



## Transport & Mobility Forum

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## Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy - Public Consultation

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Transport and Mobility Forum, Cork (TMF) is a representative group of organisations who have a common interest in sustainable travel. TMF fully support sustainable modes of travel measures and policies. Sustainable and active travel helps reduce congestion on roads, improve air quality, supports a low carbon economy, reduces noise pollution and improves public health.

Thank you for the opportunity to feed into the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS) process. We attended all the stakeholder events and found them very worthwhile. We also appreciated the presentation delivered to our group by Kevin Burke, Owen Shinkwin and John Paul and found the discussion with them very valuable to our group. Please find below general comments followed by a more detailed list of recommendations related to each section.

### General Comments

The TMF finds the general direction of the CMATS very positive and forward thinking. We fully support its alignment with national (NPF and NDP) and regional (RSES and Cork MASP) policy and its role in informing local plans (LAPs, LTIPs, LECPs). Cork's unique position as the fastest growing region in Ireland demands that the strategy be placed on a firm statutory footing to ensure delivery, supported by transparent timelines and clear funding commitments.

We are however concerned that there is a lopsided emphasis on public transport as opposed to active travel and disproportionate need for engineering in some cases. Priorities should be given to public transport projects that would significantly improve the quality, affordability and reliability of public transport and a transition towards a low-carbon bus and train fleet. The need for increased investment in walking and cycling infrastructure is of primary importance and we would like to see an up-front

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prioritisation of these in the implementation of the plan. We would like to highlight the strong global shift towards cycling, the rapid adoption of electric bikes and their implications for mobility, congestion charging in city centres and the move towards lower urban speed limits. In the light of three recent accidents involving cars hitting children in suburban Cork over the last few months, we call for an urgent review of all speed limits in the expanded city, with 30 km/h being the default speed for all non-arterial roads.

We also observe that there still is an excessive spending on free-flow **road infrastructure** which caters primarily towards unsustainable use of private cars, e.g. Dunkettle interchange, N28 and the Northern Ring/Distributor Roads. Any investment in roads should be primarily aimed at increasing Public Transport capacity and other sustainable modes ensuring they are truly multi-modal in their use. In particular relation to the Northern Distributor Road, we are very concerned at the prospect of a road bridge running across the Lee Fields west of the Kingsley hotel. This green space must be protected and a route avoiding this extremely popular and valuable space is imperative.

In general, we need to protect the few, precious **green corridors** that exist in the city, and be careful not to turn them into concrete thoroughfares. Existing vegetation should be affected as little as possible and opportunities for increasing green spaces should be sought when any infrastructure is being installed or upgraded. Consideration regarding 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 (environmental effects through light pollution).

We would like to see far more reference to all **forms of multi-modal travel chains** including Park+Cycle (P+C), Park+CarPool (P+CP), Park+Stride (P+S), etc. and more information on the inter-connectivity and integration of transport modes, higher quality interchanges and integrated ticketing systems. The issue of pay parking in urban areas should be carefully managed, dissuading the private car in the city centre and the conversion of car park spaces to set-down spaces.

We feel the strategy lacks guidelines on suburban towns and rural areas contained within the strategy area. The regional bus network, school buses and local link services should be prioritised and funded to ensure residents of these areas have access to affordable and accessible public transport. The model of private operators such as 'Cobh Connect' has proved to be extremely successful by linking local residential areas previously not served by PT directly to Cork city centre. A focus should be placed on routes to school in suburban towns and rural areas. All children should have the opportunity to walk or cycle or get the bus to school. The CMATS should pay particular focus on delivering high quality walking and cycling routes in these areas.

**Water Transport** should be featured in the CMATS. A ferry servicing the commuters in the Cork Harbour area (Cobh, East Ferry, Crosshaven, Ringaskiddy, Passage-West, Rochestown, Little Island, etc) could help reduce congestion on the roads (N28, N25, N8 and N40).

Already today, Cork's transportation system is at its maximum capacity. **Clear timelines** need to be set out showing outcomes within the next 3 years. Implementation cannot begin once the Cork County and City Development Plans are updated in the next 1-2 years. Existing strategies such as the City Centre Movement Strategy, Cork Walking Strategy and Cork Cycle Network Plan can be used in the short term to implement changes. Low-cost improvements can be implemented in the short term to harness latent demand for alternative modes of transport and help reach that critical mass.



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Opportunities to install cycling and walking infrastructure alongside other works such as Irish Water carrying out water infrastructure upgrades should be explored.

Travel and transport in their quality (mode) and quantity (distance) are a direct result of where facilities of everyday use (housing, employment/education, retail etc) are located. Getting the spatial structure right in a way that favours shorter distances is the first important step to facilitate a modal shift to more sustainable travel. We support the '**Land-Use Priorities**' outlined in CMATS and the integration of new development at appropriate densities with high capacity public transport infrastructure, more attractive walking and cycling networks and associated public realm improvements. While we understand certain densities are necessary for such infrastructure projects to be successful, we propose a 'build it and they will come' approach. Relying on existing transport infrastructure in the short term to deliver a critical mass of growth in population and employment to leverage investment for higher capacity transport infrastructure will not deliver the results meeting the strategy objectives in the time needed.

Moving forward, the CMATS needs to evolve to meet development pace and speed up where necessary. **Monitoring and Evaluation** needs to be built into the strategy and continually inform implementation. Public engagement will be needed consistently throughout the lifetime of the strategy to garner sustained support for the measures being implemented and to achieve the cultural shift away from car dependency.

We would strongly recommend the establishment of a permanent **National Transport Authority (NTA) office in Cork**. The Cork office would help to ensure implementation does not get compromised and remains a national priority. It would also create stronger links between the NTA and local transport stakeholders in Cork. This is vital in allowing meaningful communication between the NTA and stakeholders who are ultimately responsible for the delivery of these measures. Failure to do this will result in a lack of communication and slow responses between both parties.

Equally important is the set-up of a dedicated Sustainable Transport Office, properly resourced with sufficient staff to address walking, cycling and sustainable travel in general. These officers should have a background in behaviour change and wider field of place-making & community building not just engineering of infrastructure. The role should be primarily conceived as one of building a walking and cycling culture rather than purely overseeing the provision and maintenance of infrastructure. It also requires a dedicated budget ring fenced for building a cycling and walking culture within the metropolitan area with continuous funding for civil society initiatives which serve this end.

### Walking

There is a great opportunity to make Cork the most walkable city in Ireland. With its compact size, network of streets and attractive quaysides, Cork city centre is highly conducive to walking. We support the adoption of the measures set out in the Cork City Walking Strategy (CCWS). Please consider the following points:

- **Permeability:** We cannot emphasise enough the importance of permeability of neighbourhoods. The challenge is to retrofit permeability into existing areas. Improved (filtered) permeability ("tear down these walls") can generate quick wins for modal shift towards cycling and walking. There should be a budget dedicated to improving the



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permeability of existing suburban areas, allowing local authorities not only to simply knock walls but if necessary purchase sites and demolish buildings to allow permeability in existing impermeable developments.

- Higher standards of urban design should not only be promoted in new development but also retrofitted into existing spaces. The quality of the walking experience does not depend only on what is beneath our feet but also on what we see with our eyes and therefore, we need to ensure the public realm is vibrant, welcoming and green.
- Priority should particularly be given to improving pedestrian connectivity and permeability to employment hubs, educational facilities and public transport services. These transport services should include not only rail and bus but e.g. bike-share or car-sharing stations as well.
- Low cost measures such as removing street clutter, increasing pedestrian crossing times at signalled junctions, instating crossing guards at schools, etc. which can be done in the short term, can lead to 'Quick Wins'.
- Park and Stride (P+S) locations should be identified at a local level especially close to schools with an average walking distance of 10-15 minutes from P+S location to destination.
- The post of a Walking Officer should be instated (see above).
- Community-led Walkability Audits: In order to cater to an increasing population with a wider range of ages, abilities and needs, community-led Walkability Audits should be carried out by groups representing all pedestrians. The proposed Walking Officer could facilitate these. The recommendations should inform LAPs and be implemented at a local level.
- Universal design should be applied where everyone's needs are met. For example; extending tactile paving to guide a visually impaired person from public transport hubs to popular destinations and healthcare services could be installed. Increase public seating along popular walking routes to provide resting places e.g. for the elderly.
- Routes to Schools: Experiencing the city on foot can start at an early age and is an important part of the development of a walking culture. Routes to all schools in the Metropolitan Area should be made walkable through the following measures: the instalments and widening of footpaths, car-free zones outside each school, permeability retrofit into existing estates to allow children to walk through these estates to school, traffic calming alongside routes to schools, school enrolment should favour those children that are able to walk (and cycle) to school, continued funding for behavioural change programmes like Green Schools Travel.
- Traffic Signals: Signalling programmes at junctions must be revised to promote walking and cycling. The principle of 3-phased cycles (with one short "4 way green" for pedestrians) disfavours walking and encourages jay-walking.
- Traffic Calming and lower speeds for motor traffic as mentioned above.
- With the public realm improvements planned to be prioritised within a 20-minute walking catchment (from the city centre), we would ask that this be extended in some areas to 30/35 minutes.



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### Cycling

Investment in cycling offers a ‘Small cost, big impact’ effect compared to the levels of investment necessary for roads and other public transport infrastructure. Please consider the following points:

- The Cork Cycle Network Plan (CCNP) should be prioritised and implemented in an incessant rolling basis in the very short term in parallel with service improvements on other modes (as well as other services such as Irish Water and OPW works) and while larger projects are moving through planning and funding. Cycling routes should be coherent, connected and of high quality. All primary routes in the city should have a continuous and segregated 2-way cycle path.
- Secondary network (p48) is important. Alternative quiet routes must be available, as cyclists are not a homogeneous demographic. Some cyclists would often choose a quieter more comfortable route despite it taking more time. This aspect was under represented in CCNP 2017.
- Bike Share Scheme: The Cork Bike Share Scheme is the most successful in Ireland and its short-term expansion is should be of primary importance. Public bikes shall also be accessible in suburbs with consideration given to station less schemes to reduce infrastructure costs.
- Signalled junctions: Cycling must be included in general traffic “GREEN” phase. Common practice in Ireland that often cycle paths are integrated into pedestrian GREEN phase which disfavors cyclists against motor traffic (see also “walking” above). Alternatively, the Dutch model of a frequent 4 way Green” phase for cyclists shall be considered.
- Park+Cycle: Opportunities for P+C locations should be identified throughout the Metropolitan Area including train stations, bus stops as well as other areas where people can park their car and cycle to their destination, including fiscal (fee) incentives.
- Bike Parking: Secure overnight bike parking should be installed in Public Transport hubs (e.g. Kent and Bus stns.) to serve the tail end of the commute.
- Bike ramps shall be installed at footpath stairs in the city, to facilitate pushing bikes and baby buggies.
- Infographics (p46): The figures given for 2040 only provide limited information, as there are no comparison baseline figures (2011 or 2018) given. These should be included.
- E-Bikes should be promoted and the bike to work scheme should facilitate the purchase of e-bikes.
- We strongly support the call for City Cycling Officer (see above).

### Public Transport- Bus

Bus transport is of vital importance in Cork and all services from city centre, metropolitan area and regional routes should be efficient and accessible to all. Please consider the following points:

- BusConnects must be clearly spelled out with timelines and phasing. Park and Ride must be created at the same time as dedicated corridors are put in place. Bus priority corridors must be the immediate priority.



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- Bus routes should connect to other transport hubs (train stations and P+R locations) to enable multi-modal interchange. Bus and Cycle should be included with secure bike parking at Bus Stations. New Bike Share stations should extend to connect with the bus network.
- Orbital routes are very welcome, especially bus routes along through the Jack Lynch Tunnel and along the N40. Consideration should be given to a (peak-hour) bus lane on hard shoulder between e.g. the tunnel and Mahon.
- There should be bus priority to all major employment zones Four main employment hubs – (Ringaskiddy, City Centre, Mahon, Little Island, Holyhill). Ringaskiddy, a major centre of employment is underserved by the plan. PT improvements in Little Island must be prioritised as a thriving hub of commerce that does not have any public or sustainable transport provision. There should be bus priority from all proposed Park and Ride sites (Black Ash should be facilitated by a dedicated bus corridor without delay) and from suburban rail stations (Kilbarry/Dunkettle).
- A bus route linking Carrigaline to Mahon is not mentioned in CMATS.
- Local bus services in Metropolitan towns should be emphasised more (compare to “Stadtbus” concept, Austria / Southern Germany in 1990s). For suburban, metropolitan towns as well as the inner city, shared taxis (“paratransit”, “ride pooling”) should be considered. Closing the gap between taxi and bus seems the latest trend elsewhere (see e.g. “Berlkoenig” or “Clevershuttle” in Berlin and elsewhere - run by Public Transport operator).
- There needs to be more priority given to school buses. School buses should service larger areas with more stops and include a smaller fleet of mini-buses. Public bus routes should service secondary schools where possible.
- Bus fleet: Current practice of single door buses (even high capacity double-deckers) must be reconsidered. Dwelling times at busy bus stops for boarding and alighting are far too long and would kill the gains in travel times resulting from bus priority. Shorter dwelling times can save cost, as one less bus (incl. driver) might be needed on a route. In Europe, articulated buses have up to 5 doors, double-deckers up to 3. Explore Options for carrying bikes on busses shall be explored.
- Bus Technology: Cork needs to be the progressive city in Ireland in the adoption of green technology. We must have biogas/hydrogen for our buses. Hybrid diesel does not meet the potential of Ireland (Biogas - circular economy) in meaningfully meeting GHG emission reduction targets as well as still emitting particulate matter. These issues should be reflected in the NTA tendering process.
- Infographics (p54): figures given for 2040 only provide limited information, as there are no comparison baseline figures (2011 or 2018) given.
- The supporting measures listed in the CMATS are fully supported namely RTP1 and bus stop infrastructure. Bus stops should be welcoming places located in easy to access places especially in suburban towns.



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### Public Transport- Light Rail

We welcome a light rail service in principle as a new level of quality for Public Transport in Cork city. Please consider the following points:

- The potential light rail route should be identified as soon as possible and early protection should be given of corridors. It should be implemented as a sustainable transport corridor around which development should be focused.
- The Light Rail Tram would need its own protected lane for most of the way (quality of service). This must be combined with a bus lane in many places (e.g. Western Rd), as buses will still operate on the same roads for segments of their routes.
- For the “green field” portions of this route, this should initially be as a green route for cyclists. As development occurs it should be upgraded to a bus route and cycle route, followed by a cycle and bus rapid transit route. Ultimately allowing a common light rail and cycle route this should be envisaged as the “main street” of future development with shop fronts and social spaces opening directly onto this route with any limited car traffic allowed in these developments routed away from this corridor and kept to the outside of developments.
- Severance: A Light Rail+Bus+Cyling Corridor should not result in community severance across the line. Special attention should be given to avoiding any severance and there should be regular and safe crossing points for pedestrians
- Green Corridor: This proposed Light Rail+Bus+Cyling Corridor should be lined with greenery and vegetation where possible and of high standards for a pleasant design of the public realm.
- The LRT’s route alignment remains very vague, especially in the western part of the city (unclear how CSAIP, CIT and CUH will be connected without cutting straight through residential estates.)
- Western gateway bridge: Investigate the possibility of a bridge that can open otherwise large ships would be prevented from coming into the city in the future which would result in a loss of heritage.
- Long-term plans to expand network would be of interest, as one line only will bear a lot of overhead cost (e.g. for depot)
- If densities support light rail before timelines set out, investment should happen sooner.

### Public Transport- Suburban Rail

All stations should be developed as mobility interchanges/hubs. Please consider the following points:

- Bike+Ride (B+R) is as important as P+R (catchment areas will even expand with e-bikes, e-bikes NEED secure parking (and charging). Accessibility by bicycle is mentioned, but rarely bike parking at stations. A combination of (e-)bike and train would provide unbeatable flexibility. All train stations in the CMA should include free or subsidised parking to



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- encourage people to Park and Rail. A bike share scheme should be considered and integrated into the suburban network in close cooperation with the rail operator.
- Bus stops should feature at each train station and bus and train services should be aligned to enable people to switch modes easily.
- There is no mention in CMATS of carrying bikes on suburban trains. Bikes should be facilitated on all commuter trains (as is in most European countries) at all times of the day including peak times.
- The model/vision should be similar to that of the DART in Dublin as per usage, real time info, leap integration, frequencies.
- The fare system must be attractive, easy to understand and fully integrated with all PT modes and operators. Ultimately an integrated ticketing system for all modes including private operators and bike share schemes should be implemented.
- Access routes (walk and cycle) to stations must be of high quality urban design.
- All stations should be welcoming and feel safe at all times.
- The proposed new station at Dunkettle/North Esk has the potential to take huge volume of traffic from North and East off the road. Within the context of the Dunkettle Interchange Upgrade, there is big potential here.
- We welcome the plans for Kent station and would emphasise the need for improved signage to and from the station and city centre.
- Blackpool is an area that has a strong growth agenda and ambition driven by some of the most progressive and rapidly growing companies in Ireland. Kilbarry train station is critical to securing further investment in this city location and to helping address the infrastructural deficit of the north side of Cork city.
- The Cobh/Midleton train should be prioritised for increased frequency. The 220 bus has seen a 60% increase in usage due to a blend of frequency and service extension. It is reasonable to expect that a similar result should be attainable on this route which already serves 1.3million journeys per annum. However, the proposed frequency of every 10 minutes (5mins between Glounthane and Kent) looks metro-like, but given the location of Kent station, it will hardly serve as a metro for Cork. Consideration should be given to station platform lengths to accommodate longer trains and running them every 15/20 minutes (also think of staff cost for drivers).
- Mallow station should be included in commuter zone with immediate effect– early win.
- The proposed train station at Tivoli is very welcome.
- Funding for Irish Rail fleet is needed where by electrification is welcomed.

### Parking

We strongly support the proposed network of strategic P+R locations which are designed as local mobility hubs. Please consider the following points:

- More detail is needed (function, size, locations, land available) in terms of these P+R locations being Mobility hubs. Black Ash should be facilitated by a dedicated bus corridor without delay as mentioned above. Apart from strategic P+R sites, smaller ones must also



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be considered at Public Transport nodes. Areas such as Blackpool and Ballyvolane appear neglected with Blarney P+R very being located far out.

- It will be essential to provide park and ride facilities out by Curraheen to develop the western corridor from CIT to CUH to UCC into the city centre.
- E-cars: provision for e-charging points especially at P+R sites should be mentioned.

### Interchange and Integration

We very much welcome that the phenomenon of “interchanges” gets acknowledged widely in the CMATS. Please consider the following points:

- It is imperative that the options to facilitate bringing a bike onto trains (including peak hours) are allowed.
- Sharing Services- Higher emphasis should be put on car sharing (GoCar, etc.) and bike sharing. The latter to include also e-bikes and cargo-bikes. Shops like DIYs and IKEA are providing cargo-bikes for their customers in Europe. These could be integrated into Mobility Hubs. Everything that can replace privately owned cars will free up road space that is now used for parking.

### Roads

We fully support the development of a road network that supports sustainable travel. Please consider the following points:

- The concept of ‘Permeability for carriageway’ and ‘multi-modal roads’ are mostly mentioned in connection with new developments and new roads. Retrofitting of existing streets and neighbourhoods is just as if not more important.
- As mentioned above in relation to the Northern Distributor Road, we would be opposed to any road bridge intersecting the Lee Fields area.
- The construction of the western access roadway to CIT would be seen as a major benefit from a CIT perspective. There were compulsory notices issued for this roadway a number of years ago. The proposed roadway through the proposed Science Park would be controlled for use by CIT and public transport and not another rat run into Bishopstown. It would remove traffic from the existing roads network in Bishopstown together with providing more options for Park & Ride/Cycle and a safer cycling route from Ballincollig. In time it will be required for the Light Rail rapid transit corridor.

### Freight, Delivery and Servicing

We welcome the proposed HGV ban in the city centre which is replaced by a system of depots located in strategic points on the periphery of the city with small vans delivering items from there around the city centre.



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Consideration shall be given to micro-delivery schemes based on electric cargo bikes.

### Supporting Measures

We agree with the need for all the supporting measures outlined in the CMATS namely high quality Urban Design and Place-making, wayfinding and behavioural change programmes like Smarter Travel and Green-Schools Travel. Please consider the following points:

- We strongly recommend the creation of a Cork NTA Office and the appointment of a Cycling Officer and a Walking Officer as outlined above
- Regarding the school travel, we recommend liaising with the Dept. of Education to advocate for more flexible school opening times, schools opening a half hour before starting so parents have time to actively travel with their children to school, school enrolment policies should firstly admit children that can walk or cycle to school. Similarly, more support for flex time working and tele commuting can take the pressure off the transport network (including Public Transport) in the am and pm peaks.
- Integration technologies and transport tech should be adaptable and not be restrictive to future tech innovation.

### Implementation

As mention above, secure funding streams are essential. An annual “gamble” regarding funding / budget is not supportive of delivering an integrated transport system. Fast track small but highly effective improvements for walking and cycling which can generate quick wins for relatively little money not to mention the health benefits of active travel. Please consider the following points:

- Recommendations which have been sitting in the CCMS, CWS and CCCN cannot wait until LAPs are updated in line with CMATS.
- A new section on Urban Planning should be added to the strategy which would outline clear and measurable guidelines to Cork City and County Councils. Specific guidelines mandating that all developments be permeable, of minimum density, that car parking should not be provided with accommodation but purchased separately, etc. as well as minimum standards envisaged for the various types of infrastructure specified. Guidelines that aligned with DMURS, National Cycling Manual and NTA Guide to Permeability and translated to a Cork Metropolitan area level.

### Strategy Outcomes- Modal Share figures

The projected modal share targets for 2040 seem quite disappointing with only a 3% increase targeted for cycling and walking to remain the same at 21%. These figures are said to be for the am peak, and refer to the entire metropolitan area which in places incorporates quite rural hinterland areas. These figures feel too crude and do not reflect local travel behaviour, changing local and national mobility patterns, other policy targets or census commuting figures. Are these figures based on modal



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projections that use past behaviour rather than ambitious targets to work towards? A reduction in car modal share from 67% to 49% will be over-compensated by general traffic growth resulting from population / employment growth. How many cars (in absolute figures) will Cork's roads be able to take, especially within Cork City? A more detailed breakdown of these figures, at least one for the core city (e.g. Cork City in 2018 boundaries) would be useful.

In conclusion, the TMF commends the great work done on the CAMTS and we are as a whole very supportive and aligned with the main thrust of the strategy. We are excited to see its implementation and are happy to be of support going forward in any way we can.

Should you require any clarifications, please email me at [tmfcork@gmail.com](mailto:tmfcork@gmail.com).

We look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stephan Koch".

Stephan Koch (Chair)  
Transport and Mobility Forum

**Note:** *The comments within this submission are solely the view of the Transport and Mobility Forum (TMF) as a whole and not the opinion or view of any individual partner of the TMF.*

A list of organisations participating in the TMF can be found on the Forum's website.