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Strategic Objective 3: Transport and Mobility

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

The implementation of the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS) is undoubtedly in sharp focus in this Draft City Development Plan however it must be robustly supported and delivered with urgency in the lifetime of the plan. When factoring in planning, funding and construction time cycles, it is clear that active progress must be made on every front, to ensure that delivery on the ground is maintained. There are pitfalls at every turn in the delivery of infrastructure and put simply, City Council must ensure that delivery is always taking place. Delivery of CMATS should be considered a minimum viable indicative template and every opportunity should be sought in every corner of the city to apply the ethos of CMATS in the most proactive manner.

If delivered the anticipated modal shift associated with CMATS will deliver long terms benefits for generations to come and will secure the future of the city. It is therefore of utmost importance that proposals contained within CMATS such as a Light Rail System, which would service the route from Ballincollig to Mahon, are progressed. It is imperative that suburban rail services are upgraded also. CMATS provides for six new train stations at Monard, Blackpool, Tivoli, Carrigtwohill West, Waterrock and Ballynoe along the existing Cork-Mallow and Cork-Midleton rail lines. Without these upgrades it will be difficult to encourage many people living in suburban areas to substitute private cars for public transport.

CMATS proposes a €1.39 billion investment in roads and an effective and safe road network is essential. Equally, the tension between the emissions and other environmental impacts associated with roads must be acknowledged. Cork Chamber endorse the national 2:1 spend ration set out in the Programme for Government. Where roads are enhanced or constructed there must be clear strategic rationale, and they must be carried forward in a manner that holistically addresses the mobility of an area rather than encouraging further car dependence. Any new or enhanced road must be part of a transport corridor that facilitates safe sustainable mobility. At points of congestion, public transport corridors must be facilitated. Public transport cannot become the dominant mode until such time as it can move freely past the private car. It can never again be the case that road investment is sole priority.

Roads that are of strategic regional connectivity are essential and Cork Chamber supports enhanced inter and intra-regional connectivity with investments such as the M20, M28, and Dunkettle Interchange. Each is essential for different reasons. The M20 as a transport corridor that links CMATS to LSMATS and not only includes motorway upgrade but also rail and cycle. The M28 as the key that unlocks the potential of both the port and docklands. The Dunkettle interchange as the obvious regional bottleneck that must unquestionably be addressed.

The Cork North Ring Road will be essential to remove Heavy Goods Vehicles from the City with residential areas such as Ballyvolane and Blackpool currently shouldering a volume and type of traffic that is unsuitable for any residential area. Its design must facilitate cycle lanes, and a widening of footpaths as well as dedicated bus lanes at any point of foreseeable congestion.

It is also welcome to see plans for a Cork Northern Distributor Road and a Southern Distributor Link Road (as identified in CMATS) contained within this plan as both will create opportunities for the rollout of sustainable transport measures as well as creating opportunities, particularly on the northside of the city, for sustainable development of existing landbanks. Again, it is essential that these developments enhance sustainable mobility rather than uniquely take precious space for the private vehicle. Whether by offering a new dedicated sustainable mobility corridor online, or creating opportunity to create them offline, a rule that could be implemented would be to ensure that no new road infrastructure is added without a commensurable enhancement in sustainable mobility infrastructure.

Walking and cycling reduce the amount of vehicular traffic on the road and also provide benefits to both the individual and society. To encourage more people to consider this, there is a need to provide a safe infrastructure within which people can commute to work either through walking or cycling solely or as part of a mixed use of the public transport network. The existing CMATS plans must continue to be built on with projects such as *Lee to Sea* a prime example of the opportunity available. CMATS makes strong provision for improvements to cycle and pedestrian infrastructure which we believe could be implemented fully and at pace.

Park and rides (increasingly known as mobility hubs) are an essential component of CMATS and it must be acknowledged that within the metropolitan area, due to the proliferation of low density and one-off housing models, the majority of journeys do and will begin in a private car. However, journeys need not be completed by this single mode if adequate Park and Ride facilities can be put in place. In the short term, significant Park and ride facilities must be developed at each point of access to the city and must be served by connected multi-modal transport options from walking to bike, rail and bus. Public transport cannot become dominant until it becomes quicker than a private car, and every effort must be made to ensure that this shift takes place.

Cork Chamber would encourage the introduction of reduced speed limits across the city centre to 30kph. This is the safest way to ensure all users of the road and path networks can be accommodated in the existing infrastructure. It enhances safety, reduces noise and pollution, and helps our urban areas to be pleasant locations for trade and amenity alike.

The plan should also cater to the multiple ways in which publicly available sustainable mobility is provided. It should encourage the expansion of the existing bike scheme, but also allow for private operators of micro mobility options schemes such as e-scooters, and car rental schemes such as those operated by Go-Car.

This Development Plan must facilitate the shifting environment surrounding the way in which we power our mobility. The plan must not only facilitate but encourage the incorporation of electric charge points throughout the City, and in residential, community and commercial settings. It must also set the scene for the inevitable integration of hydrogen into the mobility mix and facilitate and promote its proactive rollout.

Finally, Cork airport will be a key driver of Cork's economic recovery and is of regional economic significance. It must be prioritised from a local connectivity perspective relative to CMATS. It must also be protected from a planning perspective to enable future traffic growth. It is not appropriate to have residential development in the vicinity of Cork Airport.

