greenways** throughout the county. **Develop a masterplan for all Cycle Paths & Greenways in the district prioritising the coherence of the network and linking greenways to the urban centres.**

Recommendation 05: Insert an additional development objective after TR-R-AI-08 as follows:

Facilitate the development and promotion of Eurovelo Route 1 where it passes through Tralee Municipal District.

Recommendation 06: Insert an additional development objective after TR-R-AI-08 as follows:

Carry out an audit of cycling infrastructure and policy by a recognised cycling audit system.

Reason for the recommendations: The coherence & connectivity of the cyclepath network continues to be a significant problem in the district and it is an important issue for current & potential future users of the network. There have been numerous examples of development where opportunities to enhance the connectivity & coherence of the network have not transpired, e.g. connectivity of the Tralee Bypass cycleway to the urban centre, Ballyseedy Wood (old Primary road entrance) to the Tralee Bypass, the Rock Street greenway crossing / signage, the An Bord Pleanala requirement for additional connectivity to urban areas in the recent Listowel Bypass proposal. (It is noted that objectives TR-RI-04 & 05 address one of these issues, however it is a more general problem that needs to be addressed).

It is noted that the section 2.6.5 only refers to cycle paths in relation to tourism & amenity potential. Whilst this may be true for long distance rural greenways it should be recognised that in the environs of urban areas it is fundamentally incorrect not address the role that cycle paths and greenways would play in facilitating sustainable transport. It is the opinion of the Kerry Cycling Campaign that there would be a significant improvement in the numbers of cycling commuters along the currently proposed greenways in the environs of urban areas. It is important to ensure that there are adequate and carefully planned connectivity points to facilitate this along all proposed greenways.

Eurovelo Route 1 - The Atlantic Coast route, part of the planned trans-European cycle network is proposed to pass through Tralee Municipal District, This route would be in line with the route indicated on the Fáilte Ireland Cycle Network published as part of their document '*A strategy for the development of Irish cycle tourism*' as well as in the NCPF. This is proposed to form part of the Great Southern Trail, the Limerick section already being a recognised part of the Eurovelo route, the remaining route to the south as yet to be defined.

<http://www.eurovelo.com/en/eurovelos/eurovelo-1>

Section 3.1.1 Development in the Tralee Municipal District Settlements

Recommendation 07: Modify objective TR-BE-01 as follows:

Support initiatives to strengthen and improve the physical environment of the towns and villages of the Tralee Municipal District area with enhanced streetscapes, appropriate shopfront design and provision for improved street lighting, public footpaths, **facilities for cyclists** and street furniture.

Recommendation 08: Insert an additional development objective after TR-BE-04 as follows:

Promote a more cycle friendly environment through the provision of improved cycling infrastructure. Developments in urban areas shall have regard to the 'National Cycling Manual' (June 2011) – National Transport Authority.

Recommendation 09: Insert an additional development objective after TR-BE-04 as follows:

Facilitate the appointment of a Local Authority Cycling Officer at an appropriate senior level to oversee the delivery of the cycling related strategy.

Reason for the recommendations: To complement the proposed objective TR-BE-04 which specifically highlights pedestrian friendly environments. The appointment of Local Authority Cycling Officer is a requirement of the National Cycling Policy Framework (2009) Department of Transport.

Section 3.1.4 Villages

Recommendation 10: Modify objective V-03 as follows:

Facilitate improvements to the village centre, with an enhanced streetscape, appropriate shopfront design and provision for improved street lighting, public footpaths, **facilities for cyclists** and street furniture.

Reason for recommendation: It is necessary to also consider facilities for cyclists in the redevelopment of villages. For example, it would be important to connect Ardferf village to the proposed greenway and all neighbourhood centres should be required to have cycle stands.

Section 3.1.5 Development Nodes

Recommendation 11: Modify objective VN-03 as follows:

Promote the development of lands closest to the development node centre in the first instance and the development of good pedestrian, **cyclist** and amenity links.

Recommendation 12: Modify objective VN-04 as follows:

Ensure that roadside development within the development node should be sited and designed to ensure that the development potential of backland sites is not compromised and that suitable vehicular, **cyclist** and pedestrian access to these lands is retained.

Reason for recommendation: Mobility should be considered in terms of all three modes.

Section 3.2.7 Roads & Infrastructure

Similar to the points raised at 2.6.5 above greenways are only included as having amenity is no mention of the potential for their use for commuter transport to work, school, shopping etc. or utility cycling nor their potential role in delivering on overall strategic objectives for sustainable transport.

It is noted that the draft local area plan does not refer the necessity of completing the remaining objectives in the Tralee Active Town Plan e.g. the Blennerville to Dromtacker cycle route and 30km speed zone.

Recommendation 13: Modify objective TR-RI-10 as follows:

Facilitate improvement of existing footpaths, **cycle paths** and road network and support future projects for footpaths, **cycle paths** and roads.

Recommendation 14: Insert an additional development objective after TR-RI-01 as follows:

Facilitate the development of a cycling network strategy for Tralee Town.

Recommendation 15: Insert an additional development objective after TR-RI-01 as follows:

Complete the development of the 6km cycle path from Forge Cross to Blennerville Village, linking the Institute of Technology Tralee to Blennerville via the Town Centre as per Tralee Active Travel plan.

Reason for recommendation 14: The current Tralee Transport Strategy (TTS) 2011 does not provide a credible cycling network strategy and in recent years has largely been ignored with regard to cycling infrastructure planning & development. For example, the Rock Street to Tralee Railway Station greenway is not included in the TTS and the TTS proposal for the Listowel Road cycle paths has proven to be impractical. The TTS states that the 'cycling network strategy for Tralee is an integral part of the overall Tralee Transport Strategy' however, the section relating to cycling infrastructure is generic and accounts for only 3 pages in the entire strategy.

In particular, the proposed network map is unsatisfactory and lacks credibility for the following reasons:

- There are numerous missing links.
- The proposed network lacks coherence or planning in accordance with current technical standards & manuals.
- The terms used for links types are ambiguous are not recognised terms in of current technical standards & manuals.
- The implied use of INTEGRATED / MIXED ('Cycle Friendly') link types in a cycle network is not appropriate because the use of this link type should normally be limited to locations where there are low traffic volumes and speeds.
- The extent of the map is unnecessarily restricted and does not show the northern sector of the town. The Institute of Technology, Killeen Road (with Gael Scoile), Bracker O'Regan cycleway and Mounthawk (largest school in Kerry) are not included.

It is essential that a credible and comprehensive cycling network strategy including a network map is prepared for Tralee Town. It is noted that an Infrastructure Map is included in the Draft Local Area Plan but is completely inadequate. For example, the proposed infrastructure referred to in objectives TR-RI-04 & 05 is not shown.

Contact for this submission:

John Jones
Chartered Engineer
087 6294595

john@kerrycyclingcampaign.org

kerrycyclingcampaign.org

SUMMARY OF 15 No. RECOMMENDATIONS (Proposed wordings are in **bold**)

01: Insert an additional overall strategic development objective as follows:

Facilitate the development of walking & cycling routes and smarter travel initiatives, such as the use of electric vehicles, in order to promote sustainable mobility.

02: Modify objective OS-07 as follows:

Provide for the development of the area in a manner which is environmentally sustainable, **promotes a modal shift to sustainable transport** and protects its social, cultural, environmental and economic assets for future generations.

03: Modify objective OS-11 as follows:

Facilitate improvements to the town and village centres, with an enhanced streetscape, appropriate shopfront design and provision for improved street lighting, public footpaths, **facilities for cyclists** and street furniture.

04: Modify objective TR-R-AI-07 as follows:

Facilitate the interconnection of existing and proposed **cycle paths & greenways** throughout the county. **Develop a masterplan for all Cycle Paths & Greenways in the district prioritising the coherence of the network and linking greenways to the urban centres.**

05: Insert an additional development objective after TR-R-AI-08 as follows:

Facilitate the development and promotion of Eurovelo Route 1 where it passes through Tralee Municipal District.

06: Insert an additional development objective after TR-R-AI-08 as follows:

Carry out an audit of cycling infrastructure and policy by a recognised cycling audit system.

07: Modify objective TR-BE-01 as follows:

Support initiatives to strengthen and improve the physical environment of the towns and villages of the Tralee Municipal District area with enhanced streetscapes, appropriate shopfront design and provision for improved street lighting, public footpaths, **facilities for cyclists** and street furniture.

08: Insert an additional development objective after TR-BE-04 as follows:

Promote a more cycle friendly environment through the provision of improved cycling infrastructure. Developments in urban areas shall have regard to the 'National Cycling Manual' (June 2011) – National Transport Authority.

09: Insert an additional development objective after TR-BE-04 as follows:

Facilitate the appointment of a Local Authority Cycling Officer at an appropriate senior level to oversee the delivery of the cycling related strategy.

10: Modify objective V-03 as follows:

Facilitate improvements to the village centre, with an enhanced streetscape, appropriate shopfront design and provision for improved street lighting, public footpaths, **facilities for cyclists** and street furniture.

11: Modify objective VN-03 as follows:

Promote the development of lands closest to the development node centre in the first instance and the development of good pedestrian, **cyclist** and amenity links.

12: Modify objective VN-04 as follows:

Ensure that roadside development within the development node should be sited and designed to ensure that the development potential of backland sites is not compromised and that suitable vehicular, **cyclist** and pedestrian access to these lands is retained.

13: Modify objective TR-RI-10 as follows:

Facilitate improvement of existing footpaths, **cycle paths** and road network and support future projects for footpaths, **cycle paths** and roads.

14: Insert an additional development objective after TR-RI-01 as follows:

Facilitate the development of a cycling network strategy for Tralee Town.

15: Insert an additional development objective after TR-RI-01 as follows:

Complete the development of the 6km cycle path from Forge Cross to Blennerville Village, linking the Institute of Technology Tralee to Blennerville via the Town Centre as per Tralee Active Travel plan.