



Galway City Community Network
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Galway City Community Network, The Public Participation Network in Galway City

Galway City Council Proposed Active Travel Schemes: Ballyloughane Road Clybaun Road

GCCN Submission

November 2021

Preface

Established in 2014, **Galway City Community Network (GCCN)** is the Public Participation Network in Galway City. It represents groups and organisations in the community, voluntary and environmental sectors in Galway City.

The role of the GCCN is to:

- Facilitate representation of the community, voluntary and environmental sectors on relevant local government, local development bodies and any local, regional, national or international structures deemed appropriate by GCCN.
- Act as a platform for the community, voluntary and environmental sectors to develop policy and positions on issues of common concern and to advocate for these policies and positions to be implemented.
- Strengthen capacity of the community, voluntary and environmental sectors, including to represent Galway City Community Network on all relevant structures.
- Provide information relevant to the environmental, social inclusion and voluntary sectors and act as a hub around which information is received and disseminated.

Context

GCCN welcomes the opportunity to make this submission on the Proposed Active Travel / Traffic Calming Measures on the L-5001 Clybaun Road (South) and on the L-50441, L-5044 & L-5045 Ballyloughane Road & L-5046 Renmore Avenue made after consulting with GCCN members of the appropriate GCCN linkage groups.

GCCN Policy and Positions

In developing this submission, GCCN has drawn on its Policies and Positions document, the relevant sections of which stated:

- GCCN policy on transport is based on a Hierarchy of Road Users in the following order:
 1. Pedestrians and people with disabilities
 2. Cyclists
 3. Public transport and
 4. Private motor transport.
- GCCN believes that all projects, initiatives, policies, programmes and services in Galway City should be universally accessible enabling the full and equal participation of all people, regardless of disability, age, literacy or linguistic considerations.
- GCCN endorses the European Charter of Pedestrian Rights and the Road Danger Reduction Charter.
- GCCN notes that documents such as the National Cycle Policy Framework, the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets and the NTA Permeability Best Practice Guide seek to address inappropriate and unsuitable roads management and town planning practices. The network endorses the overall approach advocated in these documents.
- Speed limits of 30km/h or lower are the default option for all non-arterial roads in the city.
- Roundabouts be replaced with signalised crossings and in the short term raised table zebra crossings be established on all entries and exits recognising that the challenges and risks that current roundabout designs impose on vulnerable users are a barrier to pedestrian and cyclist mobility.

- Safe travelling routes to amenities and recreational grounds are provided including for example, bike routes away from traffic, pedestrian crossings, traffic calming systems, lowering of speed limits and addressing 'rat-runs'.
- Safe areas are established in residential areas which; favour pedestrians and children's play areas over traffic, have speed limits of walking speed and separate roads with access for bicycles, buses and pedestrians from those open to motor vehicles.
- Existing bóithrín and greenways in the city and its environs are protected and connected where possible and further routes developed with the twin aims of promoting ecological corridors for wildlife and active travel routes for humans.

Submission

Overview

GCCN welcomes the increase in pedestrian infrastructure across both schemes and calls for this infrastructure to align with the European Charter of Pedestrian Rights and the Road Danger Reduction Charter. Both schemes should align with universal design principles and ensure universal accessibility enabling the full and equal participation of all people, regardless of disability or age. All plans should be accessibility and equality proofed to ensure accessibility for all road users, including people with disabilities, older people and children.

At present, the schemes do not align with the Hierarchy of Road Users and protecting other vulnerable road users, namely cyclists. The shared street design within the proposed schemes fails to prioritise cyclist safety. The road design and road management practices in both schemes should reflect this hierarchy of road users by prioritising the safety of more vulnerable road users.

The aims of the Clybaun Road Active Travel Scheme include 'to provide a safe, direct, cohesive, comfortable and attractive Active Travel route on the Clybaun Road'. The objectives of the Ballyloughane Road and Renmore Avenue scheme include, 'to provide for improvements for school users in terms of active travel facilitates along Ballyloughane Road and Renmore Avenue' and for Beach and GAA Club users 'to provide for improvements for those active travel users accessing the beach and Liam Mellows GAA club'. There is also an intention to tie-in to various Greenway projects.

Objective 2 of the National Cycle Policy Framework is to 'Ensure that the urban road infrastructure (with the exception of motorways) is designed / retrofitted so as to be cyclist-friendly and that traffic management measures are also cyclist friendly.'¹ The current design and traffic management measures are not cyclist friendly and would continue to endanger cyclist safety.

¹ Department of Transport, *National Cycle Policy Framework*.

Segregated Cycling Facilities for Cyclists

It is vital that there is safe dedicated road space for cyclists through segregated cycling facilities however the proposed schemes include a shared space design. Both the Clybaun Road and Renmore Avenue proposals involve cyclists sharing with motor vehicles on road lanes that are only 3m wide. This constitutes a tight cross-section and means that it is too narrow for a motor vehicle to overtake a bike within the lane:

‘Motor vehicles following cycle traffic within a tight cross-section, or suddenly braking to do so, can be very intimidating. Cycle traffic can operate comfortably in a tight cross-section only if the speeds and volumes are low and overtaking by using the outside or oncoming lane is easy. The creation of a tight cross-section, for example by footway widening, may be considered in urban central locations, but can be intimidating for cyclists being followed by motor vehicles’.²

Section 4: Routes Within the Highway

Figure 4.1.2 Cross-section descriptions

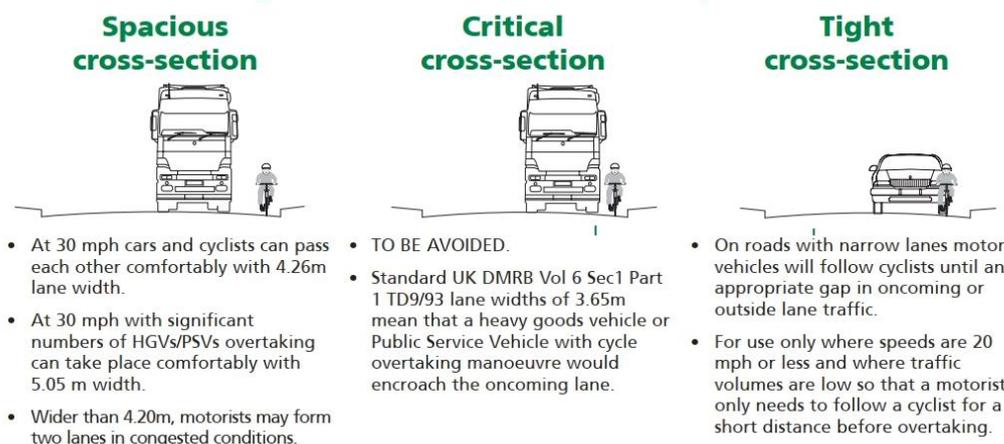


Figure 1: Lancashire County Council Environment Directorate (2005), A code for planning, designing and maintaining roads and tracks for cyclists, Section 4 Width Impacts

Research on driver behaviour and overtaking of cyclists highlights that ‘If lanes are shared by both cycle and motor traffic, the widths need to be sufficiently wide to allow overtaking within the lane’.³ Otherwise motorists will still overtake but do so dangerously. Shared street cycling on narrow lanes should only be allowed where there is little or no through traffic and traffic speeds are low. Although the proposals include reductions in speed limits the roads within the proposed schemes cannot be described as having little or no through traffic.

² Lancashire County Council Environment Directorate (2005), A code for planning, designing and maintaining roads and tracks for cyclists, Section 4 Width Impacts

³ Shackel and Parkin (2014), Influence of road markings, lane widths and driver behaviour on proximity and speed of vehicles overtaking cyclists, Accident Analysis and Prevention 73 (2014) 100–108.

Traffic Calming Measures

The traffic calming measures proposed in the scheme including pinch points can put cyclists in danger. Guidance from the UK highlights that ‘narrowings were a serious safety issue for cyclists and constituted ‘major obstructions’ on vital cycling routes. When carriageway width is reduced, motorists tend to pass cyclists with less clearance. Pinch points can make matters worse because motorists sometimes accelerate to overtake cyclists ahead of them. In doing so, they may leave insufficient clearance when passing and cut in too early. Unless cyclists can bypass a narrowing, or supplementary calming features are introduced around it, riders can feel threatened by having to squeeze through a gap shared with passing motor vehicles.’⁴ In relation to these measures preventing motorists overtaking research demonstrates this is not the case as ‘It should be expected that at least 70 per cent of drivers will attempt to overtake a cyclist within or close to a narrowing that is 3.5 metres wide (TAL 01/97). Gaps of 2.75–3.25 metres can be inhibiting for cyclists, as motorists may attempt to overtake them despite the lack of sufficient clearance to do so safely’.⁵ Road narrowings ‘should form part of cycle routes only if there is clear passage for cyclists in both directions adjacent to the narrowing’.⁶ As a result a cycle bypass should be the first option when narrowing is introduced. If a bypass is not possible a segregated cycle lane should be provided.

⁴ UK Department for Transport (2007), Traffic Calming, Local Transport Note 01/07

⁵ *ibid*

⁶ Cyclists at Road Narrowings, DG Davies, TJ Ryley, SB Taylor and ME Halliday, TRL Report No. 241, 1997, (Transport Research Laboratory)