



Registered Charity Number (RCN): 20102029

Dublin Cycling Campaign
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Dublin 8
22 January 2021

Dublin Cycling Campaign Campaign Submission on the Review of the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area

Introduction

Dublin Cycling Campaign is a registered charity that advocates for better cycling conditions in Dublin. We have a vision for Dublin as a liveable city where people of all ages and abilities can safely enjoy everyday walking and cycling.

We welcome this opportunity to comment on the Review of the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area and note that cycling is a key enabler for the four challenges listed within the strategy overview: Climate Change and the Environment, Health and Equality, Growth and Change and the Economy.

The climate emergency demands quick solutions to avoid reaching dangerous tipping points. Of all transport modes, cycling is the one that can be most quickly and cost-effectively built. Recent emergency covid-19 infrastructure projects, such as the Coastal Mobility Route, have shown how quickly cycling infrastructure can be created. Investment in cycling projects provides the best Return on Investment of all transport projects.

While there has been a recent increase in funding at national level, we note that cycling has been underfunded since the start of the plan in 2016.

We believe that there should be a fairer allocation of roadspace and reallocation towards active travel. Roads are for everybody: we believe that enabling people to cycle safely from an early age, and for it to be a part of everyday life will meet the challenges of the strategy overview. We need to have equity of access to our roads and to transport. Active travel is a right and children in particular, have a right to cycle to school safely and to grow up where that is a habit. This will be achieved by creating a dense network of safe cycling infrastructure from the local level out.

We welcome in particular the following:

1. The recognition that the strategy has to be adapted to a post-Covid life in the Greater Dublin Area;
2. The importance of delivering a sustainable transport network which meets climate change requirements; and
3. The acknowledgement that new technologies such as electric bikes and scooters, have a key role to play within the strategy.

Please find our submission in relation to the 4 questions that are posed.

1. What are the things that we should look at first while working on this plan?

15 Minute Village Concept and the Micro Journey - Whilst many of the existing cycling projects proposed are very linear and city centric orientated, we would encourage routes to be developed to enable people access their locality; specifically home to schools, shops, cafes, and sports and leisure facilities. According to the NTA Bike Life Report 2019, only 34% of cycling trips are for work, while 8% are for college, 4% for school, 30% for shopping/business/social, and 23% for leisure. This report was produced before the massive shift to working from home and increased local travel by bike and on foot that has occurred in 2020. In addition, international evidence proves these statistics will increase if people are provided with a safe local mobility network. The above change in work patterns is likely to become a permanent feature for many people, which will maintain and increase the popularity of short local cycling trips over trips to the city centre. Indeed thinking around arterial travel to city centres will need to be more considerate of local networks crossing these major routes to allow for the above.

Progression of Existing Cycle Network plans - We note the great progress made on existing network plans such as the Dodder Greenway and we anxiously await the progression of the Core Bus Corridors and cycle routes as part of BusConnects. We would urge that these projects be expedited. Whilst we gladly welcome the investment in high quality segregated cycling infrastructure we are concerned by the lack of connectivity to these routes. In order to ensure the routes are utilised to the maximum extent by all of society the connectivity to these routes needs to be of equally high standard. Too often in Ireland the private motor car is used to transport bicycles to join routes, and cycling is simply seen as a leisure pursuit and not part of the everyday transport solution. Every journey involving a cycle should start from the home and enable the person cycling to reach their destination in an efficient and safe manner. Connectivity to these major infrastructural routes should also be improved, such as safe and sheltered cycle parking at bus and rail stops, and subsidised hire cycles at major bus and rail stations.

Safe Routes to Schools - In order to expedite a shift to cycling, we are of the opinion that schools should be utilised as a change agent, in cooperation with organisations such as the An Taisce Green Schools programme, and with teachers as role models. There is a huge opportunity for trips by pupils to be made by bike. For this to happen we believe enhanced cycling infrastructure adjacent to schools should be installed enabling school children to cycle to schools safely. At a minimum a few hundred metres surrounding each school, but potentially up to 2km, should be capable of being safely navigated by a primary school age child walking/by bike, on their own or accompanied by a parent. Schools should also be provided with sheltered bike parking and repair facilities. Local authorities should be supported by the NTA to achieve a defined percentage modal shift to active travel to school within the GDA.

Maintenance of cycling infrastructure - many of the existing cycle lanes and tracks are badly maintained, with poor surfaces and overgrowth. Funding for maintenance needs to be significantly increased, and as the cycle network grows, a proportional amount of funding needs to be allocated to maintain the full network.

Speed limits - We recommend that the speed limits are reduced in alignment with DMURS to ultimately cultivate a self-regulating environment. A default limit of 30 km/h should be introduced in all built-up areas in the GDA in compliance with the [Stockholm Declaration](#), as endorsed by the UN General Assembly. Technology should be used to automatically monitor and enforce speed limits.

2. How should we evaluate future transport needs?

All transport projects need to be measured against their impact on climate action. Any project that is shown to encourage a shift to a sustainable mode of transport needs to be prioritised, and any project that will lead to an increase in Greenhouse Gas Emissions should be cancelled.

Often the success rate for cycling projects is measured in km of cycle tracks and lanes delivered. We think the additional metric of percentage modal share increase for cycling should be included. This should be further broken down by age group, socioeconomic group, gender etc. This will demonstrate that a true modal shift has occurred.

The NTA should also ascertain what technology can change people's habits. For example a 25km e-bike ride might be very doable for Kildare residents commuting to Dublin. The need therefore is high quality segregated safe infrastructure to enable that journey to take place and make it a viable alternative to the private car.

3. What are the key components to a forward-looking transport strategy?

The Transport policy needs to tackle the Climate Crisis:

Transport accounts for 20% of Ireland's overall emissions with 52% of overall transport emissions coming from private cars. Given the urgency of the climate crisis, the Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy must actively encourage but ultimately enable a significant modal shift to cycling, by building a comprehensive network of cycling routes and building it quickly. Other cities have shown that this is possible. For example, Seville built a network of 80km of segregated cycle routes in 5 years and saw an 11-fold increase in cycling. Cycling infrastructure can be built much faster than other transport infrastructure.

One of the lessons of the COVID-19 lockdown is that there is a huge latent demand for cycling. When traffic was reduced at the start of the lockdown, the streets were filled with children and adults cycling. A recent Sustrans study showed that a quarter of adults in Dublin cycle once a week or more, and a further 21% would cycle if segregated cycle routes were available ([Sustrans Report July 2020](#)).

There needs to be swift implementation of an ambitious program to convert Dublin into a world class cycling city. All local authorities within the GDA should be supported and also held accountable to obtaining a true modal shift to active travel modes.

The strategy should deliver safe cycling infrastructure for new high density developments to enable safe cycling to local shops, schools and amenities.

3. What does the future of transport in this region look like to you?

Our Vision for the Greater Dublin Area is that:

- **Cycling is for everyone** regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, social class and physical ability and is the primary mode of transport for the population of the GDA.
- There has been a **true modal shift to Active Travel** for short journeys and sustainable modes are prevalent for longer journeys. Private car journeys are the exception. The GDA is comparable to the Netherlands with equivalent stats for participation in active travel, e.g. over 55% of women cycling. Parents are happy to see their 12 year olds cycle alone in 30km/h zones because they know that speed limits are observed.
- **There are widespread wide cycle tracks** suitable for bikes, e-bikes, scooters, mobility scooters and wheelchairs.
- **The true focus of the infrastructure is to cater for micro-journeys** but to supplement it there are strategic long fast cycling routes that enable commutes to be made through the advancement of e-bikes and scooters.
- **The infrastructure for cycling projects is bold, courageous and are landmarks in their own right.** This will demonstrate the NTA's commitment to cycling and the imperative need to use cycling as a key enabler to meet our sustainability goals and reduce congestion within the Greater Dublin Area.
- **The cycling infrastructure has a world class safety record.** This is achieved by the design and building of truly protected junctions and speed regulations that are appropriate for the environment and are, by the nature of the environment, self-regulating.
- **Commercial vehicles are segregated** as much as possible from cyclists and are offered safe, time-appropriate provision for loading / unloading activities.
- **The public realm promotes active travel**, by prioritising the needs of walkers, cyclists and public transport users over motorists
- **Cycling projects are progressed in a slick manner.** A quick process for implementation of cycling infrastructure is developed. No longer do cycling projects languish in consultation and discussion. Instead quick build projects, similar to the Coastal Mobility Route, give immediate benefit to transport users and result in a modal shift.

- There is **interchangeability between transport modes** and cycles are facilitated on trains, busses, trams. Bikes are allowed on all trains and LUAS at off-peak times.
- **Barriers to accessibility such as 'kissing gates' are no longer used** and a programme of removal (and if necessary replacement with more accessible alternatives) is in place.
- **Bike sharing schemes**, including e-bikes, are available throughout the region.
- **Secure bike parking is widely available** - in particular at transport interchanges.
- **The Councils work together** to deliver integrated cycling routes.
- **Metrics are maintained with accountability** - Metrics for km of cycle tracks and lanes delivered, and percentage modal share increase for cycling are measured, with a further breakdown by age group, socioeconomic group, gender etc.

Challenges

Cycling will contribute to the Climate Change and the Environment, as outlined above. Cycling can also address the other challenges listed in the issues paper.

Growth and Change

Creating more liveable urban areas through investing in cycling will help to achieve 'Compact Growth', a key objective of the National Development Plan. As described in the NDP, investment in sustainable transport can play a crucial role in 'creating more attractive places for people to live and work'.

- High-quality walking, cycling, and public transport infrastructure should be embedded in all housing developments and area plans.
- New developments should be connected to employment, education, retail and other local services directly through high-quality cycling and walking routes and networks
- Car use and parking should be managed effectively to reduce reliance upon the private car
- More people are likely to walk and cycle for more of their journeys if the quality of the spaces they travel through are attractive.
- Enabling more cycling will reduce air pollution in urban areas and create cleaner and healthier neighbourhoods.
- Walking/cycling routes to link with mass transit systems should be provided.

Health and Equality

Cycling is an affordable mobility option for all and it promotes social interaction. Improving provision for cycling will reduce transport-related social exclusion amongst many individuals who do not have access to a car by improving their access to employment, education, shopping and social activities.

Facilitating active and sustainable transport modes can play a significant role in delivering a 'whole of Government' approach to population health. In addition to physical health benefits, active commuting can also benefit psychological wellbeing. For example, researchers who analysed data from around 18,000 commuters across the UK over eighteen years found that people who walked or cycled to work benefited from improved mental wellbeing in comparison to commuters who travel by car.

Exposure to persistent or high levels of noise has also been linked to a number of adverse health impacts including sleep disturbance, cardiovascular and physiological effects, mental health impacts and cognitive impairment. A modal shift to cycling, and a reduction in motor traffic, together with self-enforcing speed limits, will reduce both noise and air pollution and lead to a healthier environment for all.

The Economy

Active travel contributes towards economic performance by reducing congestion, supporting local businesses and villages, and through job creation and supporting the leisure and tourism industry.

Cycle tourism will be enabled by completion of, for example:

- The Dodder Greenway and link to villages
- The Grand Canal route into Kildare (Hazelhatch)
- The link routes between the Grand and Royal Canals

Other Comments

- **Visualisation of Plans** - In order to help the public visualise changes we would like to recommend the use of 3D technology and Virtual Reality. Maps and even drawings can be hard to interpret for the public and to reduce the fear of change and really try to illustrate the improved environment we would like to see this new technology leveraged in public consultations.

- **Trialing Designs** - We would suggest that designers of cycling infrastructure cycle the routes with a cross-section of society aged 8-80 and of varying abilities including not just bicycles but also tricycle and cargo bikes. We feel this would be invaluable to help understand the needs of all road-users.
- **Reallocation of road space for active travel** - Only just over half of journeys in Dublin are made by car, with 20% on foot or by bike ([CSO publication 2019](#)), yet most road space is set aside for use by motor traffic. If people are to be encouraged to walk and cycle there needs to be a more equitable distribution of the available road space. Examples where space could be reallocated to encourage active travel include the section of the N81 where it goes from 60 km/h to 50 km/h, parking spaces in villages such as Lucan and Rathfarnham, grass verges along Wainsfort Road, Templeville Road. In areas like Inchicore where car ownership is comparatively low, footpaths are very narrow, (Templeogue Road, Willbrook Road are other examples)
- **Junction Sequencing** - Pedestrians and cycle priority should be implemented at junctions *now*. Currently wait times are far too long and penalise those choosing active travel. The advantage of active travel needs to be felt and supported. We are aware of systems in the Netherlands that detect precipitation and alter the traffic light sequencing to shorten the wait times for pedestrians and cyclists so as to reduce exposure to rain compared to those who sit in the comfort of motor vehicles.
- **Inter-Urban Routes** - In countries such as the Netherlands and Germany there are fast routes between towns. These encourage more people to use bicycles, including e-bikes, on their commutes and for leisure. There is huge potential, e.g. on the Grand Canal from Naas to Dublin (via several employment centres),, Navan to Dublin and the Royal Canal from Maynooth to Dublin.
- **Delivery of Cycling Facilities as part of BusConnects** - one of the stated aims of the BusConnects project is to deliver a 'next generation' network of cycling facilities. The design of these cycling facilities needs to be given equal priority to that of the CBCs, so that the cycling facilities are of high quality and contribute to the shift to sustainable transport.

Conclusion

A modal shift to cycling will address many of the challenges outlined in the issues paper. And cycling infrastructure can be provided quickly and cost-effectively using existing infrastructure, simply by reallocating space to cycling, segregating this space and by automatic monitoring and enforcement of speed limits. The construction of the GDA cycle network can then be progressed in the medium term.

Because of the benefits and return on investment provided by cycling, and the fact that it has been underfunded for many years, funding for cycling *must* be prioritised.

The covid-19 pandemic has permanently altered travel patterns, and so the '15 minute village' concept needs to be supported by active travel options.

A particular focus of the GDA transport strategy should be the next generation of cyclists, i.e. children at primary and secondary level, so that they are given the opportunity to cycle for their everyday activities, and to continue to cycle as they reach adulthood, so that cycling becomes a normal, efficient means of getting from A to B.

Only by normalising and enabling many people to cycle on a regular basis and by making it a realistic choice, can we deliver the potential modal shift changes. Whenever a new person starts cycling society reaps the benefits of improved public health, reduced congestion, and better liveability for our urban places. The maximum benefits of cycling are only achieved by designing cycle routes that enable the largest cross-section of society to cycle.

Yours sincerely
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