



## **Pre-Budget 2019 submission from 'Cyclist.ie' – The Irish Cycling Advocacy Network**

### **I. Introduction**

Cyclist.ie, the Irish Cycling Advocacy Network, is the umbrella body of cycle advocacy groups in Ireland and the member for Ireland of the European Cyclists' Federation. Our vision is that cycling becomes a normal part of everyday life for all ages and abilities in Ireland.

Cycling, as a mode of transport, offers numerous well documented benefits to society, including:

- improved public health
- reduced congestion
- reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- reduced air and noise pollution
- more liveable and sociable streets and communities, and
- High rates of economic return

Unlocking these benefits requires targeted and sustained investment, and international evidence demonstrates that investing in cycling provides excellent value for money.

From available data we estimate that spending on cycling currently only amounts to approximately 2% of Transport capital spending. This compares to recommended targets of 10% for cycling, and present European levels of between 5% and 8%. This very low proportion is not commensurate with the benefits offered by cycling, or with the significant economic costs which car dependence imposes on Irish society. To encourage people to make more journeys by bicycle; **We call for 10% of the capital budget for land transport to be invested in cycling.**

At the same time, an increase in current spending on a range of different objectives which can support a transition to a cycling friendly society is also required.

In this pre-budget submission, we first summarise the case for a substantial increase in government investment in cycling by showing how cycling aligns strongly with many different national policies and objectives. Following this, we outline our priorities for investment.

## **II. 10 Reasons to Prioritise Investment in Cycling:**

The National Cycle Policy Framework (NCPF) set a target in 2009 that 10% of commuting trips would be made by bike by 2020. However, despite strong growth in cycling for commuting in Dublin over this time period, we are still very far away from achieving this national target. Census 2016 showed that just 3% of people usually travelled to work by bike, while 2% of school pupils and 6% of third level education students usually travelled by bike.

We believe that if sufficient investment is made in creating safer and more comfortable cycling conditions, substantial and rapid growth in cycling mode share can be achieved. The CSO National Travel Survey 2016 showed that more than 25% of journeys were less than 2 kilometres, while nearly 57% were less than 8 km<sup>1</sup> and with improved cycling conditions, many of these trips could be made by bike. Additionally, electric bikes have significant potential to replace car use for longer journeys (e.g. 10 – 20 km), while also making cycling an option for a much wider range of people. Improving cycling conditions will also help to improve access to public transport for many people, thus increasing the attractiveness of public transport in comparison to the car for longer trips.

Investing in cycling aligns well with numerous government policies and societal objectives. Here below we outline what we see as the ten most significant reasons why government need to prioritise the growth of cycling mode share. National and international evidence relating to these benefits of cycling highlights that although a significant increase in investment is required to achieve the necessary modal shift, such investment will yield significant positive returns in the long term.

1. Investing in cycling provides excellent value for money
2. Cycling helps tackle congestion
3. Cycling helps more people get the exercise they need and improves health
4. Cycling can improve psychological well-being
5. Investing in cycling will improve safety for cyclists and for other road users
6. Cycling can help us meet our Climate Change Obligations
7. Cycle trips don't generate air or noise pollution
8. Interventions to boost cycling can create better places
9. Cycling is an affordable mobility option for all
10. Cycling can boost local economic activity

### **1. Investing in cycling provides excellent value for money**

Researchers who analysed the cost-benefit frameworks currently used to assess bicycle infrastructure projects in Copenhagen reported that the cost to society of 1km of car driving is more than six times higher (Euro 0.50/km) than cycling (Euro 0.08/km), when collisions, climate change, health and travel time are considered<sup>2</sup>.

A 2014 report commissioned by the UK Department for Transport assessed cost benefit evidence for walking and cycling interventions. Almost all of the studies identified by the report author demonstrated 'highly significant' economic benefits, while the mean cost benefit ratio for the schemes identified was 6.28:1<sup>3</sup>. In general investment in cycling projects provide the highest rate of return of all transport projects.

## **2. Cycling helps tackle congestion**

The cost of congestion in the Greater Dublin Area was estimated at €358m in 2012 and is projected to reach €2.08bn by 2033<sup>4</sup>. The cost of congestion for all of Ireland was roughly €1.8bn in 2012 and given strong economic growth over the last few years the current cost can be assumed to be above the €2bn a year mark. Congestion reduces labour mobility and connectivity, which are two key parts of a competitive economy. Longer travel times also reduce quality-of-life which negatively impacts Ireland's ability to attract talent and inward investment<sup>5,6</sup>.

Congestion in Ireland is caused by over-reliance on private cars, which use limited road space inefficiently. The space efficiency of bicycles in comparison to private cars is clearly illustrated by images such as those recently created by Translink Northern Ireland as part of their promotion of Glider Bus (Appendix 1). A recent real world source of data is available from central London, where monitoring of new segregated cycle lanes has shown that these are moving five times more people per square metre than the main carriageway<sup>7</sup>.

The DTTaS, Strategic Investment Priorities for Land Investment policy states we must tackle urban congestion through improving walking and cycling infrastructure, and through expanded public transport capacity. As outlined previously, cycling is a viable replacement for many trips currently made by car and there is also scope to facilitate greater public transport use through improved integration of public transport and active modes. Therefore, investing in cycling is one of the best ways that government can reduce the negative impacts of congestion on competitiveness and quality of life by better allocating scarce capacity.

Car parking also makes major demands on urban space. Cycle parking is highly space-efficient in comparison, with one on-street car space able to accommodate up to 10-12 bicycles<sup>8</sup>.

## **3 Cycling helps more people to get the exercise they need and improves health**

The Healthy Ireland framework recognises that all sectors of society and 'the whole of Government' need to be proactively involved in improving the health and wellbeing of the population<sup>9</sup>. Facilitating active and sustainable transport modes can play a significant role in delivering this 'whole of Government' approach to population health.

Large numbers of people in Ireland are not meeting recommended levels of physical activity currently<sup>10</sup>, while 39% of the adult population are overweight and 23% are obese<sup>11</sup>. Physical inactivity contributes to obesity and links between obesity and heart disease, cancers, type 2 diabetes, mental ill-health, respiratory problems and musculoskeletal conditions are well established<sup>12</sup>. It is also important to note that physical inactivity of itself is also a major risk factor for many chronic diseases, independently of an individual's weight<sup>13</sup>. Poor health outcomes as a result of inactive lifestyles put extra pressure on the state's already struggling public health system, as well as impacting on individual lives. Regular cycling for everyday journeys, such as cycling to work or school, builds exercise into busy lives and can be easier to maintain compared to recreational physical activity. For example, it has been shown that in England, people who cycle for travel purposes are four times as likely to meet physical activity guidelines as those who do not<sup>14</sup>.

Greater targeted investment to encourage growth in everyday cycling can help to save significant funds in the national health budget, as has been demonstrated in other jurisdictions<sup>8</sup>.

#### **4 Cycling can boost psychological well-being**

In addition to physical health benefits, active commuting can also benefit psychological wellbeing. For example, researchers who analysed data from around 18,000 commuters across the UK over eighteen years found that people who walked or cycled to work benefited from improved mental wellbeing in comparison to commuters who travel by car. The researchers noted that this finding was consistent with pre-existing bodies of research which hypothesised that car driving can give rise to boredom, social isolation and stress, while in contrast the exercise and relaxation associated with active travel positively impacts wellbeing<sup>15</sup>.

#### **5 Investing in cycling will improve safety for cyclists and for other road users**

15 cyclists were killed on Irish roads in 2017 as a result of a collision involving a motorist, the highest number in a decade. To date in 2018, 7 cyclists have been killed on Irish roads. There is a lack of good quality data on injuries incurred by cyclists, as research involving hospital admissions data from one hospital in 2014 found that if all hospital admission data were included, total cycling injuries would be much higher than suggested by RSA data<sup>16</sup>. However, data released by the HSE early this year showed that 1,339 cyclists attended HSE hospitals in 2016 due to being injured in a "transport accident"<sup>17</sup>.

Improving cycling infrastructure will both reduce risks and encourage more cycling. Researchers who compared different cycling investment scenarios in Auckland found that physical segregation on arterial roads (with junction treatments) and low speed, bicycle-friendly local streets were needed to reduce risks and increase cycling uptake<sup>18</sup>.

Increasing cycling can also improve safety for non-cyclists. An individual who walks or cycles for a trip instead of driving is posing less threat to others by not using a motor vehicle. Modelling of three different scenarios for England and Wales involving more cycling and walking found an overall reduction in injuries in all scenarios but especially in the scenarios with greater reductions in car trips and overall travel distances<sup>19</sup>.

#### **6 Cycling can help us meet our Climate Change Obligations**

The recently published Climate Change Advisory Council (CCAC) 2018 Review contains the stark message that Irish greenhouse gas emissions are rising rather than falling and that "Ireland is completely off course in terms of achieving its 2020 and 2030 emissions reduction targets". According to the CCAC, the transport sector "is not contributing towards the 2020 targets and there has been little progress towards the long-term low-carbon transition".

Transport accounts for 20% of Ireland's overall emissions (and 27% of our non-ETS emissions), with 52% of overall transport emissions coming from private cars, 24% from freight and 4% from public transport<sup>20</sup>. Failure to meet our EU agreed emissions targets is expected to cost the exchequer between €350 - €600m a year in EU fines annually from 2020 onwards.

Facilitating increased walking and cycling through increased investment will reduce greenhouse gas emissions linked to private car travel and has the potential to significantly reduce the level of EU fines which will become payable.

**7. Cycle trips don't generate air or noise pollution**

Enabling more cycling can reduce air pollution problems in urban areas which result from private vehicle use. The World Health Organisation has determined that there is no safe level of air pollution. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, a 'transition away from the use of private diesel and petrol powered motor cars to alternative modes of transport' (including walking and cycling), is vital for Ireland's at-risk urban populations<sup>21</sup>.

Exposure to persistent or high levels of noise has also been linked to a number of adverse health impacts including sleep disturbance, cardiovascular and physiological effects, mental health impacts and cognitive impairment. In 2012, over 50% of the populations of both Cork and Dublin were exposed to noise levels above the desirable level<sup>22</sup>. While the problem obviously requires a multifaceted approach, the Dublin Agglomeration Environmental Noise Action Plan acknowledges that encouraging modal shift to cycling, walking and public transport can have 'a direct positive acoustical benefit by reducing the growth in traffic noise sources'.

**8. Interventions to boost cycling can create better places**

Making areas more cycling friendly can also make them more pleasant for people walking, as well as more pleasant and safer places to live, shop or relax.

In Vancouver, a study of new cycle tracks suggests they may have made pedestrians perceive the block as 'less polluted, less overcrowded, more stimulating, and more peaceful'<sup>23</sup>. Similarly, an important means of creating safe and pleasant cycling conditions on residential streets is through eliminating rat-running by through traffic, which also has benefits for pedestrians and local residents, while encouraging greater outdoor play and movement by children.

Creating more liveable urban areas through investing in cycling will help to achieve 'Compact Growth', a key objective of the National Development Plan (National Strategy Outcome #1). As described in the NDP, investment in sustainable transport can play a crucial role in 'creating more attractive places for people to live and work'<sup>24</sup>. The space efficiency of cycling compared to private car travel also facilitates greater densities, as cycling can move large numbers of people around urban areas at low cost.

**9. Cycling is an affordable mobility option for all**

Improving provision for cycling will reduce transport-related social exclusion amongst many individuals who do not have access to a car by improving their access to employment, education, shopping and social activities.

Investing in cycling will also help reduce 'Forced Car Ownership' amongst those households who do currently have one or two cars but experience the associated costs as a significant financial burden. The AA have estimated the average cost of running a family car for a year in Ireland at €10,691<sup>25</sup>. Improving cycling conditions and

making cycling an option for all ages and abilities will mean that car ownership and particularly having a second car in a household will become less of a necessity.

### **10. Cycling can boost local economic activity**

Greenway projects completed in Ireland to date have been described as “transformational” in terms of rural development and “catalyst projects which have been shown to rejuvenate communities”<sup>26</sup>. One study estimated that the 42km Great Western Greenway in County Mayo would have a payback period of just six years based on tourism expenditure alone<sup>27</sup>. More recently, the Waterford Greenway has been described as a “huge magnet for visitors to the region” and as having had “incredible economic, social and cultural impact”<sup>28</sup>. Investment in greenways also provides a sustainable transport option for local people who may not feel safe walking or cycling on rural roads without footpaths. Investment in cycling facilities can also boost economic activity by improving access to employment and to local shops and services.

Supporting cycling can also boost economic activity in urban areas. The New York City Department of Transport found that two years after construction, streets that received a protected bike lane saw a greater increase in retail sales compared to similar corridors<sup>29</sup>. Numerous international studies have found that although people arriving by car tend to spend more in an individual trip, shoppers who arrive on foot, by bike or by public transport tend to visit more frequently and spend more over the course of a month<sup>30</sup>. Increased cycling investment produces tangible and measurable benefits to local economies<sup>31</sup>.

## **III. Cyclist.ie’s Budget Priority Recommendations**

### **1 Prioritise Investment in High Quality Safe Cycling Infrastructure**

#### **a. Expedite the Development of strategic cycling infrastructure projects**

*There are a number of examples of local, regional and national strategic cycling infrastructure projects that are various stages of development. Safe segregated infrastructure needs to be prioritised to encourage greater levels of everyday cycling. Examples of these are given below. Capital and current expenditure must be allocated to ensure these projects are expedited and fully resourced, including adequate human resources in planning and design.*

- Develop all primary and secondary cycle routes as outlined in the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan (2013) including the following key strategic infrastructure projects:  
Liffey Cycleway, Royal Canal Cycleway, Grand Canal Cycleway (Portobello to Inchicore), Dodder Greenway, Clontarf/Fairview to City Centre route, Clonskeagh Route, S2S southside, East Coast Trail to Balbriggan, Airport Route.
- Develop all primary and secondary cycle routes as outlined in the Cork Cycle Network Plan

- Waterford - Complete the 'last mile' from the Waterford-Dungarvan greenway into Waterford City centre. Complete safe cycle routes in Tramore and a segregated cycle link between Tramore and Waterford. Construct the New Ross to Waterford Greenway .
- Limerick - Continue the work of Smarter Travel City in improving public realm and cycling facilities in the City. University of Limerick route to extend to Annacotty. Further stages along the Shannon: repair / rebuild the old bridge over the Mulcair (near Annacotty), extend the path to Castleconnell and ultimately Killaloe, so as to significantly improve the Lough Derg Way, making more of it riverside and off-road. Foot / cycle bridge over the Shannon, at Parteen Weir. Link Limerick City with the Great Southern Greenway.
- Galway - Greenway from Galway to Connemara via NUIG and crossing and alongside the Corrib. Additional priority projects in Galway City including making the many hostile junctions pedestrian and cycle friendly.
- Dundalk - Link Railway Station to Bus Station, Inner Relief Road segregated cycleway, housing to services links, and safe cycle routes to all schools.
- Other projects as defined by regional and local authorities

**b. *Improvements in Existing and Planned Transport Infrastructure***

- National junctions audit - prioritise the remediation of top 50 most dangerous junctions to comply with the National Cycle Manual and the Department of Transport Tourism & Sport's 'Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets' (DMURS) at a minimum
- All road upgrades and new roads in urban areas must include provision for cycling built to standards set out in the National Cycle Manual and DMURS
- Major public transport projects to ensure cycling is fully integrated into transport system, for example carriage of bikes on trains and buses, and adequate and secure bike parking at transport hubs
- All road designs and transport projects to be subject to a design audit by an independent cycling expert.
- Current expenditure allocation to ensure ongoing maintenance of cycling infrastructure

**c. *Greenway Network to be developed***

- Greater front loading of Funding for Greenway initiatives to promote active tourism and active commuting. The new National Greenway Network as proposed in the National Greenway Strategy<sup>32</sup> needs to be resourced over and above present funding level proposals.
- Prioritise completion and upgrading of the EuroVelo Network in Ireland, EV1 and EV2, much of it already in planning or completed, and the addition of a new section of Euro Velo along Ireland's East Coast from Rosslare to Larne in Northern Ireland.

**d. *Bike Parking***

- Develop high quality national bike parking standards
- Develop high volume, safe and secure bike parking at main transport hubs in cities and towns to ensure integration into wider public transport system, and encourage multi modal travel
- Provide more cycle carriage on bus, rail and tram services
- Grants for agreed quality bike parking at all public buildings where facilities are currently inadequate - schools, hospitals, museums, venues, shopping centres etc. need to be targeted
- Mandate the provision of bike parking facilities at Major Events such as sporting, concerts, festivals, conferences etc

## **2. National Cycling Office**

- Appoint a National Cycling Officer to coordinate a resourced National Cycling Office at senior level in the Department of Transport Tourism & Sport, which will drive the cycling agenda. This office will ensure a coordinated approach across Government Departments to the development of cycling, and should have the authority to ensure that Government Departments and Agencies, and Local Authorities, adhere to stated policy and design guidance. The National Office would liaise closely with similar European counterparts in order to build and share new ideas and best practice.
- At local levels, dedicated cycling officers need to be appointed in every local authority to spearhead the cycling programme in their area. A network of such officers should be created in order to share best practice and provide mutual support.

The National Cycling Office will

- Review and develop national cycling policy and infrastructure standards.
- Coordinate cycling initiatives and development of local regional cycling plans.
- Allocate spending for cycling initiatives and monitor cycling initiatives for return on investment.

## **3. Safety and Awareness**

### **a. Cycling Promotion**

- Continuation and expansion of the very successful bike-to-work scheme to allow greater flexibility and take-up of cycling
- Completion of green schools cycle audits and funding to promote cycling to school nationwide
- National Campaigns to promote cycling as a recognised transport option
- Health Awareness campaigns to highlight the benefits to the individual and society of cycling
- Reduction of VAT level on cycle sales to further promote cycling

### **b. Cycle Training**



- Access to cycle training to be available in all primary and secondary schools free of charge.
- Training also too made widely available to adults including Third Level Students
- Cycle safety must become a core part of the driving test, particularly for HGV and Public Service Vehicle drivers.
- All taxi drivers to undergo European Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) standard certification.
- An upskilling of An Garda Síochána so that the Traffic Corps (TC) better understands cycling. It should be a requirement for all officers to have to use a bicycle in traffic on a regular basis. 'Bike Start' training to be introduced into the Garda Colleges.

**c. Legislation / Enforcement**

- Introduction of cycle friendly legislative initiatives to promote growth of cycling, including contra-flow cycling, left turn at red lights, and joint use of pedestrian crossings<sup>33</sup>.
- Resourcing and training of Garda in cycle related legislation and increased enforcement, to support safer cycling
- Increasing the monetary fines for FCNs for vehicle infringements of cycling related incidences such as parking illegally in cycle tracks, or dangerous overtaking.

## **IV Conclusion/Summary**

The prioritised resourcing and development of cycling nationally, as demonstrated above, and elicited in many government strategies, can have a wide ranging positive impact on many aspects of Irish society. Increased cycling levels will improve national health and wellbeing, support national competitiveness by tackling congestion, support local economies and increased tourism and support Ireland in meeting its climate change targets.

The present low level of transport funding of approximately 2% allocated to cycling needs to be increased immediately and radically both to bring Ireland into line with our EU neighbours, and to realise the broad benefits that a cycling economy can bring about. Furthermore investment in cycling is a 'no brainer' as it provides generously high rates of return on investment in comparison with other public sector investments.

Cyclist.ie calls on the Irish Government to realise these economic and social benefits through significantly and immediately increasing the funding allocated to facilitating and supporting cycling as both a transport mode and as a leisure activity.

**Invest a minimum 10% of the capital budget for land transport in cycling.**

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## Appendix 1 Use of Road Space with acknowledgement to [www.translink.co.uk](http://www.translink.co.uk)

How much road-space is occupied by 105 people using various modes of transport?



