

Improving Pedestrian & Cycle Connectivity at Aughmalogue Bridge

Introduction

This revision to the City and County Development Plan presents an opportunity to improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity at Aughmalogue Bridge on the R712/Dublin Road.

Issues

The current footpaths on each side of the R712, under Aughmalogue Bridge, are particularly narrow. These footpaths are very narrow, measuring no more than 600mm in some places. The R712 is a busy road with plenty of HGV and LGV traffic.

The footpath is difficult to navigate for pedestrians, particularly those with buggies, children or pets. There is no cycleway under the bridge so cyclists must share the narrow roadway with vehicular traffic.

This is an obvious safety concern and acts as a major disincentive to modal shift to people whose journeys take them via this route.

Pedestrian and cycle connectivity on the city side of the bridge is very good with dedicated pedestrian footpaths and cycle lanes on each side of the carriage way. Pedestrian and cycle connectivity is also good on the Paulstown side of the bridge with footpaths to Cillín Hill and a wide hard shoulder on the R712 almost all the way to Paulstown and beyond.

Proposal

Consideration should be given to including a specific objective within the revised plan to improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity at Aughmalogue Bridge.

Possible Solution

Improving connectivity may be achieved by creating a foot and cycle path through the eye of the bridge to the north of the R712, as illustrated in Figure 1. This may be of a similar and complimentary style to the Ossory Bridge, beneath the N10, see Figure 2. There is a similar example to be seen where St Francis' bridge links to the footpath at Michael's street, see figure 3.

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Figure 1 Possible Pedestrian and Cycle Linkage



Figure 2 Ossory Bridge, Pedestrian Linkage



Figure 3 St Francis Bridge Pedestrian Link to Michael St.

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Rationale

This objective would contribute towards many of the objectives contained within the draft plan.

Safety

This area has a history of serious road traffic incidents so there is a clear road safety benefit to separating pedestrians and cyclists from vehicular traffic. Section 5.3 of the draft city plan includes a number of objectives that would all be enhanced by the inclusion of a specific objective to improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity at Aughmalogue Bridge. Removing this pinch point would “join the dots” on 10’s of kilometres of safe cycling routes.

Modal Shift

It is clear that the plan places a clear emphasis on climate change and reducing the dependency on cars. Sections 5.5 and 5.6 of the draft plan deal with this specifically. This pinch point is a major obstacle to achieving this modal shift.

Addressing this issue would contribute towards the development of a compact, 10 minute city, by providing a safe link to the growing variety of facilities in Cillín Hill, including retail, fitness, childcare and employment generally. It would also facilitate pedestrian and cycle traffic to the event centre in Lyrath.

Tourism

Tourism is clearly a very important part of the fabric of Kilkenny. This is dealt with under section 3.2 of the draft plan. Improving the cycle connectivity in particular would enhance the attractiveness of Kilkenny for touring cyclists and would open up access to by cyclists to the East Kilkenny Cycle Route.

Heritage

Aughmalogue Bridge was built between 1845 and 1850 as part of the expansion of the Great Southern and Western Railway Line. It is of interest from an architectural and a heritage perspective, however it is not easily appreciated given its location on a busy roadway. Creating a walkway through the bridge would create a unique perspective of the structure and help enhance Kilkenny’s reputation as a heritage destination.

Conclusion

Taking the points raised into consideration there is a strong case to be made for including a specific development objective in the revised plan to improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity at Aughmalogue Bridge.