



Transport & Mobility Forum

Cork County Council
County Development Plan 2022-2028
Planning Policy Unit
County Hall
Cork

Via online consultation portal

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2nd July 2020

Pre-Draft Public Consultation – Response

Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for giving the general public the opportunity to feed into the new County Development Plan (CDP 2022-2028) at pre-draft stage.

The Transport and Mobility Forum, Cork (TMF) is a representative group of organisations who have a common interest in sustainable travel *. The TMF fully supports 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.

The new CDP will shape the further development of County Cork well into the 2020s and 2030s at a time where the urgency for sustainable development and the challenges of Climate Change require swift and decisive action. The carbon emissions from transport represent about one third of Ireland's CO2 emissions, with the vast majority of them being caused by road transport, i.e. mostly the fossil fuel powered private car traffic. The county's population travelling to work and education, retail, family and leisure activities and the resulting travel patterns in terms of distance and transport mode is highly determined by the location of housing, employment, education and retail facilities. This and the provision of transport infrastructure and services is a direct outcome of planning and thus the major lever that the CDP can have for contributing to a sustainable development of the county.

While the current COVID 19 pandemic crisis dominates the debate on public life these days, it is uncertain how far into the future its effects will last. But it certainly highlights the vulnerability of a



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society that is highly dependent on transport and mobility, on covering distances in people's daily lives and it imposes a strong new perspective on the significance of proximity, for work and retail, leisure and social life alike. The question of what shops or amenities can be reached within a small radius has suddenly reached a new importance, for reasons previously unforeseen. At a time where roads were at and beyond capacity on a regular basis, and public transport and lift-sharing in a private car experience unprecedented constraints, the ease and necessity of covering distance appears in a very new light.

TMF Consultation Process

While the Transport and Mobility Forum Cork (TMF) primarily concentrates on the promotion of sustainable travel from the transport side, the right location of homes, jobs, schools and services are also being considered, as this is the decisive factor of how and how far people need to travel in their daily lives.

In order to get input from a majority of the TMF member organisations, the TMF held a virtual brainstorming meeting focusing our discussion on the following four key areas:

- 1) Policy
- 2) Active Travel
- 3) Train travel
- 4) Bus travel

We are grateful to County Council Planner and TMF member Susan Lorole for delivering an excellent presentation on the draft CDP and answering the many and varied questions from TMF members on the day. The feedback from these discussions form the basis of our submission.

1) Policy

Housing Development

To cater for the predicted 100,000 population increase in Cork county over the coming 20 years, the TMF supports plans for 'Compact Growth' in County towns and villages and for future housing demand to be met with high and medium density housing developments in infill and brownfield sites where possible. New and existing developments (housing, schools, health facilities, retail outlets, etc) must have access to high frequency and reliable Public Transport including school buses and high quality walking and cycling infrastructure. If this infrastructure is not available at the site, their constructions should be a condition of approval. As a good example, the TMF commends the County Council's approach to the development of Carrigtwhohill whereby the Burys Bridge to Carrigtwhohill cycle and pedestrian path is constructed to connect with the new schools, housing developments and train station. This kind of holistic approach should be applied county wide going forward.

In rural areas of the county where 'one-off housing' is restricted, clustering could be considered to provide housing for local families in a more sustainable manner with shared services and links to the Bus network (including school buses) and cycling and walking infrastructure.



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Implementation

In order to ensure the new CDP is aligned within the overarching policy framework of the NDP, NPF, RSES, CMATS, Sustainable Development Goals, Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Plans and other policies, there needs to be a clear and transparent process of oversight and consultation amongst stakeholders. In order to achieve this, we propose several steps as follows:

- A robust **Monitoring and Evaluation** structure must exist between the NTA, the Southern Regional Assembly and Cork County Council to ensure interventions align with all policies and annual mode share targets are met. Clear and time-bound indicators should be followed and such oversight transparent outside of these structures.
- **Data Gathering:** All trips, not just commuting, should be focused on. In most planning documents, **travel data** for transport planning mostly concentrates on ‘Commuting’, which only accounts for about a quarter of all trip purposes. As most data is taken from the Census, data on transport shows only a very narrow cut-out of people’s travel patterns (i.e. commuting, primary transport mode). Multi-modal travel, alternating use of modes and all other trip purposes are very little reflected, if at all. Many trips that happen locally are not necessarily commuting trips. A **better and more comprehensive data base** is needed for transport planning.
- **A devolved NTA:** A local NTA office should be set up in Cork (covering city and county, or further e.g. all of Munster) in order to allow for better communication with local stakeholders. This is essential in order to roll out the infrastructure projects detailed in CMATS as well as the increased funding for Active Travel and Sustainable Transport as outlined in the new Programme for Government (PFG).
- Cork County Council should develop a role for a **Mobility officer** covering Active Travel and Public Realm enhancements. This role would function as a link between communities and the council, in the development and delivery of both hard and soft measures.
- **DMURS to be adopted** and fully implemented in respect to new infrastructure and retrofitting of existing infrastructure. The Hierarchy of the Street should be strictly adhered to. Where there is limited space the priority should be Pedestrians, Cyclists, Public Transport and then Motorized Private Vehicles. A system of continuous professional development for county engineers, planners and architects should be developed to ensure DMURS and other best practice guidelines are applied in designs.
- Public Consultation: A **pre-consultation** phase should be developed whereby communities are included in the design process. The current process whereby almost finalised designs are presented for public consultation makes it more difficult to change these designs and also makes it harder to get designs accepted by communities and the Councillors who represented them. Consultation with elected representatives, community groups, PPN and advocacy groups such as Age Friendly Cork and ourselves at the pre-planning stage would result in a more inclusive and holistic design that is broadly accepted by communities.
- **Community Audits** (Walkability, Cycleability, Mobility, Green Space, etc.) should be supported by the County Council whereby the recommendations are considered and there is dialog between communities and the council. Recommendations and issues should be mapped (GIS mapping technology) with updates shared with communities in an open-sourced



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platform. Assess amassed data from **Walkability Audits from Green Schools** stored in local authorities.

- **Local Representatives:** There needs to be a better system of communication between communities, councillors and the council. The current system of forums such as safety forums and community policing forums are not inclusive and effective. Councillors need to be more aware of policy objectives and show leadership within their constituencies to promote these objectives.
- The County Council will need to apply **Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs)** more frequently when rolling out sustainable transport and active travel infrastructure.
- **Integrate Land Use and Transport Planning:** In order to achieve a greater use of sustainable commute mode and have a real impact on mode share, a greater number of people will need to live closer to their place of work. The CDP may need to facilitate a better mix of residential development and compatible employment uses, particularly in Metropolitan Cork.
- **Footpath Clutter:** Planning applications needed for on path advertising such as A-frame and licences appropriately priced. €2/day per each on-path A-Frame or other shape to be considered as a possible fee.

New Programme for Government 2020

The new Programme for Government (PFG) commits to a ‘fundamental change in the nature of transport in Ireland’ outlining ‘necessary improvements in climate impact, quality of life, air quality and physical and mental health demand that every effort is made by the Government to make active travel and public transport better and more accessible’. It goes on to state that ‘each local authority will be immediately mandated to carry out an assessment of their road network to see where space can be reallocated for pedestrians and cyclists. This should be done immediately’. This reorientation of transport planning and infrastructure implementation will require a reorientation of the system that delivers them. There needs to be a move away from silo thinking towards systems thinking. Instead of auditing towns and villages for active travel infrastructure or public transport provision, they should be audited for liveability. For example, what makes a town or village walkable is not only about footpath quality but also public seating, green space, low traffic speeds and volumes and a vibrant centre where people want to not just walk through but linger. The TMF commends the County Council’s enhancements to the Clonakilty Public Realm and hopes to see this delivered to towns and villages across the entire county.

The TMF welcomes the proposals in the new PFG for significantly increased investment in Active Travel whereby there will be annual budgets of 10% for walking and 10% for cycling amounting to an expected €360 million annual investment as well as a 2:1 ratio for Public Transport and Roads investment respectively. This is long overdue and essential in delivering the modal shift away from car dependency. It is vital that this new budget capacity is not all absorbed in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) and Metropolitan Areas while ignoring suburban and county towns and rural areas. How can Cork County Council ensure access to these funds? Measures such as a **local NTA office** and a **Cork County Mobility Officer** would help in this regard.



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Town Centres First

We support the PFG's 'Town Centres First' policy which aims to promote residential occupancy in our rural towns and villages and feel it could help regenerate Cork county villages and towns. Whilst the policy focuses primarily on housing regeneration, it outlines a 'Collaborative Town Centres Health Check (CTCHC) framework to 'gather and lead actions'. It is imperative that transport, mobility and active travel are central to this framework, creating towns and villages that are not car centred but people centred, where residents prefer to use public transport to travel outside of their town, prefer to walk and linger in their town or village and have the option to let their children walk or cycle to school or send them in a school bus. The draft CDP must include details of how this 'Town Centres First' approach is achieved in a holistic manner delivering walkable and liveable county towns and villages.

We must also note how the recent change to the current CDP to enable out of town Retail Outlets similar to the one proposed for Carrigtwohill, contradicts this 'Town First' approach and only serves to redirect footfall and vibrancy away from towns such as Midleton, Carrigtwohill, Glounthane and Cobh.

Cork County Clean Air Strategy

Cork County Council should develop an Air Quality Strategy in-line with the PFG's proposed National Clean Air Strategy. Air quality should be monitored in Cork towns and villages and measures implemented to improve air quality such as smoky coal ban, tree planting and in the area of transport, reduction in congestion and engine idling in towns and villages. As a first step, all school gates should be made car free to ensure clean air for our young people.

Retrofitting of Homes and Neighbourhoods

Subsidies and grants for retrofitting of homes should also include e-car and e-bike charging infrastructure and safe bicycle storage and parking. Also measures to increase green space along urban streets such as parklets should be supported.

Short-cuts (filtered permeability) should be retrofit where possible to allow for shorter ways to town centres, shops and services, and public transport.

Working from home

Emerging research suggests most people do not want to return to pre-COVID levels of commuting and prefer to continue working from home for all or part of their week. This should be supported within the new CDP as it helps to reduce congestion and re-localise services in county towns and villages. Estate agents are now seeing an increase in demand for rural housing with green space, room for an office and access to broadband.

Local Co-working spaces and digital hubs like the Ludgate Centre in Skibbereen should be replicated throughout the county. Rather than attracting high volumes of cars to these hubs, they should be connected to active travel routes and sustainable transport services and have limited car park space. They should in fact double as 'Mobility Hubs' equipped with Bike Share stations, secure bike parking, welcoming Bus Shelters with RTPI and footpath access.

2. Active Travel

Modes of Active Travel, i.e. walking and Cycling, combine a **large number of benefits**: Little space consumption, no or little space demand for parking, zero-emission (air quality and climate), healthy through physical activity and lower stress levels and socially inclusive.

Yet active travel is far **underrepresented** when it comes to planning at a larger scale. The same applies to its representation in official statistics in Ireland (see above re flaws of Census data). It also is highly dependent on good spatial planning, as distances covered are limited and personal safety aspects are more important than e.g. when driving in a car. This is particularly important for vulnerable road users such as children (families), elderly or mobility impaired people.

The conditions and uptake of active travel in County Cork have much room for improvement. The figure of only 0.5% of students cycling to school or college (2016) is alarming.

The current **pandemic crisis highlights** the need for more space given to people walking and cycling. The impact on our public realm and ways of working and traveling (i.e. reallocation of road space, pedestrianisation, outdoor dining, reduced public transport capacity, home-working, etc.) offer a – once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for mass societal behavioural change away from car dependency and toxic commutes. The new CDP must maximise on this momentum and act swiftly to implement the infrastructural changes needed to make this short-term behavioural change, long-term.

Improved conditions for **active travel must be at the heart of planning** for sustainable towns and communities in the new CDP, and must get an equal, if not higher importance to car access for the planning of new developments, residential, retail, educational (schools) and commercial (workplaces). Adequate access routes for active travel should be an essential planning condition for any larger scale development. All new development designs must include detailed plans of the outdoor landscape and how it is connected to footpaths, cycleways, bus and train services.

Attractive and safe walking and cycling routes must be **deemed as essential infrastructure** with the same significance as roads. For active travel as well, the general benefits for the community should prevail in the planning process over the objections of a few, e.g. regarding opening laneways or the necessary acquisition of land, which often means only a minor part of a property (also via CPO).

Active travel infrastructure must cover hard measures like infrastructure design (foot and cycle paths, dedicated quiet routes) and soft measures like safety, attractive environment and a high quality public realm.

A special focus should be on **planning for the youngest and the oldest**, i.e. with children and the elderly in mind, order to promote and maintain their independence. The needs and **requirements for people with disabilities**, be they mobility or other impairments, must be considered at all stages.

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Walking

On the **walking infrastructure** side, good public realm and road/street space design must improve conditions for pedestrians and should be applied in new builds and continuous retrofit, such as:

- Wider footpaths (e.g. complying with DMURS guidelines)
- Tighter kerb radii at junctions to lower turning cars' speeds, shorten crossing distances and increase footpath area
- Raised table pedestrian crossings.
- Maintaining footpath levels at driveway accesses, i.e. not to dip the level of the path, resulting in undulating surface. This would require a small verge towards the kerb, which would be welcome anyway.
- Tactile paving
- Appropriate / safe paths access to every school.
- Removal of permanent street clutter
- Better surface quality for footpaths (conditions, materials to be different for roadway, kerb and footpath for visual purposes)
- At signalled crossings, signal timings shall be revised in favour of pedestrians (length and frequency of Green lights)

see: https://tilda.tcd.ie/publications/reports/pdf/Report_AmberCrossCode.pdf

Greenways

Greenways should be planned for, designated and designed for **dual purpose** use and promoted as such: recreational / amenity AND utility use (commuting, shopping etc. uses). **Greenways are active travel infrastructure** and should be connected to all residential, educational, retail and commercial developments in the vicinity and connected to other transport modes especially bus stops and train stations but also **Park+Cycle facilities**, with secure overnight bicycle parking to let longer distance car commuters change to the bike in the town and city approaches. This integration of transport modes is essential. Subsequently greenways in rural areas, whilst often installed as an amenity function, will also become a key transport link for the local population.

Greenways reaching into towns and the City (like the proposed Lee to Sea Greenway) will also avoid the need for many to travel by car (incl. transporting bicycles) to reach a greenway for a leisurely family cycle.

On greenways, **separate people cycling and walking** in an appropriate way. Walking and cycling happen at different pace, so shared surfaces and high footfall will increase the chances of conflict between both user groups.

Greenways also follow the **law of induced demand** or “build it and they will come”. This applies to Greenways as much as road infrastructure.

Greenways should also become “**wildlife superhighways**” to combat the loss of biodiversity. The use of hedgerows and other supportive planting would facilitate improved biodiversity. Lighting and careful maintenance of both the greenway and associated planting are of high importance.



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Lighting on Greenways shall be in line with best practice regarding light pollution and its effect on animals/insects in the vicinity.

Cycling

A **comprehensive cycling infrastructure**, providing a safe environment for all kinds of people cycling (ages, abilities), must be established within towns and linking towns and villages. This must include pathways of all kinds (greenway, artery routes, quiet routes, cycle lanes, short-cuts, ...) as well as parking facilities at destinations (high-street, retail centres, train/bus stops, secure employee parking incl. changing facilities) and safe and convenient storage facilities at homes.

Residential cycle parking should consist of adequate storage facilities at homes (new builds: via building regulations / planning conditions) or neighbourhood bike sheds for adjacent homes (more relevant to retrofits).

Set-up of bike rental/sharing schemes (like e.g. CokeBikes, BleeperBikes, ClonBikes, ...) should be promoted, and room for their docking stations earmarked in public space. The successful Clonakilty Bike Share scheme is currently on-hold as they cannot attain insurance cover. The NTA or Cork County Council must step in and take on the insurance liability for such schemes.

Speeds

Lower speeds for motor traffic in towns and villages, but also on selected rural local roads, will be an important factor to raise levels of active travel, perception of safety and attractiveness of the public realm. This will subsequently also raise the attractiveness of town centre businesses.

Over time, the default speed limit in towns and villages shall come down to 30km/h, with exceptions to meet clearly defined criteria. The lay-outs of urban street space shall reflect this. This would honour Ireland's signing of the UN's "Stockholm Declaration" in February 2020.

As a short term supportive measure, e.g. side alternating parking and the application of planters, parklets etc. (tactical urbanism) can help to reduce actual speeds in towns and villages. While necessary car access could be maintained, a pedestrian centred urban design can contribute a lot to this transition process.

Schools

It should be imperative that schools are safely accessible by means of active travel. Hence all new **schools must be located in the hearts of towns and communities**. As many of their pupils and students as possible should be able to access their schools by walking or cycling in a safe environment, and, dependent on age, should be enabled to do so independently.

All existing schools should execute an **active travel audit**, and be retrofit with safe active travel access where necessary.

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School streets where car traffic is largely restricted at start and finish times should provide a “soft landing” for children, and address the increasing issues of congestion (and hazards) and air pollution outside schools.

For young people travelling longer distances to schools, the schools should be **connected to public bus services or a school bus** service which could be delivered via the Local Link service. Defined drop-off zones should funnel and regulate car access and protect other children walking and cycling, when the motorised school run is unavoidable.

As for many parents, the **school run is connected to their commute**, long distance and car dependent access also determines the modal choice for their commute. The closer the school is to where children live and the more they are able to get to school independently, the higher are the chances for their parents to be in a position to commute other than by car. Therefore, schools should favour students living closer to the school.

For a **short case study** of two schools in a very rural setting (Ballydehob, near Scull), with a list of proposed interventions to improve its accessibility, please see Appendix 1.

Rural Roads

The potential for **‘Active Travel’ corridors on L-Roads** should be explored. In rural areas there are several L (Local) Roads leading to the same destinations. The option of allocating one of them for Active Travel (while allowing for local car access only) and the others for general motor traffic (cars, HGVs and buses). This designated ‘Quiet Way’ would have speed limits of between 30-40km/h, hence far below the usual limit of 60-80km/h on similar roads.

Case Study Kinsale: The most popular cycling route from Kinsale town is a loop out to the Old Head of Kinsale and back via Ballinspittle. Part of this route is on the very busy R600. It might be possible to direct cycle traffic through Sandycove instead (hilly though!) or Ringrone. If these are not considered suitable, some kind of road calming or cycle way would be appropriate for the R600 from Duggan Bridge to Barrel’s Cross. Also, many locals and visitors cycle from the town centre out to Charles Fort (Scilly Walk could be marked for cycle use as it is already pedestrian), James Fort/Dock Beach and Sandycove. Again, something could be done to make these more cycle friendly as they are already used regularly by cyclists.

There are two areas in the area where there is potential to make family friendly cycling i.e. cycling suitable for young children: Widen the existing walkway south of Charles Fort towards Lower Cove and/or provide a separate marked cycle track.

Possible interventions:

- 1) Lee to Sea Greenway <https://lee2sea.wordpress.com>
- 2) Dunkettle interchange bypass cycle route to connect Little Island to the City
- 3) Ringaskiddy Spur from Lee to Sea to connect up to International Ferry Arrivals
- 4) Passage West River Ferry Port to be linked to existing greenway. Continue Passage West Greenway east onto Cobh via the Riverbrook Ferry whereby a continuous segregated cycle

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- path would run into the town centre and there would be ample bike parking available by the Heritage Centre. Link with upcoming redesign of public realm.
- 5) Fermoy Cycle Routes – proposed cycle path would be along the R639 connecting Rathcormac and Fermoy
 - 6) Cork to Kinsale cycling route
 - 7) Western Greenway to be actioned in the time of the next development plan
 - 8) Complete the Clonakilty Greenway - 2km of off-road cycle paths linking town with business park (yet to be finished)
 - 9) Other Clonakilty Routes identified and delivered; <http://clonbike.com/?s=routes>
 - 10) Carrigaline Direct Cycling Route to City to meet up with bridge link across the N27 to Tramore Valley Park
 - 11) Timoleague to Courtmacsherry - develop the existing track between the R601 and the sea for pedestrians and cyclists.
 - 12) Pilot Project in Midleton: Midleton has 5,000 students (vs 6k in CIT). Aim to facilitate all students to reduce car use and travel to school via Active Travel or multi-mode or school bus. Car Free School gates and pedestrian priority zones around schools.
 - 13) Mobility Hub at City end of N71 (Bandon Road interchange), to allow e.g. for P+Cycle to the numerous large employers in the southwest of the city and the city centre.

Cycling Tourism

Ferry Linkages and linking up of existing network of greenways into a seamless network should be considered to encourage a “slow travel” revolution with Cork at its epicenter. Bike tourism for international travel via the Ringaskiddy ferry port could be encouraged. Also Cork-based and other Irish-based tourists could potentially begin travel from their front door via bicycle. Local small villages and towns near greenway network to be reinvigorated with “slow travel” that pauses longer and spends more money per visit as a result. The local community benefits through access to utility walking and cycling infrastructure. Less car dependency, more childhood and adult independence.

“The Martin family arrives via the ferry at Ringaskiddy and cycles that morning to Cork City to spend a few days there, exploring the city itself and the full length of the Lee to Sea. They turn west and spend several days enjoying the beauty and hospitality that West Cork offers before returning to the city and cycling on east, and further on to Waterford before taking the Ferry back home from there”

3. Bus Travel

Apart from the two rail corridors from Cork City to Mallow/Charleville and Midleton/Cobh, bus services are the backbone of public transport in the County.

Fast, frequent, reliable, affordable and accessible services must be provided to perform a major shift towards sustainable travel. Reliability becomes ever more important where frequencies are low.

Fast and direct connections between the county towns and the City and its metropolitan region must be complemented with **rural services** linking villages to towns and feeding to city bound services or trains. The Local Link services are of major importance here. Both types of services operate under **very different conditions** and need different approaches.

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Reliability should be enhanced by **bus priority measures** such as bus lanes and priority signalling where there are notorious bottlenecks.

Timetables should be subject to review on a regular basis. **Connections between services** must be convenient and reliable (ICT supported), esp. when service frequencies are low.

Connections and transfers between routes, operators and transport modes will more and more become the norm. They need to be organised as seamless as possible, as the “one-seat bus trip” becomes more unlikely.

Bus stops must be accessible at all times for the buses and the passengers, not least for allowing safe access for mobility impaired passengers.

Bus stops and stations, esp. in towns, should be **well connected to walking and cycling routes**. Bicycle parking should be provided at major stops. Bike+Ride and Park+Ride should be provided in key towns.

Bus stops should become a **“place” in towns and villages** and serve multiple purposes (vending machines, “parcel motel”, local notice board, ...). Access and waiting must be safe esp. for vulnerable users, incl. single female passengers. Stops should be visible in populated and overlooked places (“with eyes on the street”), well-lit at night, but yet to an adequate level so that waiting passengers can still watch the darker surroundings. Upgrading bus shelters to become ‘Neighbourhood Mobility Hubs’ should be explored.

Local Link services should be strengthened and better connected and integrated into general public transport. Attractive interchanges to Bus Eireann routes can offer new levels of connectivity, for education, employment etc. Flexible routings and on-demand-services should be facilitated through modern ICT.

Vehicles for rural services must be suitable **for rural roads**. Small volume deliveries can also be included to generate an additional source of revenue (flexible seats).

The system of **School Buses** needs to be fundamentally reviewed as its structures appear to be outdated. It is far too prescriptive and restricted for pupils endeavouring access to it (e.g. the arbitrary distance limits and age limits). Integration into general public transport needs to be considered, as well as opening school bus services to the general public in return. Hybrid operating models involving parents’ engagement should also be investigated.

In order to provide a sustainable mobility offer also in rural areas, **all forms of low-volume collective transport** should be investigated, strengthened and integrated: Local Link, town buses, community buses*, ride pooling, collective taxis, lift sharing, etc. All such services should be interlinked with classic public transport wherever possible (information, real-time-info, ticketing, ...). Best practice examples from all over Europe should be considered.

* Town buses: compare “Stadtbus” concept in DE and AT, Community bus, see “Buergerbus” or “Buurtbus” with voluntary drivers in DE, NL, ...

In rural areas with low levels of passenger numbers, all kinds of latent demand for travel should be bundled and served with an **integrated variety of service models**. Rural public transport should be an

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attractive and a viable option for more people than the classic “captive ridership” (i.e. the “youngest, oldest, the poor or the mobility impaired”).

Alternative Fuels for Buses must be considered when moving away from diesel buses, with several options like e.g. electric, CNG, hydrogen, bio-methane or hybrid versions thereof. As it is unlikely that there will be one unique form of fuel used in transport, an adequate supply of charging/ refuelling infrastructure needs to be provided throughout the county. Projects to develop this refuelling infrastructure or produce renewable energy for use in these stations should be supported where possible.

4. Rail Travel

Rail travel in Cork consists of the services on the Cork–Dublin main line, connecting the Cork Metropolitan Area (CMA) to the north (Mallow, Charleville, Limerick Junction), and on the East Cork commuter line from Cork Kent Station to Midleton and Cobh. The proposed East-West light-rail (LUAS) line connecting the City Centre to Ballincollig and Mahon (see CMATS) shall be taken into account, but is not subject to the CDP, as it will run entirely within the City boundaries.

Although County Cork once was served by a number of (now closed) railway lines, it seems highly unlikely that their former alignments will be re-used for train services. The only exception might be the closed Midleton-Youghal line. While a complete new build of railway lines can be ruled out from today’s perspective, the development of light-rail services could be an option in the CMA.

The new CDP will hence treat rail travel as the upgrade and further development of the existing railway lines and services and their integration with other transport services and town planning.

Residential and commercial development (density) shall focus on the rail corridors, as a higher density is highly important to support rail services.

In the **debate on “higher densities”** (e.g. in RSES), clarification / examples of what “high density” actually means for rail corridor towns will be helpful. Local public perception is often (mis)led by undesirable scenarios like “Ballymun-style” and likely to spark opposition. Effective community engagement is essential to facilitate such an attitude change.

Properties around commuter rail stations will **rise in value** when there is a frequent and fast connection into Cork City (“*Kent Station only 15mins away*”). This must be reflected in planning and local development.

Commuter Rail stations must become “places” and focal points in their towns. Attractive access routes for active travel should link the station to the community. Services around the station (shop, café, ...) and high quality public realm shall raise the significance of the station as a place in town. Future development shall be directed towards the station, esp. where the station is peripheral to the town (centre), like e.g. Charleville, Mallow, Blarney (closed).

Train stations must be **linked with other transport modes**, i.e. active travel paths, incl. e-bikes, feeder bus services and P+R/B+R, to maximise their catchment.



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New commuter rail stations must be **built in parallel with new local developments**, not years later, so that train services will be available from “day one”.

The **carriage of bicycles on all train services** (particularly commuter rail) must be provided and facilitated. Integrating both modes will unlock significant synergies regarding train catchment and last-mile solution as well as action radius for cycling.

Quick-wins shall be identified as short-notice solutions to boost attractiveness of train services. One example would be an improved access for cyclists to **Little Island station**, i.e. a new bridge across the N25 and secure overnight cycle parking at the station or improved bike carriage on the trains. This would unlock a significant potential for Bike+Ride access to Little Island (an employment and congestion hotspot).

As a more radical option, **conversion of the East Cork commuter lines to TramTrain** operation should be investigated as an alternative to classic heavy rail operation. Instead of operating two technically isolated rail systems of small scale (future Cork LUAS and the short commuter rail lines), the long-term option of combining both to a Cork TramTrain system, following the highly successful Karlsruhe-Model or the LUAS Green Line in South Dublin, should be considered.

With a track link at Cork’s Kent Station, direct journeys from Ballincollig, CUH, County Hall, UCC etc. to Little Island, Midleton or Cobh would be possible. Rail stations (then light-rail stops) would be more numerous and better accessible (closer and at level) and extensions e.g. into Midleton town centre would be feasible.

For a more detailed consideration incl. some technical requirements, please see Appendix 2

Additional Points

Roads

All new roads must be multi-modal. Correct landuse and transport planning should be adopted to prevent new roads creating induced demand thereby negating any benefits to the investment in the medium term.

In relation to **large scale roads projects**, the question of cost and benefits and also affordability and alternative must be asked. Apart from the Dunkettle Interchange, the **M20 Cork-Limerick motorway** is the most prominent road project in the county. In times when severe budget cuts in the aftermath of the COVID pandemic are looming, it must be questioned if parts of the estimated EUR 900M could better be spent for a multitude of smaller yet highly effective sustainable travel projects. While the necessity of a road upgrade between Munster’s two large cities, and particularly the bypasses of Charleville, Buttevant and supposedly Mallow, is undoubted, it might not need to be to full motorway standards along the entire length of the road. Downgrading from full motorway to high quality N-Road standards might also do the job and bring the cost significantly down (less width, i.e. land acquisition; less grade separated junctions, i.e. bridges etc.) without compromising the principal effect.

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Park+Ride Network

The 6 Park+Ride locations mapped in CMATS must be delivered in the short term and be developed as public transport interchanges alongside smaller and more local mobility hubs. These hubs must be serviced by high frequency bus routes from/to county towns and villages. They should also facilitate e-car and e-bike charging to allow those travelling from the county in e-vehicles to “park+charge+ride” into the city. This combined with effective parking management will deter drivers from accessing the city centre by car.

Parking Management

The availability and pricing of parking should be used by Cork County Council to deter cars from town centres in order to attract more sustainable modes and create a more pleasant and vibrant public realm for people to linger and increase footfall.

Enforcement

There needs to be strict enforcement of parking laws and speed limits. Community and traffic Gardai must be funded to have the capacity to enforce such laws.

Park+CarPool

Car-pooling holds a large potential to mobilise underutilised capacities with minimal investment. Longer distance, destination focussed car-pooling should be facilitated through designation of Park+Pool sites (car parks), where two drivers meet and one car is left behind. Applied at a larger scale, this could alleviate levels of dependency between two fixed car-pooling partners, as the car-pooling trips would all happen along a defined corridor (e.g. Little Island to the western end of N40), and a pool of car-poolers would travel the same itinerary, possibly at slightly varying times.

Water Transport

A commuter and tourist ferry network in Cork Harbour should be supported. This would help alleviate congestion in the East and South East of the county and city and service towns like Cobh which are targeted for growth. The possibility of *Blueways* along rivers should also be explored.

Conclusion

The directing of large parts of predicted growth in population and employment into public transport corridors and concentration of development into towns and brownfield sites is welcome. The idea of higher densities in such corridors, and the proximity of homes to shops, schools, services and workplaces is essential. Access to new developments must have a strong emphasis on active travel and public transport. Retrofit of existing town fabrics must happen accordingly. The public realm and urban design shall see an upgrade in towns and villages with the needs and comfort of pedestrians of all ages on top of the priority list, to create vibrant and pleasant spaces in successful town centres and communities.



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As planning is a long-term process, the right decisions must be taken now to move the future development of Cork into the right direction for a mobile, pleasant, healthy, successful and sustainable County.

We hope that this comprehensive submission, concentrating on the wider transport and mobility aspects, will help drafting a robust, forward thinking and future proof new County Development Plan to shape Cork well into the 2030s and supports a sustainable development of the county that has the right responses to the overarching challenges, first and foremost to Climate Change, for decades to come.

We would be obliged to further participate in the discourse around the development of Cork's 2022-2028 County Development Plan. Please do not hesitate to contact us at any time under tmfcork@gmail.com.

Kind regards

Stephan Koch

Transport and Mobility Forum – Chair

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 full list of partners in the Transport and Mobility Forum can be found at

<https://transportandmobilityforum.com/partners/>

Appendices 1-3

Appendix 1:

Case study on improved school access in Ballydehob

The below list of potential interventions favouring active travel to schools was sent to us through our TMF partner An Taisce Green Schools.

Here are our suggestions and observations to encourage more people to walk and cycle which will make Ballydehob a more pleasant and safer place for people to live and visit.

- *The simplest improvement to Ballydehob would be to have a 30km speed limit through the village. We fully support the LOVE30 campaign <https://www.love30.ie/>*
- *Ballydehob has two schools both within 0.5km of the village. Neither have safe pedestrian or cycle access from the village.*
- *Children going to Scoil Bhride National School from the village turn into Greenmount road which is narrow with no pavement. During school drop off and pick up it is congested with school traffic. This area needs to be designed as a shared space with a restriction to motorised traffic at certain times to facilitate children who would like to walk or cycle.*
- *Children wishing to go to St Mathias on Church Road can walk a footpath but then have to cross to access the school in between two bends. There is a need for a crossing before the first bend onto a pavement.*
- *Due to the bends the only way young cyclists can access St Mathias from the village is on a contra flow cycle lane on the left of Church Road. It is not a long distance but would make a big difference.*
- *There needs to be a clear path on the left from Store Road (from the community playing field and community centre) to the garage on the Main street. The visibility is very poor and the path too narrow on the corner.*
- *The garage is a popular place and pedestrians leaving to go up to the village cross the road (because it is the shortest route) either in front of a busy garage or just before a right hand bend. A raised crossing here would make it safer.*
- *Traffic arrives into Ballydehob too fast past a playground on the left. More signage and a different junction like a roundabout would slow traffic before they entered.*
- *Converting a few parking spaces into sitting and sociable spaces would allow people to relax <https://www.siobhankeogh.com/work/corkcityparklet>*
- *The Main street/Greenmount Rd junction may be suitable for a pedestrian / cycle corridor. Making that central part of the village slower and more pleasant. <https://twitter.com/GoPlaySandwell/status/1275050589152575495?s=20>*
- *Ballydehob and Schull are connected communities especially as Schull has a secondary school (7km away) A cycleway connecting the two villages along the R592 would be a great asset to the area for locals, children and visitors.*

Appendix 2

Option of Converting the East Cork commuter lines to TramTrain operation

The text below is taken from an earlier submission relating to the CMATS public consultation in June 2019.

“In CMATS, the upgraded network of suburban rail will still only consist of one line (Mallow – Cork – Cobh) with a branch to Midleton. Cork’s LRT will also only consist of one East-West line. Although the area around Kent station will become a future employment hotspot, and development of the Docklands will put Kent Station more into the centre of the City’s activity zones, it will still remain peripheral to the actual core city centre. Accessing employment and education centres e.g. in the south west (UCC, CUH, County Hall, CIT etc) will always require changing transport modes at Kent Station. The fact that a rail based PT provision e.g. for the Tivoli development area will in most cases require changing modes only after a very short train trip, is likely to limit its attractiveness.

*The **basic idea** for TramTrain in Cork would be to combine two technically isolated modes of only small size – heavy (suburban) rail and light-rail (SR and LRT), which will meet at Kent station, to a larger system.*

The combination of LRT (trams) and regional heavy rail lines has proven to be very popular and successful in connecting medium-sized cities to their hinterland in several places in Continental Europe: Karlsruhe, Kassel, Saarbruecken, Chemnitz (all Germany), Mulhouse and Banlieu of Paris (France). TramTrain is often also referred to as the Karlsruhe Model, due to the ground-breaking pioneering works done in this field in and around the city of Karlsruhe in the 1980s and 90s, with local railway lines being converted to LRT operation, and even shared track operation between heavy rail and LRT trains.

The basic idea is to combine the East Cork commuter lines (Cork – Cobh/Midleton) with the inner city LRT line (Ballincollig – City Centre – Mahon), with trains running through on both networks. A seamless travel from Midleton to UCC or CUH, without changing seat, would offer a complete new form of quality and commuter experience to public transport.

*A number of **technical pre-conditions requirements** would need to be met. While they cannot be discussed here in detail, only the most obvious ones shall be mentioned. Due to the unique track gauge of 1600mm on Irish railway lines, and most LRT systems running on 1435mm standard gauge, incl. the Dublin LUAS, a uniform track gauge would be needed for a TramTrain service. Most likely, the East Cork railway lines would need to be converted to LRT standard, i.e. tracks converted to 1435mm standard gauge (as building the LRT with 1600mm Irish Rail gauge would be very uncommon, custom made and hence expensive). Station platforms would need to be lowered to low floor LRT height. As the railway line is not electrified yet, this can be done to LRT standard. These are the three most essential requirements.*

*As a **consequence** this conversion, however, would require the fundamental decision to permanently cease all heavy rail operations east of Kent Stn. The only potential reasons for not doing so would be maintaining heavy rail connections to port activities at Marino Point and Cobh for freight services. But*

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even if such heavy rail access would still be required (at a very limited scale), technical solutions to do so would be available (three-rail track for parts of the line and a passing loop where required).

*As an **effect**, instead of having two different, independent systems (SR and LRT) at a very limited scale each, a Cork TramTrain would offer a larger uniform system and the comfort of through running light-rail trains from East Cork into the heart of Cork City, and further to employment hotspots in the City's southwest and Mahon, connecting Ballincollig with Little Island etc. The only negative effect for the network development would be the isolation of the Mallow to Cork Kent commuter services, as this line is part of the intercity line to Dublin. However, having a dual system operation between Kent station and Blackpool / Kilbary, although quite sophisticated from a technical perspective, would also be possible.*

As light-rail vehicles (LRV) are laid out for far more frequent stops than heavy rail trains (weight, acceleration), more stops along the railway line could be served while maintaining short travel times (and cheaper to build than compared to railway standards). By expanding the walkable and cyclable catchment area along the converted railway line, the TramTrain system would move "closer" to where people live, would be better accessible to passengers as they could be allowed to cross the tracks (no stairs, bridges, lifts required, compare LUAS Green Line in South Dublin), and the line could also be extended e.g. into the town centre of Midleton as a tramway operating on street level.

These features were realised in the Karlsruhe TramTrain system and made it the stunning success story as which it is known throughout Europe and worldwide.

As the development of an LRT system in Cork is only planned in the long term, and upgrades of the SR lines in Cork can facilitate quick wins for public transport, a TramTrain system would be unlikely to be developed in the near future. Conversion of the line would also result in service limitations during construction phase. The only requirement that needs to be met in the present time for keeping the option alive for later years is to plan for a connection of both systems at Kent station today, and keep the alignments for the necessary tracks free of buildings during the current and ongoing urban development of the area. (...)

As this is a quite complex topic, the above description can only touch the technical aspects very briefly."

Appendix 3

Reflections on Geographical Nodes

North

Mallow is not only the main commuter town in North Cork but also one of 2 key Cork towns (with Clonakilty) chosen in the RSES for its influence in the region, employment function and the wide area they serve. As a 'Self-Sustaining Regional Drivers', it should be given special focus in the new CDP. The planned M20 (depending on the route selected) may result in community severance and/or cut the town off from the current train station east of the current dual carriageway.

Mallow train station should be developed as a mobility hub and interchange. Multi-modal access to and from the train station from Mallow town and surrounding areas must be improved. The Station

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should act as a location from Park+Train and Park+Bus journeys and also facilitate people travelling by bike with high quality bike storage and the ability to bring bikes onto trains. Improvements to the general station appearance along with amenities, lighting for pathways, and bike/E-bike dock stations should be invested in. Pathways can also be extended to the west towards the racecourse where sporting and cultural events are held.

South

The main commuter town here is Carrigaline and this also ties in with Ringaskiddy with a large area of employment. The current road network (N28) connecting Cork city to Carrigaline (current population of approx 17,000) is something which has been addressed already and the proposed bus lane is a decent solution. However, this is largely influenced by employment in Ringaskiddy - there needs to be a movement of focus from this one route. Carrigaline can be linked to Douglas/Grange from an area west of the town and this can greatly help reduce the number of users on the main N28. To take it a step further, Carrigaline can be linked out further west to towns such as Ballygarvan and on to Ballinhassig with improved networks. From Ballygarvan there is a direct link to Cork Airport and the the N27 in to Cork City. From Ballinhassig there is a direct link to the N71 and N40 west bound. We can help shift the need to use the 1 route - this can be for any motor vehicle including buses. This helps with access to CIT, CUH and even UCC from another angle. You had mentioned Kinsale and cycle ways to Kinsale and I think this could also fall under that remit.

There is already an excellent Carrigaline to Crosshaven walk/run/cycle pathway. I think it should be extended further in both directions - south towards Camden a Fort and north to link with Ringaskiddy. This link to Ringaskiddy can be done on the east side of the town and away from the N28 or roads linking to N28. There are minor road networks already in place where this can be done. While there are obvious positive externalities with health and wellbeing, there is also the fact that this can be a work/school commuter link. One would assume that a high number of people working in Ringaskiddy will live in Carrigaline or surrounding areas while the main Carrigaline secondary school is in the land area I speak of.

To build on the extension further it could also serve as an access point to Ringaskiddy harbour where we may have a Lee to the Sea ferry service. Here we have a multi-modal solution again which gives options to all on how they can travel. I'm assuming that this will be a ferry transportation route in to Cork City.

East

The obvious start point is Midleton (population of approx 12,500). We have a main road (N25) and a train route as the main transport offerings. Bus routes also on offer. Little Island business park between Midleton and Cork City is a main focal point of discussion.

The train station in Midleton is currently located on the north side of the town. It has adequate parking for current levels but may need growth and improvements. It will also need improvements in infrastructure to surroundings areas, with particular attention to access points. Similar to Mallow, we can see Midleton being a mobility hub for east of the city. Midleton train station needs to be the centre of this. For commuters from nearby towns, there needs to be an easier way to get to the train station so they are incentivised to use it. If we take example of people living in say Cloyne area, they can only

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access Midelton train station via a bottleneck roundabout off the N25. We have some infrastructure in place to build walkways and cycle paths here. We also improve to build the park and train ride offering. This proposed pathway could also move south towards the coastline of Ballycotton via Whitegate and Roche's Point.

From Midelton, moving back westbound towards the city we have the Glounthaune and Little Island train stations. We need the same work here with regards to amenities, lighting and bike/E-bike stations. This particular route can really improve congestion from single passenger occupied vehicles east of cork city and in particular the Dunkettle roundabout.

Cobh (population approx 13,000) is another major town in the east belt. The train station and ferry transportation route are the 2 best solutions. Unfortunately, both are faced with similar challenges in terms of their location in the furthest point south in the town and accessibility to this area. An argument could be made for another station to be positioned north west of the town at the point in which the Cobh/Monkstown ferry service operates. This may give greater scope for inclusion of all Cobh residents. It may be more feasible to have walk/cycle routes to this point. The argument for a Luas type offering over the train may make more sense here. With Cobh's heritage attractions for tourism along with the towns proximity to Spike Island and the Wildlife Park, then the Luas type is even more attractive. I know Cobh have some upcoming consultations on the town centre so I'm sure strong plans are in place.

West

Essentially we are looking at anywhere west of Ballincollig here but perhaps a strong case can be made for Macroom. There is a planned town bypass road which will certainly help but an argument can be made that Macroom can serve as a gateway to West Cork and Kerry from a bigger picture with regards to tourism. The town itself could benefit from an improved network of buses linking further west and south west in this respect with the development of a bus station proposed.

To build on any proposed bus station, this again should be backed by car parking spaces and maybe a mobility hub for bikes/e-bikes. Macroom has a population of nearly 4,000 people and it can be assumed that will grow as the city boundary includes Ballincollig and population growth naturally occurs. It can also be assumed that a large proportion will travel to Ballincollig or Cork City. The main road (N22) is quite good and certainly suitable for regular buses.

While park and ride facilities are a great suggestion in many areas, the planning of such for Macroom makes very good sense now. The land is readily available west of Ballincollig and south of the Bandon road roundabout with park and ride facilities proposed for both already.