



Uimhir Thagarta Uathúil: CRK-C155-DEV21-399
Stádas: Submitted
Aighneacht: Sustainable Cork

Údar: UCC Environmental Society

Comhairliúchán:
Draft Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028

Litir Chumhdaigh

UCC Environmental Society is a student society in University College Cork. We work towards promoting sustainability and climate action on and off campus. A group of diverse students from different backgrounds, we work together to organise events and campaigns, and to push for more immediate climate action. We believe in the importance of intersectionality in our activism, and are passionate about climate justice.

Tuairimí:

Accelerate our shift to sustainable travel

Caibidil: Volume 1 - Written Statement» 4. Transport and Mobility

Ábhair: Transport and Mobility

In relation to Objective 4.4 (Active Travel), supporting the proposed Lee to Sea Greenway (see table 4.3) and hope for a timely delivery (4.30), particularly for its missing City Centre and western sections. The L2S would directly serve UCC's Main and Western Campuses and connect it to numerous trip attractors and key residential areas across the city. Together with a spur along the existing Currahene Greenway it would follow the proposed "Innovation Corridor" (see above) with a highest quality active travel route. Traffic light timing is currently favourable towards private cars.

The wait times as a pedestrian or as a cyclists can be off putting to commuters. Given the variability of weather in Ireland, reducing the commute time for pedestrians and cyclists would do a lot to encourage uptake, as there is a lower likelihood of getting caught in the rain.

Traffic calming measures are also needed to improve road safety, this will also encourage a modal shift towards active travel. The banning of certain vehicles from the city centre, such as HGVs and SUVs, which are inherently more dangerous to other road users, would be a big step towards improving road safety, and encouraging the uptake of cycling. The timeframes layed out in Table 4.2, are unabitious, and fail to appreciate the needed for a rapid modal shift. Public and active transport projects should be prioritised and accelerated.

Objective 4.43 outlines the proposed increase in the modal share of public transport from 9.1% to over 26% by 2040. There is very little ambition in this target. Public transport usage could be an easy win in getting people out of cars, and the targetted increase should be brought forward to 2030. We need a cultural shift to occur to get people out of their cars. Incentives such as free public transport at certain times, such as weekends or bank holidays, or as a method of reducing traffic associated with schools, should be explored. This will not only make our roads safer, but will also reduce commuting times for everyone, which will have a knock on economic benefit greater than the

cost of providing free public transport. All these benefits are additional to the massive reduction in CO2 emissions associated with commuting. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41567-019-0656-8>

Eochairfhocail: Active Travel, Free Public Transport, Traffic Calming Measures, Safer Roads, Climate Action, Cultural Shift

Main opinion:
Accelerating projects and Supporting Public Transport Infrastructure. The need for safer roads.

Main requests:
Provision of free public transport. Traffic Calming Measures. Prioritising active travel roads users and public transport over private vehicles.

Main reasons:
We need to make it as easy as possible for people to get out of there cars and to enable a cultural shift. This will go a long way towards much needed climate action, and making our roads safer and air cleaner.

A commitment to biodiversity

Caibidil: Volume 1 - Written Statement» 6. Green and Blue Infrastructure, Open Space and ...

Ábhair: Biodiversity
It is important that the entire development plan, and all action within be subject to a full appropriate assessment and Natura Impact Statement. The city should ensure adequate ecologists and biodiversity experts are employed to implement conservation on a systemic level.

We also ask that the city publishes a dedicated biodiversity management plan, including commitments to conservation of existing habitats, including protection of urban woodland habitats.

That the city subscribes to the all Ireland pollinator plan in all areas that it manages including public realm, streets, roads, and council properties, including and not limited to the elimination of the use of herbicides except in the management of invasive species.

That the city recognises that hedgerows, scrub and woodland habitats once removed cannot be replaced by simply planting trees, and that these are in high nature value in themselves having established through ecological succession over time.

That the acquired farm at the Lee Fields/straight road become designated as a nature conservation and natural floodplain area. Natural flood defense such as management of floodplains and river, and conversion of agricultural land into permanent vegetation, instead of hard engineering approaches which can be damaging to biodiversity, as seen in the degradation of river ecological health in Bandon.

That the flood relief scheme, despite exemption from EIA through the arterial drainage act be subject to a full ecological impact assessment.

That wetland and riparian habitats be given priority and retained everywhere possible, because of their extremely high value as habitats for biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Eochairfhocail: Protection of native habitats,

Natural Floodplain and flood defences,

dedicated biodiversity management plan

Main opinion:

We must systemically integrate biodiversity and conservation into all actions in the development plan.

Main requests:

Emphasis on natural flood protection methods. Ban the use of herbicides and pesticides. Ensure adequate staff with expertise are employed to systematically integrate biodiversity and climate action into each objective and action in the development plan.

Main reasons:

We are facing a biodiversity crisis, and we are not adequate responding to it. If we don't act now, there will be further consequences to all aspects of our lives.

Climate Action Now

Caibidil: Volume 1 - Written Statement» 5. Climate Change and Environment

Ábhair: Climate action

Climate adaption and climate resilient is important, but we need to double down our efforts on climate action. Often climate adaption methods, e.g Flood defences, require a large amount of resources, and are carbon intensive. We risk failing into a feedback loop of investing in climate adaption infrastructure, which further contributes to climate change, instead of simply acting now to limit the effects of climate change. A less is more approach is often better, and adopting natural solutions instead of over engineering solutions should be a priority.

5.21 talks about a just transition. I think as a city we need to go further than endorsing a just transition, but to also bring the idea of Climate Justice to the fore. While engaging those in our own communities who may be disproportionately effected by climate change, it is also important to acknowledge that we are part of a global community. Communities around the world who contribute much less to the climate crisis, but will be disproportionately effected by it, such as coastal communities and island communities, deserve our compassion and support. Cork City should double down on our climate action to support these communities. Our climate action must not ignore growth as an issue. Our use of space, and our expansion of the city contributes to carbon emissions and waste.

5.26 outlines Waste Management and Adaptable Buildings. I believe more emphasis must be put on our use of space, fully utilising existing space, combating dereliction and land hoarding. Where possible, existing buildings should be renovated. The most sustainable building is the one that already exists. Adaptable buildings are also important for providing community spaces, and an emphasis on socially inclusive spaces should be made when renovating or building new buildings.

Eochairfhocail:

Natural Sustainable Unsustainable

Climate Justice, Climate Action, Solutions, Buildings, Growth

Main opinion:

We need a climate justice approach to our climate action. We can't be reliant on future technologies to save us in the future, we must do our best with what we have now.

Main requests:

Integrate climate justice into the development plan. Move away from unsustainable growth. Shift more resources towards action now, which will prevent the need for adaption in the future.

Main reasons:

We must ensure our climate action is accelerated, and that we are acting for vulnerable communities, and ensuring their voices are heard.

A move away from air travel

Caibidil: Volume 1 - Written Statement» 7. Economy and Employment

Ábhair: New strategic employment sites

Economy and Employment Section 7.40 refers to the need to develop Cork International Airport to ensure it remains financially viable. While we recognise the importance of Cork Airport as an economic asset of the region, if the City is committed to a Just Transition, they should be encouraging alternative forms of transport, and supporting the development of alternative methods of transport linking Ireland with other countries. This should be done in line with the values of the Just Transition, and should provide support for staff and enterprise working in air travel, while we aim to decrease our reliance on it.

Eochairfhocail: Just Transition, Alternatives to flying

Main opinion:

We must look at alternatives to flying, but also support those in the industry that may lose out, and ensure they are not left behind.

Main requests:

Make a clear effort to reduce flying and provide alternative forms of transport. Support those in the industry in their transition into new employment.

Main reasons:

The climate crisis requires that we massively reduce our flying emissions, but we must do this in a way that is fair and sustainable.

Developing our communities sustainably

Caibidil: Volume 1 - Written Statement» 3. Delivering Homes and Communities

Ábhair: Community, healthcare and education

We support Objective 3.17, and believe that this should be further evolved to include community gardens and production of local food.

3.24 We must fully support our education insitutes. Where expansion of these facilites is required, an emphasis on

renovation of old or derelict buildings should be made.

Access to education is also important. We must ensure that the price of education and housing no longer deters young people from entering education. There is currently a housing crisis, and Irish students pay the highest fees in Europe. We must support our students, as they are the generation who will feel the brunt of the climate crisis, and will have to be the most adaptable generation to date. Provision of affordable and social accommodation for students, provision of free public transport, and financial supports for students should all be a priority in the development of the city.

Objective 3.25 supports the designation of Cork as a WHO Healthy City. We must acknowledge the role that air quality plays in health, as well as access to green spaces. Massively increasing the uptake of active travel will have the double benefit of increasing general health in the population, but also improving air quality.

Eochairfhocail: healthy city, community spaces, Social Housing

Main opinion:

We must support our communities by providing social spaces, working to make education more accessible, and ensuring a healthy city for all.

Main requests:

Provision of social spaces and social housing, financial aids for students, a focus on air quality and improving the health of the population.

Main reasons:

The younger generations are going to feel the worst effects of climate change, and must be adequately supported.

Documents Attached: Níl

Teorainneacha Gafa ar an léarscáil: Níl