



Dublin Cycling Campaign
Tailor's Hall
Back Lane
Dublin 8

RE: National Policy on Architecture: Places for People

Dublin Cycling Campaign is a totally voluntary registered charity. Our vision for Dublin is a vibrant, liveable city where everyone can safely enjoy everyday walking and cycling. A key part of a vibrant and liveable city is to create public spaces that are full of life.

Our built environment has a huge affect on who and how often people choose to travel sustainably, which has a resulting effect on the built environment. There is a feedback loop here that if done right can use active travel (walking and cycling) to add life to public space. If the effects of transport on the use of public space are not considered, it can lead to traffic dominated roads instead.

Our submission will address three of the themes from the discussion document.

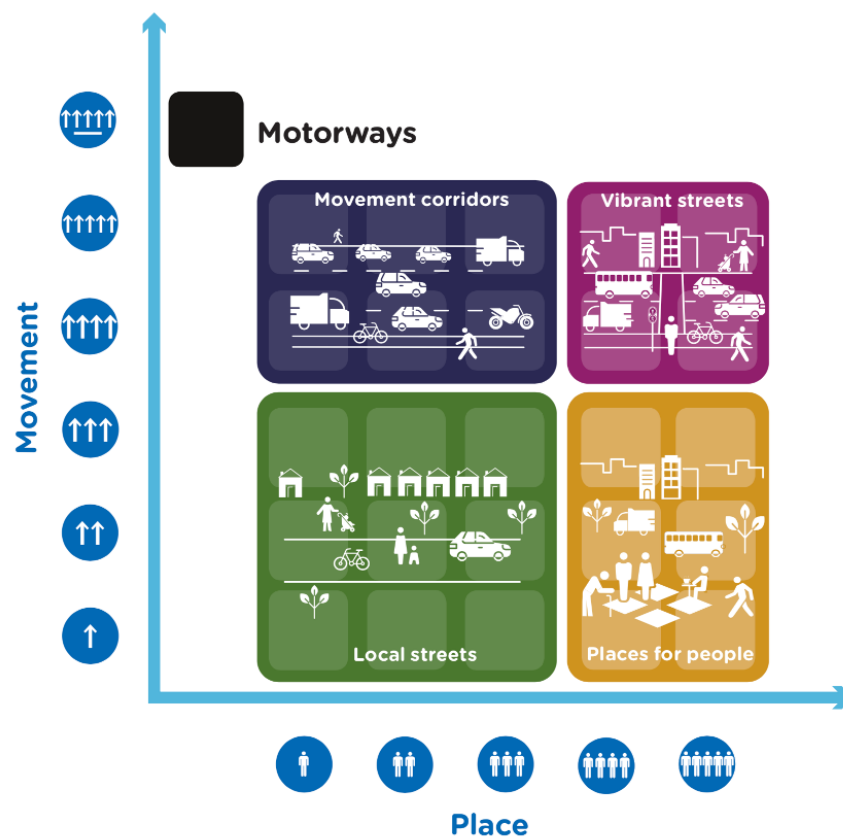
- #1 Designing for climate resilience and sustainability
- #2 Designing quality places for public benefit
- #5 Knowledge and Innovation

The final section of our submission breaks down our key ideas into each of the themes. In our submission we will discuss why it's important to: find a balance between movement and place; how our built environment influences how people choose to travel; the effects of different modes of public space; and why transport planning and

place making should be done in combination using multi-disciplinary teams under a common framework.

Transport Versus Place

Transport is a vital function in any urban centre. People use roads and streets to circulate from place to place. When designing public space we must find the right balance between movement and place depending on the context. There are times where public spaces should prioritise movement and there are times when public space should be focused on creating places for people.



An extract of the New South Wales Transport Strategy 2056

Far too frequently in Irish urban centres transportation dominates the public space, which consequently forces people to stop using public space. This creates a negative feedback loop, where fewer and fewer people use public space and traffic increasingly dominates the space.

An architectural policy that doesn't consider the effect that transportation can have on the use of public space will fail to create places for people.

Motor Traffic and Street Life

Detracting from Street Life

Motor traffic detracts from street life. Road danger from motor traffic can create fear and anxiety, which prevents certain classes of people from using public space. This is particularly true for older people and mobility impaired people who may choose not to travel for fear of harm. Anxiety from parents prevents children from using many public spaces.

Motor traffic negatively contributes to a sense of place in two other ways, noise and air pollution. Noise and air pollution discourages people to stop and linger, which reduces the number of people using the space.

Electric vehicles are not the solution to motor traffic's negative externalities. While electric vehicles produce no direct tailpipe emissions they still create air pollution from brake dust, tyre wear and kicking up road dust. Electric vehicles still create road noise from contact with the road surface, particularly at higher speeds. Most importantly, electric vehicles still create road danger that excludes people from public life.

Demand for Space

The physical space between buildings is a scarce commodity. How we choose to use it affects the amount of street life we enable. Moving people using individual motor vehicles squanders public space. Single occupancy cars occupy a huge amount of public space and contribute negatively to street life.

There is growing acknowledgement within transportation planning circles, and indeed the public, that we cannot solve congestion using bigger or wider roads. Induced demand is a proven phenomenon that shows it is impossible to provide enough space to satisfy ever increasing motor traffic demand.

We must rebalance our transport system by enabling and encouraging more people to walk, cycle or take public transport. Later in this submission we discuss how refocusing streets away from transport toward people involves tackling motor traffic's demand for space.

Cycling Effect on Street Life

Cycling is a human scale mode of transport that can contribute positively to city life.

Jan Gehl in his book *Cities for People* says: *"Bicyclists represent a different and somewhat rapid form of foot traffic but in terms of sensory experiences, life and movement, they are part of the rest of city life. Naturally, bicyclists are welcome in support of the goal to promote lively, safe, sustainable, and healthy cities."*

Jan Gehl makes the case that: *"What cities like Copenhagen understand about cycling is that it's more like walking than driving. It's part of public life. Cycling contributes to the vitality of public spaces. A person on a bike can make eye contact with people around them, at human speed, stopping in an instant to have a conversation or spontaneously pulling into a store. Cycling is more about people than it is about bikes."*

One of the reasons why in Copenhagen cycling contributes positively to city life is that cycling is an everyday activity that everyone. Copenhagen has achieved this by designing its public spaces and streets so it is safe for people of all ages and abilities. This enables kids to cycle to school with their parents or older people to cycle to the shops.

When we design for cycling for all it enables people to walk or cycle, which can contribute positively to street life.

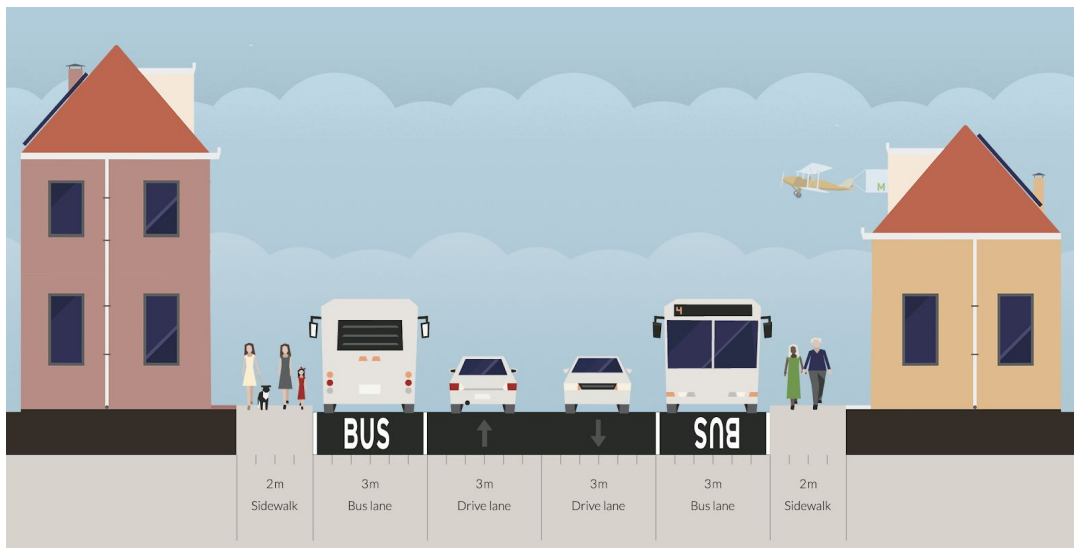
How Transport Choices Effect Space Allocation

Transportation planning choices have a huge effect on how public space is allocated either to movement or place. The BusConnects Core Bus Corridors project in Dublin is a fascinating project for exploring the allocation of public space. The goal of the project is to provide continuous bus priority so buses aren't stuck in congestion. The project spans 230km of roads and streets. The context varies from national roads like the N4 to urban villages like Stoneybatter or Kimmage.

CASE STUDY 1: Kimmage Core Bus Corridor

The Kimmage BusConnects project demonstrates how different transportation planning choices affect the allocation of public space. Proposal A for the urban village

of Kimmage at Sundrive Cross was to narrow the footpaths and widen the existing two lane road to a four lane road with bus lanes and general traffic lanes in both directions.



An illustration of proposal A for Kimmage

Below is proposal B, which provides similar levels of bus priority as proposal A, while allocating far less space for movement. Proposal B provides much needed public space, wider footpaths, tree planting and on street parking at the village shops in addition to bus priority.



An illustration of the cross-section for Kimmage after alterations

The reason why proposal B can allocate less space to transport while providing similar levels of bus priority is because of transport planning choices. Proposal B includes a

bus gate further up the road. A bus gate is a section of bus only road. This eliminates through motor traffic, which reduces traffic volumes. Buses can share the same lane as the local access traffic as there are no traffic jams for buses to get stuck in.

Reducing traffic volumes by eliminating through-traffic is key to reallocating space from movement to place.

CASE STUDY 2: Groningen's Traffic Circulation Plan

Groningen is a city in the Netherlands that in the late seventies implemented a traffic circulation plan in order to create a more sustainable and livable city centre. The traffic circulation plan was made up of two key aspects: creating traffic free streets in the city core; making it impossible to drive through the city centre. Motor traffic can enter the city for access but must return back to the inner ring road the same way. Eliminating through motor traffic from the city centre reduces the negative effects motor traffic was having on the public space.



A conceptual view of the Groningen Traffic Circulation Plan

CASE STUDY 3: Suffolk Street and Sustainable Urban Drainage

Suffolk Street in the core of Dublin City centre is adjacent to the pedestrianised zone at Grafton Street. In 2014 the street was a two lane one-way road with narrow footpaths on either side. There is active frontage on both sides of the street with a number of popular shops and restaurants. During the Luas Cross City works the street was made a cul du sac and buses were re-routed onto other routes.



Suffolk Street in 2014

Dublin City Council has used temporary measures including large planters and street colouring as part of a temporary pedestrianisation project for the street. This has led to street life to blossom. Restaurants now place tables on the street, which breaks down the barrier between inside and outside life.



Suffolk Street in 2019 with during the temporary pedestrianisation trial

In 2020 Dublin City Council will transform the street further. It will add sustainable urban drainage (SUDs) through tree planting and rain gardens. SUDs is climate action and resiliency. This is only possible because the public space was reallocated from movement (in this case buses) to people walking, cycling and public realm.



Render from Dublin City Council of Suffolk Street post-street re-design

Multi-disciplinary Teams

There are two major disciplines in Ireland that dictate the use or design of public space between building edges: architects; and transport engineers. The two professions need a coordinated approach to the design of public space or they will compete with each other for space.

When designing public space it is clear that the two professions don't always understand the motivations and requirements of the other. This leads to conflicting or incoherent plans for our public spaces.

CASE STUDY 4: Dolphins Barn Public Realm Scheme

The Dolphins Barn Public Realm scheme was an architecture-led project to improve the public realm at the urban village of Dolphins Barn in Dublin 8. Dolphins Barn is centre around the crossroads of two major roads in Dublin. The Dublin City Council planning reference is 3399/18. The scheme focused on landscaping, the creation of a new pocket park, removal of pedestrian control barriers and the use of high-quality paving materials.

The proposed scheme included limited changes to the existing traffic arrangements. This included leaving the existing wide motor traffic lanes in place. All of the existing traffic lanes are 4-6m wide. As a comparison traffic lanes on the M50 motorway are 3.6m wide. Wider traffic lanes encourage motor traffic to drive faster, increasing road danger and noise pollution. Narrowing traffic lanes is key to calming traffic and reallocating space away from motor traffic towards walking, cycling and public realm improvements.

Initially the architects on the project attempted to improve the public realm without considering the traffic engineering considerations. By working with transport engineers the architects could have reclaimed more space by narrowing traffic lanes. In the end, this public realm project was cancelled because it conflicted with the National Transport Authority's BusConnects plans.

This is a useful case study for why it is essential that those who are designing the public space for place and those who are designing the public space for movement need to collaborate.

Healthy Streets Approach

The Healthy Streets Approach was developed by Transport for London through their research into the health impacts of transport, public realm and urban planning. It turns out that the key elements necessary for public spaces to improve people's health are the same as those needed to make urban places socially and economically vibrant and environmentally sustainable.

It is a framework with 10 indicators for producing healthy streets. Transport for London is an organisation with a similar remit to Ireland's National Transport Authority. It provides strategic transport planning, design guidance and grant funding to local authorities for projects.

Transport for London recognises that their major transport infrastructure projects like their new cycle network or bus priority improvements can have a hugely positive or negative impact on public space.



Source: Lucy Saunders

Source: healthystreets.com

Transport for London now uses the Health Streets Approach when deciding which projects should receive grant funding. Projects that score higher on the 10 healthy streets indicators are more likely to receive funding. The use of the Healthy Streets Approach requires multidisciplinary teams to collaborate.

Ireland's National Policy on Architecture should consider developing an equivalent holistic multidisciplinary approach to designing public space in order to balance the needs of place and movement while promoting inclusivity and health.

Transport and Climate Emissions

"First we make our cities, then our cities make us" - Jan Gehl

How we design our built environment has a huge effect on people's travel choices. If we allocate our road space to motor traffic people will choose to drive. If we allocate our public space to walking, cycling and public realm we can enable and encourage more people to travel sustainably.

The transport sector is the only energy sector in Ireland with increasing greenhouse gas emissions. We need people to choose to walk or cycle short distance journeys, and make it easy for people to walk or cycle to public transport for longer journeys.

The design of our public spaces from the allocation of space, to the amount of traffic allowed in public spaces, to lighting design all affect who chooses to travel sustainably.

Theme Breakdown

Below we've broken out feedback into the questions and themes from the discussion document in order to make it easier for you to classify our submission.

Theme 1: Designing for climate resilience and sustainability

Question A: What initiatives do we need to address the combined challenges of climate action, urban regeneration and sustainable housing?

- Create traffic circulation plans for urban centres in order to reallocate public space away from unsustainable transport towards walking, cycling and the public realm. This will create more places for people and enable sustainable travel to reduce climate emissions

- Create an Irish holistic multidisciplinary approach to the design of public space equivalent to healthy streets

Question B: What key sustainability considerations are essential when decision-makers plan the future built environment?

- How will the built environment enable and encourage people to travel sustainably by walking, cycling or using public transport, while simultaneously reducing motor traffic in places for people
- Can we reallocate public space away from movement in order to create more space for planting, greening and sustainable urban drainage

Theme 2: Designing quality places for public benefit

Question A: What contributes to the quality of the public spaces and streets in our cities, towns and villages?

- The balance of movement versus place
- The amount of active street usage and street life
- The absence of detractors like air pollution, noise pollution or road traffic danger

Question B: How can architecture contribute to the common good – how does it affect society's wellbeing?

- The design of public space has a huge affect on who uses the space. As mentioned earlier where road traffic danger exists, children and older people are less likely to use public space. The design of public space is a question of inclusivity.
- The design of public space has a huge affect on health by enabling and encouraging walking and cycling, which provides a physical activity health benefit. At the same time if public space is allocated to the movement of motor traffic there will be a negative public health outcome from air pollution, noise pollution and a sedentary lifestyle.

Theme 5. Knowledge and innovation

Question A: In what areas does architectural research need to be undertaken and who should be involved?

- Research should be undertaken into developing an Irish holistic multidisciplinary approach to the design of public space that seeks to promote public health and the common good by finding the right balance of movement versus place.

- Stakeholders who should be involved in this process should include the Department of Transport and the National Transport Authority

Thank-you for reading our submission. We hope the ideas we have presented above provide an alternative perspective on how transport and place making can either compete or cooperate.

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