

Douglas Tidy Towns
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Senior Engineer
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Traffic & Transport Section
Floor 10
County Hall
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Cork, July 2nd 2013

Re: Ballybrack Valley Cycle Track - Submission under part 8 of the planning regulations

Dear Sir/Madam,

Douglas Tidy Town are very pleased that Cork County Council have decided to invest in Ballybrack Woods and we hope that this area will become an important amenity for all to enjoy. For this reason we would like to make a submission under part 8 of the planning regulations. This enclosed submission outlines some concerns that we would like to see addressed in the final plans.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Hertting
(On behalf of Douglas Tidy Towns)

Douglas Tidy Towns Submission on the Ballybrack Valley Cycle Track

Douglas Tidy Towns would like to make a submission regarding the above plans. We have the following concerns regarding the proposed cycle track:

1. Environmental study

The area is a home to a large range of wildlife. We are pleased to note that an ecological assessment will be carried out by the Council and we would urge that the resultant report be published. We are concerned that the works will have negative long- and short-term impacts on the flora and fauna of the Woods. We would welcome a comprehensive consideration of this issue.

2. Width of path

We are very worried that the suggested width of the cycle track will pose a danger to trees, particularly at the front of the Ardarrig apartments and the top of the to-be-capped hill. We strongly oppose the cutting down of any trees especially of mature trees. In addition, the use of heavy machinery in this environmentally sensitive area poses the risk of 'collateral damage', particularly to the roots of trees. We therefore demand that the width of the path should be reconsidered.

3. Restoration of habitat following works

We ask that native trees and shrubs to be planted following completion of works, in order to restore the habitat and reduce the visual impact of the track.

4. Drainage and river protection works

Drainage and river protection works are mentioned on the planning notice, but the published plans give no indication about the extent of these works. As a consequence, we, the public, do not know what changes may be made to the river in the Woods. We strongly urge the Council to publish in detail its plans for drainage and associated works before any consultation process is concluded.

5. Lighting

We are very worried about the effect of lighting on wildlife in the woods. It is a fact that lighting has an adverse effect on birds and bats. Lighting the area will also make it more attractive as an area for drinking parties, increasing vandalism such as bonfires and littering. We therefore strongly urge reconsidering whether lighting is necessary.

6. Barriers

We fear that a 3m wide tarmacked track will make it very attractive to drive

cars, quad-bikes and motorcycles through the Woods. Sufficient barriers to block access are essential.

7. Long-term implications of increased use of the Woods (Policing and litter)

Increased use of the Woods will result in increased littering. At the moment, all litter collection in the Woods is undertaken by Douglas Tidy Towns. We therefore insist that bins be installed at all entrance points of the cycle/walkway and that these bins be emptied at least twice-weekly. We also need Cork County Council to support our on-going efforts at keeping the Woods clean and enjoyable for all. This support has to include:

- Fast response from the anti-litter unit to reports of littering.
- Support for our wildflower meadow and tree planting projects in the Ballybrack Woods.

In addition to litter, more long-term action on anti-social behaviour in the Woods needs to be considered. To ensure that the cycle track doesn't suffer from vandalism, Gardai patrols, particularly at weekend evenings, are a necessity.

8. Cycle and walkway

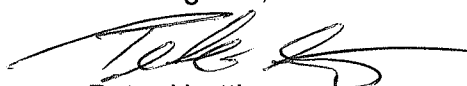
The site notice and plans indicate that this only a cycleway. We are worried that the signage erected will reflect this, and pedestrians will be reluctant to use the path. We strongly urge that any road signs indicate that equal priority is afforded to both cyclists and pedestrians.

9. Insufficient site notices

The site notices went up late and were not adequately replaced when vandalised. Consequently, we feel that the public were inadequately informed about the Council's plans.

We hope that you give serious consideration to our concerns. We would appreciate it if a meeting to discuss these concerns could be arranged between Douglas Tidy Towns, Cork County Council and other interested parties. Douglas Community Association would make the Douglas Community Centre available for this.

Kind regards,



Peter Hertting
(On behalf of Douglas Tidy Towns)