



Sustainable Mobility Policy Review  
Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport,  
Leeson Lane,  
Dublin 2  
D02 TR60

Fitzgerald House,  
Summerhill North,  
Cork, T23 TD90,  
Ireland.

**T** +353 (0)21 450 9044  
**E** info@corkchamber.ie

20 January 2020

## Re: Submission on Active Travel (Sustainable Mobility Policy Review)

To Whom It Concerns,

Cork Chamber is the leading business organisation in Cork, proactively working to identify and progress developments that are facilitative of economic and sustainable growth. Representing an employer base of close to 1,200 businesses and over 100,000 employees across the region, Cork Chamber is the largest business representation organisation in the South of Ireland.

We welcome this opportunity to submit our views on active travel and the opportunity to increase sustainable travel patterns across Irish cities, with positive knock on impacts on the economy, the environment, health and quality of life, as part of the Sustainable Mobility Policy Review.

This submission has been guided by our commitment to delivery on the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Five specific goals have been identified by the Irish Chamber Network which we are actively advocating for throughout our work;



## Introduction

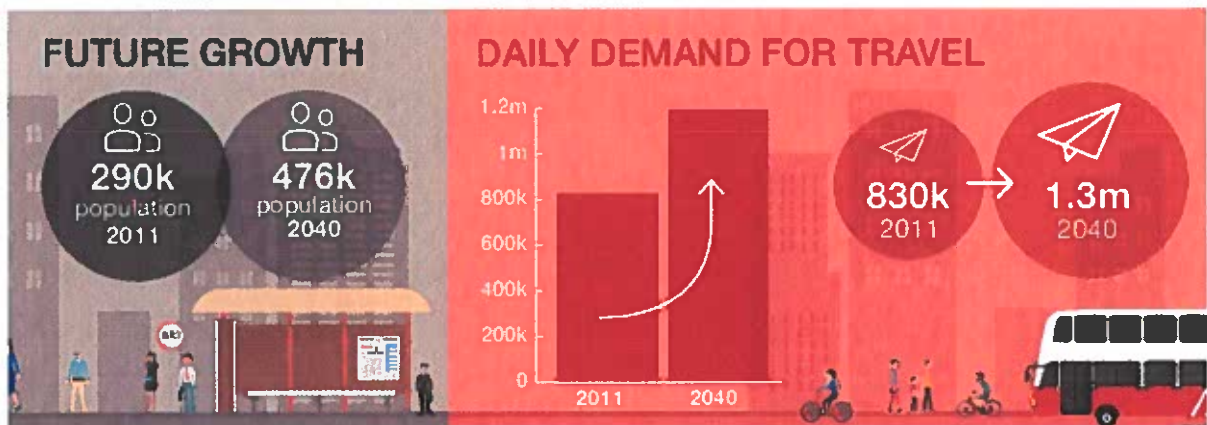
As set out in Project Ireland 2040, Irish cities will continue to grow, attracting more people and more jobs. With this growth comes additional travel demands. As Ireland's second city, Cork has already experienced significant growth in the number of people accessing our city centre for employment.

Between Census 2011 and 2016, the workforce in Cork city and suburbs increased by 11% to 102,000 people. The urban workforce has accelerated in size since. From 2015 onwards, South Mall has seen massive regeneration through the opening of new offices and flexible workspaces. Further down the river, in Cork's Docklands, new state-of-the-art office buildings have been developed and now house companies who were previously located in out-of-town business parks as well as companies new to Ireland.

At the time of writing, ten cranes are currently working on projects such as Navigation Square 2, Penrose Dock, HQ and the Beamish and Crawford site. Looking at Cork city alone, more than 1,000,000 square feet of office space is in planning and development for 5,000 extra jobs within the next three years while 1,500 new city hotel rooms are in various stages of progression. By 2030, Cork is targeted for an additional 65,000 jobs under the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. In consequence, we have no option but to make more efficient use of our transport networks through a combination of measures in order to prevent aggravating congestion even further. One such measure could and should be promotion of active travel, however this will also require significant more provision of funding for active travel modes than what has historically been allocated as part of the Budget and National Investment Plan.

The below graph illustrates Cork's increasing daily travel demand from 2011 to 2040, clearly illustrating why a shift towards active travel is required:

## STRATEGY OUTCOMES



Below, we set out our key recommendations in respect to the questions posed in the consultation document. We trust that these will be taken onboard as part of the review process, and we look forward to reading the outcome of this consultation.

## **2.1 Given the trends highlighted in Section 5, what should the focus be in terms of infrastructure delivery?**

Cork Chamber fully supports that Government policy focuses on and prioritises the growth of active travel, including walking, cycling and adoption of new technologies such as electric scooters and e-bikes.

Since the 1950s, cars and road spaces have overwhelmingly been granted priority status within national policy, planning and budget allocations in Ireland; often at the expense of public placemaking and the environment. However, nowhere in our policy framework has it been agreed that private vehicles should take precedence over other transport modes. From a climate and sustainable cities perspective, it is critical that Ireland reverses this trend. International evidence shows that the most successful, vibrant and attractive cities are those which prioritise quality of life, public realm and placemaking. As such, we fully support that national policy and infrastructure investment is refocused on active travel.

Cycling experienced the greatest share increase of all transport modes in Census 2016, recording an increase of 43% over 2011. The popular uptake of shared bike schemes across Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Galway (a new scheme in Waterford will be delivered in 2020) clearly illustrates an appetite among citizens for partaking in active travel. As shown in the consultation paper, the majority of cycle journeys in Irish cities are for work commutes.

Nevertheless, despite its growing popularity, cycling only accounts for 3% of all work commutes in Cork City (Census 2016). Targeted investment to improve urban cycling networks is critical to growing the share of cycling across Cork and other cities.

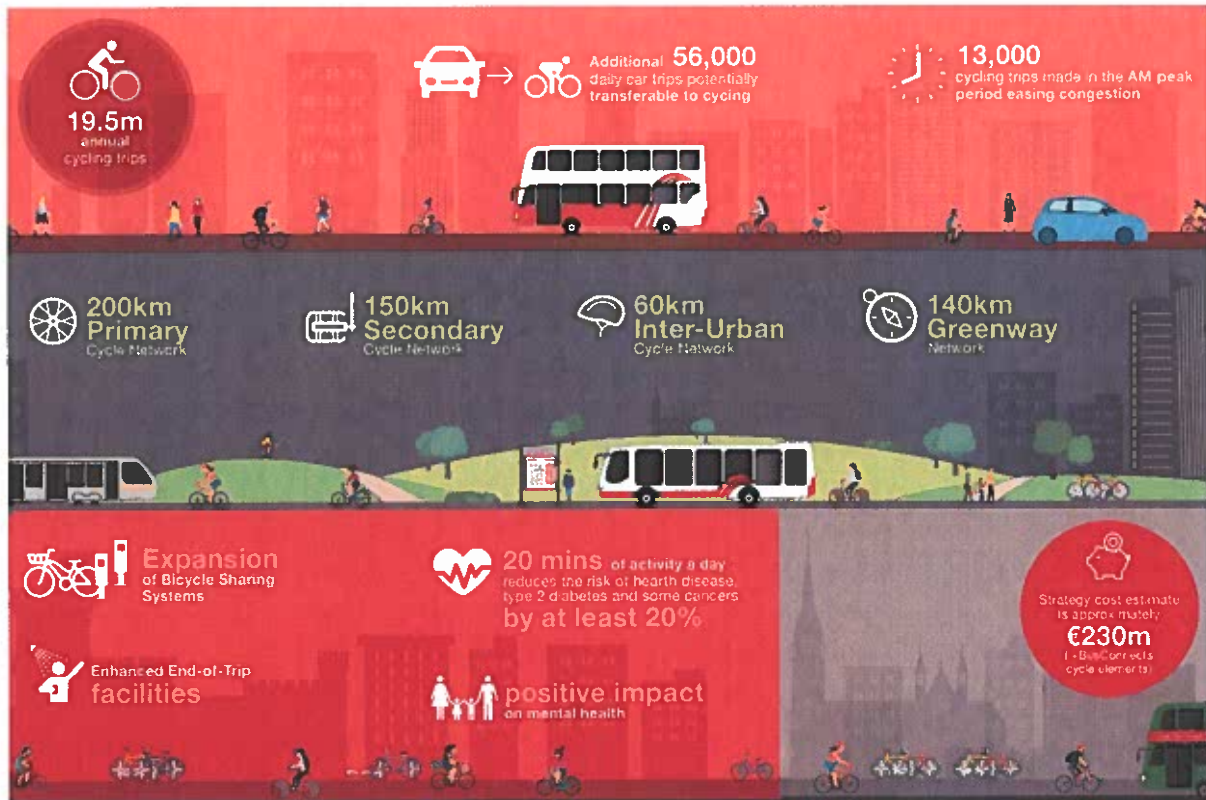
The below graph from the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy illustrates achievable results, pending an investment of €230 million (+BusConnects cycle elements) in cycling infrastructure across Metropolitan Cork.

To achieve a cycling culture in Cork, specific infrastructure investments are required. These include:

- Development and completion of a coherent primary and inter-city cycling network as set out in the 2017 Cork Cycle Network Plan and the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy, including the flagship 'Lee to Sea' greenway from Ballincollig to Crosshaven.
- Completion of the Cork Walking Strategy recommendations.
- Ensuring cycling connectivity to key educational areas and employment areas, e.g. Little Island, Cork City Centre, Ringaskiddy, Blackpool and Mahon.
- Further funding for maintenance of existing cycling infrastructure.
- Expanding the Cork Coke Bikes Scheme to include areas such as CIT, Cork County Hall, Blackrock, Mahon and Blackpool. Ten new Coke Bike Schemes were promised in 2019 in Cork but has not yet been delivered.
- Closer cooperation with, and funding for An Garda Síochána, to enforce existing cycling infrastructure in urban areas
- Developing a shared cycling scheme in Little Island connected with the train station.

- Identifying and promoting quiet roads, where cyclists share the road space with motorists.
- Integration of cycling and pedestrian networks in all future road investments.
- Delivery of wheel ramps and cycling parking throughout the city and suburbs.

## CYCLING



### 2.2 How can we best deliver an integrated package of focused behavioural change measures and infrastructure in order to achieve change?

Dublin and Cork do not experience more rainfall than many other European cities, and we do not have snowfall like Scandinavian cities. Whether it rains or not is only relevant for the short time period in which a person is moving from point a to point b. Contrary to frequent public commentary, perceptions about Irish weather should not deter uptake of active travel.

Unlike most European cities, we have, however, significantly less safe and integrated cycling/pedestrian infrastructure which is a deterrent to promote active travel. It is the view of Cork Chamber, that the number one effective measure to encourage more people to engage in active travel is to significantly accelerate the delivery of infrastructure which facilitates active travel. Without investment, any national active travel policy or strategy will fail to deliver.

In the urban environment, we should rethink and restructure our approach to different transport users with sustainable and public transport given the foremost priority.

This should include measures such as:

- Reallocating road space for investment in pedestrian and cycling infrastructure to overcome safety and congestion concerns. We note pages 29+35 in the consultation paper which recognises the development of safe infrastructure to be particularly important in attracting more females into commuting via bike.
- Using planting to create an attractive walking environment
- Redesigning intersections to give priority to pedestrians and people cycling.
- Reducing speed limits in inner cities to 30 km/h zones and reducing speeds on key access routes into the city centre to 60 km/h.
- Pedestrianising more areas for walking and cycling, e.g. the Marina in Cork which is an early win
- Identifying and promoting quiet routes similar to London
- Better and targeted education campaigns aimed at other road users.
- Subsidies for electric bikes – perfect option to incentive active travel among less mobile citizens or in places with hills.
- Better enforcement of the rules of the road to improve safety for pedestrians and people on bikes. For example, we propose that the Garda follow the lead of the Welsh police who introduced Operation Snap in 2017. This allows the public to upload camera footage of driving offences, resulting in motorists being prosecuted and fined. Similar online reporting tools have now been launched across British cities.

### **2.3 Is greater consideration needed in future active travel policy to increase walking as a transport mode? If so, what measures should be considered?**

Urban planning, our public realm and design of new developments also play a crucial role in promoting active travel. We need to refocus our city centres to prioritise active and public transport over private vehicles including by ensuring permeability through inclusion of short cuts for walkers and cyclists into residential areas, education institutes/schools, and employment hubs. By successfully making walking and cycling the easiest and most convenient option, people will change their behaviour. This is how both Amsterdam and Copenhagen successfully built cycling cities.

Budget allocation and investment in active travel must increase in order to enable behavioural change. We note Budget 2020 allocated €2.7bn to the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, however only €9m was allocated for sustainable mobility projects such as greenways and urban cycling networks. Ireland needs ongoing political will to support urban and rural active travel projects, with certainty of continued funding for both capital investment and maintenance expenditure.

We also propose that the Green Schools programme is continued to teach children from an early age the benefits of active travel. As part of this, we suggest that the Department of Transport in cooperation with the Department of Education explores opportunities/issues guidance for schools to introduce no drop zones to encourage more families to opt for active travel.

Furthermore, we encourage the inclusion and consideration of Age Friendly design considerations, along with consideration of users with visual, hearing or mobility impairments and buggies, and the inclusion of appropriate seating along walking routes, which is crucial to nurturing the liveability of cities.

At design stage, consideration regarding appropriate lighting should also be given. It is important that the type of lighting should be carefully considered in terms of shielding, setting appropriate lighting levels and consideration for lighting colour. Excessive, artificial lighting can cause light pollution which has negative effects on human health, the environment, biodiversity, and goals for climate action through energy waste. At the same time, lighting can also contribute positively to perceptions of safety and thus support active travel.

Finally, while it is welcome that the National Transport Authority has established a cycling office to assist with the design and role out of cycling networks, many local authorities lack the appropriate personnel to assist the planning and transport departments in growing active travel. We propose that funding is allocated for the recruitment of Active Travel/Cycling Officers to work in each local authority.

## **2.4 What additional measures can be introduced to encourage multi-modal journeys?**

Park and Rides, including those planned under Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy, should be designed as mobility interchange hubs to allow people to cycle via the proposed primary and secondary cycle routes. We also suggest that all existing and future commuter rail stations and core bus stations are designed as mobility interchange hubs, with sufficient parking, high capacity cycling parking, bicycle/e-scooter/GoCar sharing systems, dedicated carpooling spaces, electric charging facilities and taxi drop off points. In addition, all train stations should be served by bus to encourage a mix of modes.

We also request the NTA investigate the potential for neighbourhood/ local mobility hubs to include car parking. This could be beneficial for communities/ streets that will be asked to relinquish on-street parking during the implementation of Bus Connects.

Safe cycling storage and parking is required at transport hubs. We note how Dublin City Council has successfully installed protected bicycle parking at designated spots throughout the city centre and encourage the Department to ensure that similar investment happens across Cork city centre and other urban areas.

Consideration for active travel in design of buildings and in the procurement of other transport modes must be incorporated to encourage multi-modal journeys. For example, procurement of new train carriages should enable people to bring a bicycle on commuter trains, interurban trains, trams and any future Dublin Metrolink. We also suggest that procurement and public policy ensures that designated family carriages are included on any new trains to facilitate people bringing buggies thus making it more appealing for families to travel by train over private vehicles by making getting the train an easy option.

Finally, we wish to highlight the tendency to design cities around car usage. By its nature, driving a car is not an option for a wide group of citizens, including children under the age of 17, older people, people with disabilities, people on lower incomes, refugees, those who cannot obtain insurance and those without access to parking. Notwithstanding the substantial costs associated with owning a car (money that could be spent elsewhere in the economy), changing how we design our cities to be centred around walking, cycling and public transport instead of cars is a more democratic allocation of the public space, with positive environmental knock-on effects.

In addition, we firmly believe that immediate and ambitious action must be taken to improve our cities' air quality. A recent study carried out by Cork City Council and the Centre for Research into Atmospheric Chemistry at UCC, showed Cork city to currently have one of the worst in Europe recorded by real-time air quality monitoring website PurpleAir, with sensors measuring the level of particulate matter in the air. The Environmental Protection Agency confirmed that data from one of its air quality monitoring stations in the city rated the air quality as "poor" at approximately the same date and time, further verifying the PurpleAir findings.

**Yours Sincerely,**



**Sarah Thatt-Foley**  
**Senior Public Affairs Executive**