

# Submission on Public Consultation on Tralee to Fenit Amenity Trail

Transition Kerry - Transport Working Group  
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**TRANSITION KERRY**

Building a resilient  
community and economy

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The Transport Working Group of Transition Kerry welcome and support the proposed Tralee to Fenit Amenity Trail which is currently in the public consultation phase as required by Part 8 of the Planning & Development Regulations. Transition Kerry encourages sustainable transport & recreation wherever possible and this project has the potential to provide an important transport 'spine' from Mounthawk to the town centre. The Tralee – Fenit Amenity trail when eventually completed will be mainly for recreational use and this would be a very welcome development. It is important to note that the proposed section from Mounthawk to Rock Street also has a valuable function as a transport amenity for the local communities, linking existing residential areas both to the town centre and to each other.

The following observations and recommendations are made:

### **1. Strategic Importance of the Proposed Route.**

The proposed trail has a strategic importance and is part of the proposed National Cycling Network (National Cycling Network Scoping Study, August 2010, Smarter Travel/NRA/DOT, p22). It is noted that in many urban areas providing a high quality linkage from the outskirts to the centre is very difficult; however the proposed walking/cycling trail will provide an excellent direct link to the town centre from the North.

It would be highly desirable to connect with the Tralee Public Transport Hub (Casement Station) in a future extension of the proposed trail. The National Cycle Policy Framework (Dept. of Transport, [www.smartertravel.ie](http://www.smartertravel.ie)) states the following: *'Policy Objective 8.1 Safe Routes to Stations: We will require Local Authorities to provide safe and attractive cycling routes to PT (Public Transport) stations / stops in collaboration with the PT operator. This might include, for example, the creation of a new entrance or route across lands owned by the PT agency / provider.'*

Mounthawk Mercy Secondary School is the largest secondary school in Kerry and would benefit from having a direct and continuous safe cycling route to the town. If the trail was continued from Rock Street to the Listowel Road then CBS Primary, Clonalour would also have direct access to this transport route. This will be important in the medium term. The National Cycle Policy Framework (Dept. of Transport, [www.smartertravel.ie](http://www.smartertravel.ie)) states the following: *'Policy Objective 4.1 Safe Cycling Routes: We will provide safe cycling routes to all primary and secondary schools and third level colleges by 2020. An audit will be carried out of every school / routes leading to the school from residential areas.'*

It is recommended that a continuation of the trail from Rock Street to Ashe Street / Listowel Road / Casement Station is developed as a priority. It is also recommended that all works at the ends of the proposed section of the trail will allow for a seamless continuation of the route when other phases are developed.

## **2. Signage.**

The inclusion of appropriate signage at all entrances is very desirable to raise public awareness of the facility. Signage is not shown on the proposed drawings.

It is recommended that signs showing destination / distance / cycling & walking map should be included at regular intervals and all entry points to the trail.

## **3. Car Parking.**

The proposal includes 28 public car parking spaces at the Rock Street Entrance. Arrangements should be put in place to ensure that the primary use of this car-park is for local business and users of the proposed trail. It would be undesirable if this car-park became a long stay car-park for the town centre. It is difficult to envisage how users of the trail could be differentiated from other potential users of the car park and how this could be regulated satisfactorily. The provision of additional car parking for the general public is not an essential aspect of the proposed development at this location.

It is an objective of Kerry County Council to promote local looped walks (Objective SG 9-32 Kerry County Development Plan 2009-2015) and it could be considered that the proposed trail together with Bracker O'Regan road and Monavalley would provide a looped walk. Such an amenity may benefit from some car parking along the route; however it is not necessary to provide this parking near the town centre.

The following recommendations are made:

- It is recommended that at least 8 no. car parking spaces (on the South-West side) and the loading bay are removed from the proposed layout at the Rock Street Entrance and replaced with a dedicated pedestrian / cycling route along the route of the disused railway extending to the public road.
- It is recommended that car parking facilities for users wishing to complete a loop walk would be developed on the outskirts of the town. This would encourage users to walk towards the centre of the town and not the other way.
- It is recommended that a further phase of the trail be continued from Rock Street to the Tralee Railway/Bus Station. Users of the trail wishing to start in Tralee Town centre and travel the full trail to Fenit (when developed) should be encouraged to use the public transport hub or use the existing car parking facilities which are available in the vicinity of Tralee Railway/Bus Station.

#### 4. Rock Street Entrance.

It is noted that the proposed Rock Street entrance is essentially a carpark from the point of view the general public on Rock Street. Consideration should be given to bringing the cycle-way / trail right out to the main public road. There are a number of reasons for doing this.

- It will improve the **security** at this entrance by eliminating hidden areas and providing ongoing security from passing traffic on the main public road. It would increase visibility: the ability to see and be seen.
- It would help **promote** the amenity if the trail was very visible from Rock Street.
- An improved junction between the trail and Rock Street would enhance **safety** for both pedestrians and cyclists. No dedicated footways / cycle tracks between the start of the trail and Rock Street are shown in the proposed plans. Users of the trail must walk or cycle through a car park. The National Cycling Manual has recommendations for junctions / crossings at the end of cycleways. Typical junction crossings are shown in section 4.7 of the Manual. (National Transport Authority, <http://www.cyclemanual.ie>)
- A **continuation of the trail** from Rock Street to the Railway Station is very feasible and therefore the design of the Rock Street Entrance / junction should allow for this future development.
- Consideration should be given to the inclusion of **a crossing** at this point to enhance safety. Again the National Cycling Manual section 4.7 provides guidance.

It is recommended that the junction/car park is redesigned to allow for direct access for pedestrians / cyclists from the proposed trail to Rock Street. (i.e. the trail continues along the line of the railway as far as the public road and the proposed trail is then completely visible from Rock Street.) It is also recommended that the footpath on Rock Street adjacent to the proposed trail entrance (on the side of the proposed entrance) is upgraded to form a continuous pedestrian route.

#### 5. Mounthawk Entrance.

At the Mounthawk Entrance to the proposed trail links with existing off-road cycleways / footpaths on either side of the Bracker O'Regan Road.

It is recommended that clear road / surface markings are used to integrate the existing footpaths / cycleways with the proposed trail. Consideration should be given to the inclusion of **a crossing** at this point to enhance safety. The National Cycling Manual section 4.7 provides guidance.

## **6. Additional Access Points.**

It has been noted earlier that the proposed trail could provide an important transport 'spine' from Mounthawk to the town centre. The current proposal has limited access to the trail (Mounthawk & Rock Street entrances, access points from Connolly Park & St. Brendan's Park).

Consideration should be given to increasing the number of access points to the trail for the following reasons:

- It would allow for greater usage from the local residential communities for both recreation and access to the town / Mounthawk.
- Greater usage ultimately enhances security.

It is noted that consultation & agreement with the local residential communities would be essential in the development of additional access points.

### **Transport Working Group of Transition Kerry**

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## WHAT IS TRANSITION KERRY ?

Transition Kerry is part of a local, national & international initiative which aims to get local communities to think about making themselves more resilient, in response to three major things that are happening in our world:  
CLIMATE CHANGE, PEAK OIL & ECONOMIC CHANGE

It is about creating awareness and networks to ensure that local sustainability is at the core of all actions & decisions made at local, national & international levels. Transition Kerry's objective is to accelerate change through inspiring, encouraging, supporting, networking and training our communities as they consider and then implement their vision for the future they want to live in.

Transition Kerry has a number of different working groups which each have a different area of focus , the Transport working group is investigating means of establishing an environmentally sustainable traffic and transport solutions for Kerry.

Transition Kerry is a community initiative supported by Kerry County Council and North & East Kerry Development.

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