

To: The Secretary,
Local Authority Projects
An Coimisiun Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street, Dublin 1, D01 V902

AN COIMISIUN PLEANÁLA	
LDG-	_____
ACP-	_____
10 FEB 2026	
Fee: €	_____ Type: _____
Time: 9.15	By: Post

Re: Observation in Support of Proposed Cycle Lane and Footpath – N70 Waterville Village to Ballybrack Road Improvement Scheme, Co. Kerry(Part 8 / Local Authority Scheme)

Dear Secretary,

I wish to make a formal observation in strong support of the proposed development providing a dedicated cycle lane and pedestrian footpath between Waterville Village and Ballybrack.

This section of roadway is currently not fit for purpose and presents a significant and ongoing risk to public safety. The existing road infrastructure does not accommodate pedestrians or cyclists, despite extremely high volumes of mixed traffic, particularly during seasonal periods. The road is routinely used by tour buses, agricultural machinery, delivery trucks, local traffic, cyclists, and pedestrians, all of which are forced to share a constrained carriageway with no segregation or safe refuge.

Public Safety and Road Design Deficiencies

The absence of any pedestrian or cycling infrastructure along this route creates an inherently dangerous environment. Pedestrians are required to walk on the carriageway, often with little or no verge, and must negotiate traffic travelling at speed. This risk is particularly acute at the bridge section, where the carriageway narrows and visibility is limited. I have personally taken photographic evidence showing buses, cars, and pedestrians attempting to use this constrained section simultaneously, clearly demonstrating the hazardous nature of the existing conditions, particularly for vulnerable road users.

The current configuration is inconsistent with modern Irish road and street design standards, including the Department of Transport's **Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS)**, which prioritises pedestrian and cyclist safety and requires that street design respond to the needs of vulnerable users as a primary consideration. It is also contrary to the **National Transport Authority (NTA) National Cycle Manual** and the more recent **NTA Active Travel Design Manual**, both of which require the provision of continuous, safe, and legible cycling and walking infrastructure on routes carrying significant traffic volumes and heavy vehicles.

Strategic Importance of the Route

This route forms part of the Kerry Way, a nationally and internationally recognised walking and tourism amenity. Hikers with large backpacks are crossing the bridge and using this road daily, often unfamiliar with local traffic conditions. The interaction between heavy tourist buses, commercial vehicles, and hikers is particularly dangerous and presents a serious reputational and safety risk to the area as a destination for outdoor and adventure tourism.

The development of safe walking and cycling infrastructure on this route is fully aligned with the objectives of the Government's **Smarter Travel Policy** and the **National Sustainable Mobility Policy (2022–2030)**, both of which seek to rebalance transport investment towards active travel, improve safety, and enhance the quality and attractiveness of walking routes in both rural and urban areas.

Local Access and Community Safety

Local residents are effectively prevented from walking safely to Waterville Village. The lack of pedestrian infrastructure has resulted in residents being swiped by passing vehicles while attempting to cross the bridge and walk along the road. This is wholly unacceptable from a public safety and equality-of-access perspective and undermines the principle of providing safe, inclusive access to services, amenities, and social infrastructure within one's own community.

Longstanding Delay and Planning Compliance

It is of particular concern that this proposal has been delayed for many years, despite originally being identified as a condition of the planning permission associated with the development of Hogs Head Golf Club. As this critical piece of enabling infrastructure has still not been delivered, the development remains in contravention of its original planning conditions. This prolonged failure to deliver the required safety infrastructure has directly contributed to the ongoing exposure of pedestrians, cyclists, and hikers to unacceptable levels of risk.

Alignment with National Road Safety Policy

The proposed scheme directly supports the objectives of the **Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030**, which adopts the Safe System approach and places a specific emphasis on the protection of vulnerable road users, including pedestrians and cyclists. The Strategy recognises that infrastructure design is a core determinant of collision risk and injury severity and that the segregation of vulnerable users from high-speed and heavy vehicle traffic is a fundamental road safety intervention.

From an engineering and road safety perspective, the existing road environment exhibits multiple high-risk factors: high traffic volumes, presence of heavy vehicles, constrained carriageway widths, lack of footpaths, lack of cycle facilities, and a structural pinch point at the bridge. In combination, these factors significantly increase both the likelihood and severity of collisions involving vulnerable users.

Conclusion

Lives are being put at risk on a daily basis as a direct result of the failure to provide safe pedestrian and cycling infrastructure along this route. The proposed development is not only justified but urgently required. It represents a proportionate, necessary, and long-overdue intervention to address a known safety deficit, comply with existing planning obligations, and deliver on national policy commitments in relation to active travel, sustainable mobility, and road safety.

I strongly urge the Local Authority to approve and expedite this proposal without further delay and to prioritise its delivery as a matter of public safety.

Yours faithfully,

Damien Lee,

Twin Rock, Baslickane, Waterville, Co. Kerry. N23 NR27









