

Irish Cycling Campaign
The Tailors' Hall
Back Lane
Dublin D08 X2A3

www.irishcyclingcampaign.ie
info@irishcyclingcampaign.ie

The Member for Ireland of ECF, the European Cyclists' Federation

Addressee: Roscommon County Council

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Title: Boyle Transport Plan

Introduction

The Irish Cycling Campaign (formerly Cyclist.ie, the Irish Cycling Advocacy Network-ICAN), is the national advocacy body for cycling in Ireland with Local Groups operating on a countrywide basis. It is the Irish member of the European Cyclists' Federation and a member of the Irish Environmental Network.

Our vision is for an Ireland with a cycle and pedestrian friendly culture, where everyone has a real choice to cycle and move about safely, and is encouraged to experience the joy, convenience, health and environmental benefits of cycling and walking. We promote cycling as an integral part of both our natural and built environments—a practical and sustainable way to encourage physical activity and social cohesion in our daily lives.

The Irish Cycling Campaign (ICC) notes these initial proposals for a Transport Plan for Boyle town. This historic town, with a relatively static population over the recent past is not dissimilar to many small Irish towns, and any template that emerges from the final plan for Boyle, might act as a driver for other similar town transport plans countrywide? A main driver for the proposals contained in this draft plan would appear to be to facilitate a more people centred and safer approach to movement within the town, which we fully endorse.

We make some general comments below on the contents of the draft plan.

2 General Comments

2.1 Boyle Context

The constraints experienced in relation to transport in this historic town context present obvious challenges to full development of a coherent transport linkage system. In particular the continuation of the N61 route through the heart of the town, with its constricted street widths poses major challenges. Like the authors of this proposal we in ICC would have liked to see the adoption of a bypass for route N61, which would enable the town to '*breathe more freely*'. But unfortunately it is outside the realm of consideration.

2.2 Private Car Use

Similar to most Irish towns the ubiquitous presence and high usage of the private car, is essentially 'the elephant in the room', that constrains the ability to improve the overall transport network for all citizens. But, in general we welcome the broad thrust of the limited proposals put forward to improve the ability of people to move around the town.

2.3 Speed Limit

We note that no reference is made to the likely reduction of speed limits within the Boyle Urban area. We would have expected some further proposals to reduce the inner speed limit to 30kph, and possibly 20kph in some constricted areas. This, together with some accompanying traffic calming roadworks, could enable safer movement of pedestrians and cyclists across the town.

2.4 Public Realm

The importance of an improved public realm we feel should be given greater emphasis, with some illustrated examples, as part of this report. Clear imagery for the general public reader of proposed initiatives would help to give a greater understanding of the potential impact of these proposed initiatives. Already within the town centre improvements have been made to some public areas, which have improved the overall experience for users, both in terms of safety and visual appeal.

2.5 Transport Plan Delays

We note in Appendix B: Context and Options Development Note, that the original timeline for production of the Draft and Final Transport Plan was August 2025. It is disappointing to note the delay in producing this draft report nearly a year later. We would hope that the acceptance of any final report and implementation of the recommendations will not be delayed further?

3 Specific Comments

3.1 Gateway Treatment Measures

We endorse the proposed extensions and additions to the gateway measures, except we recommend that Gateway 1.6 on the N61 be extended further northwards beyond the L1036 junction, to encompass the Boyle soccer club grounds and the Knocknashee Road access to the Boyle Canal harbour.

We would also, as referred to above in Section 2.3, seek specific recommendations in relation to 30kph speed limit gateways in the town.

3.2 Public Transport

We welcome the proposed increase in public bus stops and the improvement in facilities at these stops, but would suggest that more information needs to be given on proposed bus routes and overall synchronisation with the train timetable?

3.3 Junction Upgrades

We welcome the proposed 12 junction upgrades, to particularly improve safety and movement of pedestrians and cyclists. We suggest that signalisation of more of these junctions might need consideration, particularly on the N61 route.

We note that Junction Upgrade 3.12 has not been shown on the reference map. Figure 5.3

3.4 School Zone Treatments

We welcome the advisable proposed improved safety treatment along school frontages, but note the omission of Zone 4.4 from the map Figure 5.4.

3.5 Active Travel Corridors

There is limited space for active travel corridors in the tight streets of Boyle town, but certainly the proposals put forward should help to improve overall permeability for pedestrians and cyclists, and provide incentives for active travel uptake. It is acknowledged that the final details of what is proposed will be critical, and some compromises will be required.

We fail to comprehend why Road Measure 9.1 proposing a direct extra road connection between Abbeytown Road and the R294 Carrick Road is not included as a separate active travel corridor, linking the Curlew View housing estates directly with the local national school and community facilities? We recommend that road Measure 9.1 be rescinded and implemented only as an active travel corridor?

It is important that access to the many community, school and sports facilities are proposed as part of these active travel corridors.

3.6 Cycle Parking

Provision of safe and good quality cycle parking is critical if cycling levels are to be encouraged to grow. We support the proposals put forward.

3.7 Town Centre Traffic Recirculation

This proposal, together with lower speed limits, junction improvements and some signalised junctions will help to improve overall movement around the town centre. We suggest that Option 2 of Figure 5.7 is the preferable option.

3.8 Permeability Improvement Measures

These proposed permeability measures, while often seeming small and insignificant, can influence active travel movement greatly. We endorse the proposals, while understanding that Measure 8.2 in particular may be difficult to implement but could possibly have the greatest effect in terms of active travel movements in the town.

3.9 Road Measures

Other than measure 9.1 we welcome the proposed 'road measures', which in essence will make the proposed road sections more appealing and safer for users. We urge the reconsideration of Road Measure 9.1, as alluded to above in our section 3.5. We recommend that it be designated as an active travel corridor only. The addition of a new vehicular roadway in this location makes no practical sense in the context of development.

3.10 Other Measures

These proposed 'other measures' should ideally be embedded as part of the separate active travel corridors, and permeability measures. We note that footpath improvement measures have already commenced within the town centre.

4 Summary/Conclusion

The Irish Cycling Campaign broadly welcomes these proposed measures for implementation as part of the Boyle Town Transport Plan, with some minor exceptions outlined above. Broadly the measures proposed will make for a safer more people centred town.

- In particular we would like to see a town centre 30kph speed limit zone, which would ideally extend to the various housing estates/clusters.
- We recommend the extension of the 50kph gateway northwards on the N61
- We recommend that Road Measure 9.1 be replaced by an active travel corridor instead.
- We support the traffic recirculation proposal Option 2.

ICC commends Roscommon County Council on moving forward with this initiative, but we would hope that ongoing timelines will be met more strictly, in implementing the proposed recommendations.

Colm Ryder
Infrastructure Coordinator
Irish Cycling Campaign
colmryder@gmail.com
www.irishcyclingcampaign.ie