

Rathmullan Road
Proposed Cycleway/Footpath Design Statement

Table of Contents

1. Introduction
2. Scheme Description and Proposed Development
3. Conclusion

1. Introduction

1.1 Brief

It is proposed to provide a shared footway/cycleway linkage with associated lighting from the Boyne Greenway to the communities on the Rathmullan Road. It will provide those living on west side of Rathmullan direct and safer access to the Boyne Boardwalk along the River Boyne.

1.2 Site Description/Location

Rathmullan is located on the east side of Co. Meath. It is approximately 2.8km from Drogheda and 50km to Dublin. It is located on the L16014 Rathmullan Road close to the M1. A small section of the area where the works are to take place is within Louth County Councils administrative area and a Section 85 agreement was required for this section.

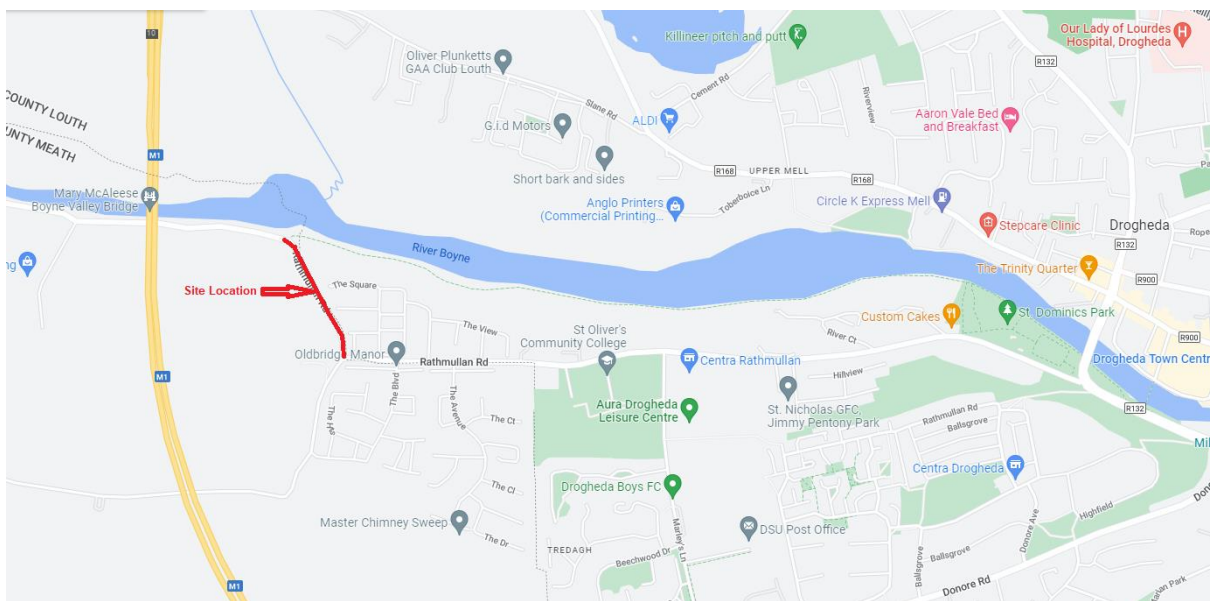


Figure 1 Site Location – Rathmullan Road

The proposed site is located in the townland of Oldbridge, the proposed cycleway/footway will be constructed on the eastern side of the Rathmullan Road. The roadway is surrounded by the Riverbank housing estate to the east and scrub and arable cropland to the west. The Rathmullan road falls steeply from the southern extent of the study area to its northern extent where the road meets the River Boyne. The Rathmullan road continues west along the banks of the River Boyne and passes under the Mary McAleese Bridge Boyne Valley Bridge. Between the road and the river is the Boyne Greenway.

Running from the centre of Drogheda near the Bridge of Peace in Drogheda, the Boyne Greenway takes you along the river close to the Mary McAleese Cable Bridge and then along the Boyne Canal to the Battle of the Boyne Visitor Centre at Oldbridge. The walking and cycling facility utilises sections of boardwalk to create a riverside resource connecting Drogheda's town centre to the Oldbridge Estate, via the existing walkway.

This proposed project seeks to construct a combined footway-cycleway link along the Rathmullan road which would create a safer access to this wonderful riverside amenity. By providing this combined access path, it will encourage more people to access this amenity at the closest point rather than travelling to a carpark as they will now have a safe route along the road and can directly access the Greenway.

1.3 Need for the Scheme

Currently the Greenway can only be accessed directly from the centre of Drogheda, Oldbridge House or at a point on the Oldbridge Road. The Boyne Greenway is used by the local community and also visitors/tourists to the Boyne Valley. Most importantly, this amenity is also used for cycling and walking by a large number of residents & communities from the Rathmullan road area which is a densely populated area. For these communities, the Greenway is accessed using the Rathmullen road which is a narrow steep road towards the river. The majority of people who wish to use this amenity tend to drive to either Drogheda or Oldbridge to walk the Greenway rather than use the Rathmullan road link as they don't consider it safe.

The proposed project will provide easier and more direct access to the Greenway from the Rathmullan Road side of Drogheda. The Boyne Canal which flows adjacent to the river is currently being recommissioned and locks reconstructed. This provides a wonderful opportunity to learn about the history of the area and how the canal provided a direct route to the midlands of Ireland. During heritage week, short boat trips on the canal are provided to get a feel for this travel was like.

The Boyne Greenway is also used by anglers, weekend and daily walkers and cyclists. The proposed project will allow more direct access to the greenway in providing a direct link from an area of Drogheda that hasn't had this link before.

During the Covid Pandemic people were encouragement to be outdoors and stay local, the numbers using the Boyne Greenway has increased substantially and with people establishing a routine it is hoped that this level of usage will be maintained. By improving the linkage to the Greenway it will make this wonderful amenity easier to access for the communities of Drogheda and to visitors.

1.4 Traffic Volumes

A traffic counter was placed on the Rathmullan Road in the location as shown in Figure 2 from 15/06/2022 to 17/06/2022. The Annual average daily traffic volume (AADT) was 2041 and the percentage of heavy goods vehicles was recorded as 4.7%. The average speed of vehicles was 46km/h and the 85th oercentile speed was 55km/hr. The results of the speed survey can be found in figure 3 below.

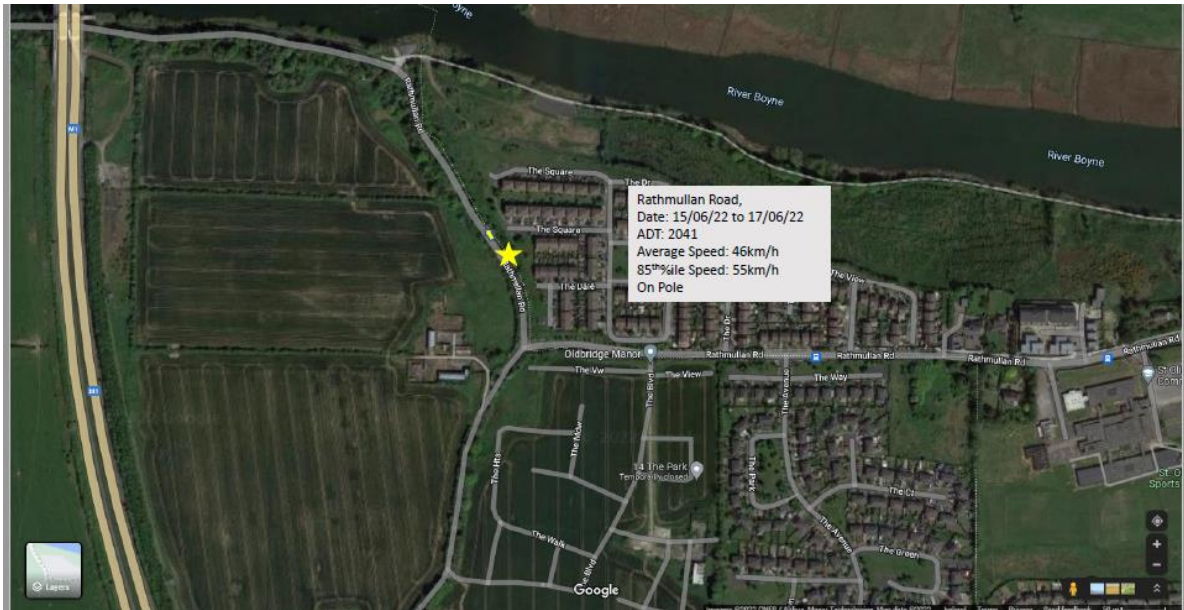


Figure 2 Traffic Survey Location and Summary

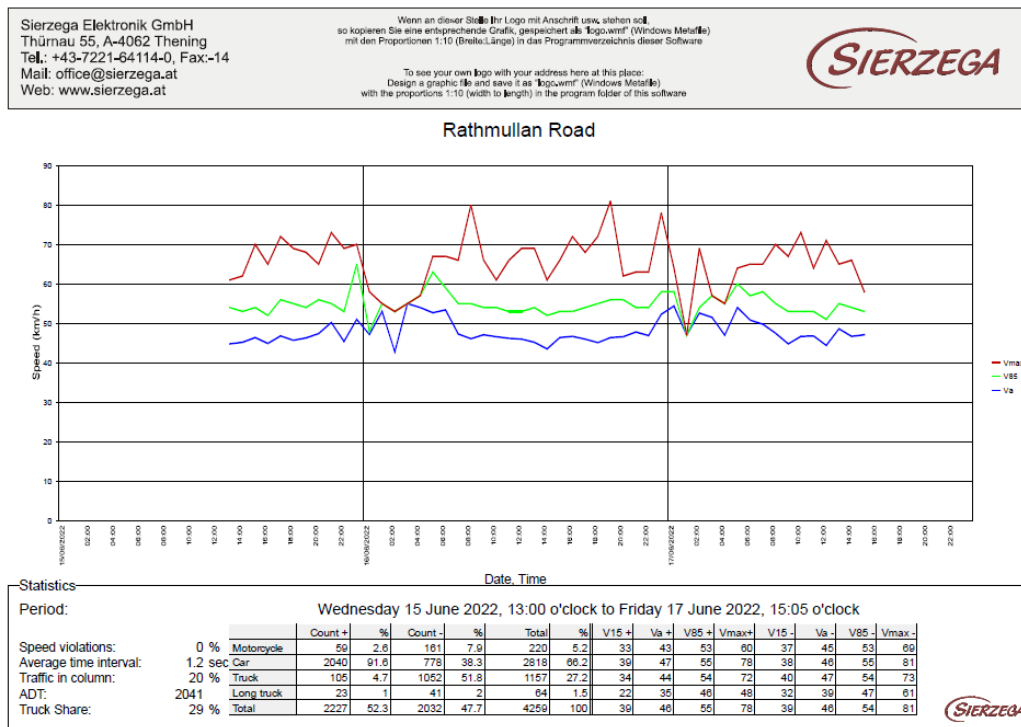


Figure 3 Rathmullan Road Traffic Survey Results

1.5 Pedestrian Volumes

A pedestrian counter was placed on the road from 21st December 2020 to 20th January 2021. The daily average was 157 people walking along this section of road per day, the busiest day was a Saturday and the busiest hour was 13:00.

Data Summary	
Rathmullan Road Walkway Exit	
Total Traffic for Period	4878
Monthly Average	4799
Weekly Average	1101
Daily Average	157
Busiest day of the year	2021-01-16
Busiest day of the week	Saturday
Busiest hour of the day	13
Device Type	pedestrian
Installation Date	2020-12-21
Site ID	0242
GPS Co-ordinates	53.717395, -8.391047

Figure 4 Rathmullan Road Pedestrian Traffic Survey Results

1.6 Design Constraints

An AA screening was completed by Flynn Furney on behalf of Meath County Council for the proposed development. This report concluded that the risk of Likely Significant Effect (LSE) upon the qualifying interests of the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC, River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA, Boyne Estuary and Coast SAC and the Boyne Estuary SPA could not be definitively ruled out at screening stage. A Natura Impact assessment was then carried out. The NIS outlines potential impacts the scheme may have on affected habitats and species and the recommended mitigation measures required for construction phase, Operational phase and the cumulative impacts the scheme may have. These reports are available in the appendices.

In conclusion in the NIS it states that with the implementation of the mitigation measures the proposed development would not result in direct, indirect or cumulative impacts which would have the potential to adversely affect the qualifying interests of these European sites with regard to the range, population densities or the site-specific conservation objectives of the habitats and species for which these sites are designated.

An Arboricultural Assessment and Impact Report, a Tree Planting Plan and a Tree Strategy Report have also been prepared for the project by CMK Hort + Ard Ltd. and are included with this application.

The existing carriageway is narrow and there is insufficient space to provide a 6m carriageway alongside the 3m shared footway/cycleway facility. The existing road will not be interfered with as part of this project.

1.7 Existing Provision for Pedestrians and Cyclists

There is no provision currently for pedestrians and cyclists along this section of the Rathmullan Road as can be seen in the photo below.



Figure 5 Existing facilities along Rathmullan Road

2.0 Scheme Description and Proposed Development

It is proposed to construct a 3m wide shared area for cyclists and pedestrians to link up the Boyne Greenway to the communities on the Rathmullan Road along with associated public lighting, fencing and drainage. A cross section of the proposal can be seen in Figure 6 below. The existing road varies in width from 4.5m to 5m.

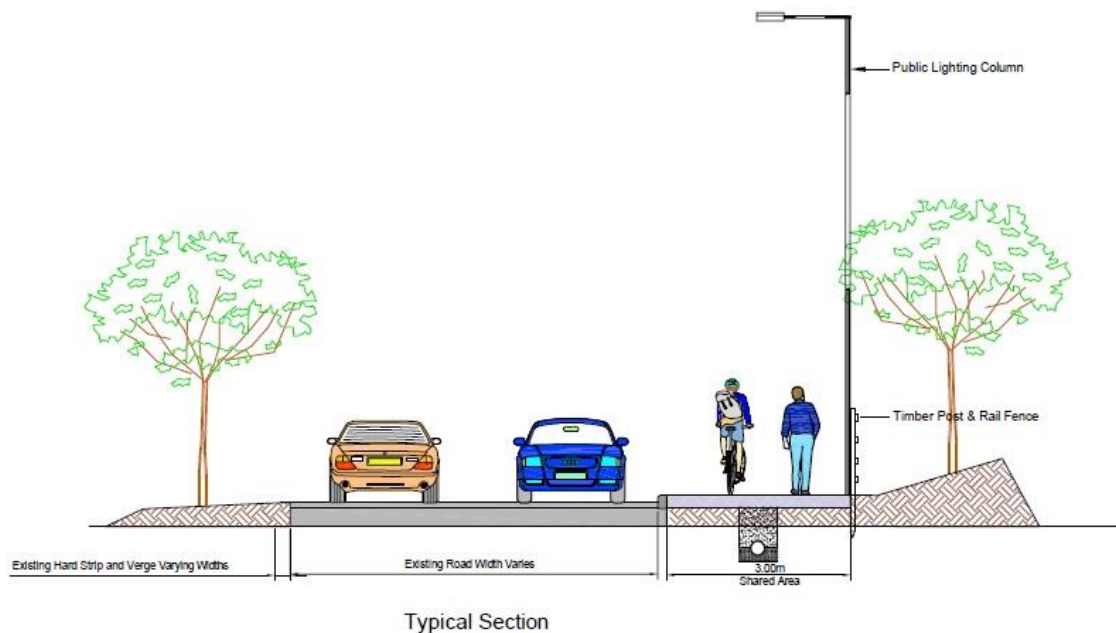


Figure 6 Typical Cross Section

3.0 Conclusion

This design statement outlines the need for the combined footway/walkway on this section of the Rathmullan Road and it also describes the proposals. The scheme involves the construction of a 3m wide shared area for cyclists and pedestrians to link up the Boyne Greenway to the communities on the Rathmullan Road along with associated public lighting, drainage, fencing, signage and road markings. This facility will greatly improve the safety of both pedestrians and cyclists along this stretch of road.