



Draft Waterford Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy 2022 Feedback from the Waterford Bicycle User Group (W-BUG)

Date: 12th of July, 2022.

Waterford Bicycle Users Group (WBUG) submission to draft WMATS, July 12th, 2022

Waterford Bicycle User Group (WBUG) is a voluntary group promoting utility and recreational cycling in Waterford City and County. It was founded as the independent, voluntary Waterford Cycling Campaign, aiming to make *the Déise* the place for cycling in Ireland and a safer place for young and old to have **positive experiences using sustainable transport**. Several of our members are members of cyclist.ie, the national cycling advocacy organisation.

Everyday cycling is of massive benefit to mobility in towns and cities in Ireland: it is direct, rapid, and efficient. It contributes to a better urban environment, it improves the health of its users, and improves quality of life for all. As a sustainable mode of travel, cycling has a vital role to play in mitigating climate change by helping society transition to low energy mobility, while improving air quality, noise, and spatial use in urban areas. Waterford Bike User Group has been the voice of people cycling in Waterford for several years by now.

We welcome the high-level vision outlined in the draft WMATS. We are very supportive of the objective to improve the pedestrian environment through the improvement of footpaths, junctions, crossing points, crossing frequency and permeability. We also support the proposed cycling network and indeed any measures that make it easier, safer, and more pleasant for people to cycle in the WMA for transport or leisure.

CYCLING

Modal shift targets: WBUG notes the **lack of consistency between the WMATS** modal share increase figures up to 2040 **and the City and County Development Plan 2021**, figures on p.131 of the development plan (vol. 1). As WMATS is to be incorporated into the development plan, it is essential that the development plan figures are increased to match the WMATS ambition. We also note the lack of any action plan which outlines implementation targets and measures of success (KPIs) for the achievement of these figures. It does not **tell us what will be delivered, when**. Without this WMATS is only an aspirational vision.

Modal shift is a means an increase in the proportion of persons travelling to and from the Site using more sustainable modes of transport. WMATS proposes measuring journeys 541%, while the *Waterford County and City Development Plan 2028*, has a cycling target of 7% by 2028. In WMATS a 541% increase in cycling trip by 2040 is stated as an objective. Modal shift is the standard measure in Europe. It is not clear how these two measures correlate.

We request the following:

1. The targets included in WMATS reflect *modal shift* and are aligned with the Waterford City and County Development Plan.
2. We propose the following **modal shift** targets:

Short term	→2028	7%
Medium term	→ 2034	14%
Long term	→2040	21%

, where the 7% target aligns with the *Waterford County and City Development Plan 2028*.

3. We recommend that the *best practice direct consultation* with relevant communities concerned by road space reallocation or road development is undertaken prior to the development of specific plans for the commencement of the part 8 planning process. This should not be left through the filter of the Transport Special Policy Committee. This is essential in delivering successful sustainable travel infrastructure.

Segregated cycle lanes: we believe it is essential that detail is given on how two-way, segregated cycle lanes and bus lanes are to be provided on the primary and secondary routes identified. While we appreciate that specific plans will be drawn up for each route separately, without any indication of the broad plans for priority implementation and routes, or the methodology to be used to deliver 'high quality infrastructure' and the 'cycle network' is not possible to understand what



Draft WMATS feedback from Waterford BUG

this practically means. The current Government has allocated a substantial sum of public funds to sustainable infrastructure (€15.175M in Waterford). We wish this to be spent in the broadest, practical ways to increase modal shift to sustainable transport in Waterford.

As mentioned above, as it is not clear from the WMATS document, what will be implemented when, the detailed plan must include specific details on what will be implemented when. Targeted primary-, radial routes and inter-country routes that are already well utilised (e.g.: Waterford to Tramore, Dunmore and the Copper coast route) are important to address firstly to get as many people as possible onto the bike.

We want to see:

4. No shared bus-bikes lanes. Consistent application of segregated cycle lanes on primary roads. (Some of the WMATS graphics show bikes sharing bus lanes on primary roads (Rice bridge).
5. Clear consistent standards in the implementation of segregated bike lanes on primary and secondary routes.
6. One-way traffic being applied in narrower streets to allow safer footpath use and cycling.

Junction safety

We are very happy to read that you will implement infrastructural projects using the National Cycling Manual.

In line with the assessment of all cycling infrastructure mentioned in chapter 15, we want to see:

7. All roundabouts in the WMA to be assessed for cycling safety and a SMART¹, timebound implementation plan to revise them based on the Dutch Style junction design be defined.

Bike parking: Bicycle parking: *Measure cycling 6* omitted an important description of bike parking: “secure”.

8. Please address this in the revised plan and in the infrastructure design.

BUS SYSTEM:

We support the measures outlined to overhaul the current bus system. However, it is notable that the proposed bus network has not changed from one where all routes lead to the city centre. Rather than connect There is insufficient orbital provision connecting places where most people live, e.g., Dunmore Rd., Williamstown Rd., Kilcohan, Ferrybank, and villages in South Kilkenny, to places where most people work (e.g., hospital, SETU, industrial estate).

Unless the bus routes are well considered to provide a frequent, reliable service between where people live and work or study, the investment in infrastructure will not see significant modal shift to PT.

We want to see:

9. Direct connections from where we live to our destination is more likely to taken-up, rather than having to connect in the city centre.
10. Thomas Francis Meagher bridge incorporated into the public transport routes, to provide new, quicker option to workplaces from South Kilkenny to the Industrial Estate, SETU, the hospital and Tramore. This would also alleviate traffic in the city centre.
11. We would like to see structured, sequential plans to integrate bus services to county villages and towns be impacted by the strategy; frequency should complement working and studying times.

Bus stop upgrade – this is needed throughout the system. Typically bus stops have only a sign on a pole, but no shelter or information. This is particularly the case in the sub-urban areas.



¹ SMART = Specific, Measured, Attainable, Realistic, Time-bound



Draft WMATS feedback from Waterford BUG

We want WMATS to mandate bus timetables as a minimum requirement at all bus stops and assess all stops for their potential to add bus shelters and real-time electronic information.

PARK AND RIDE

We are surprised and disappointed that **only one park and ride** location has been chosen: NE of the railway station, in Newrath. Traffic volumes show that several park and ride facilities are needed, notably at Carriganore, Tramore Rd (junction with outer ring road), Dunmore Rd (Knockboy or Passage Cross). It is also needed in Slieverue. Bus stops and overnight, secure cycle parking options should be located at these points to enable drivers to continue their journey into the WMA sustainably.

We want to see:

12. Provide significantly more park and ride on strategic access points to the WMA at: Carriganore, Tramore Rd (junction with outer ring road), Dunmore Rd (Knockboy or Passage Cross).
13. Collaboration with Kilkenny Country Council would benefit residents there to travel into Waterford sustainably and quicker e.g.: at Slieverue or a Park & Ride at a new Belview Port commuter train station could be considered.

RAIL

The section on rail focuses only on inter-city travel, without presenting any improvements on those services. This is a huge, missed opportunity to implement changes that complement the intervention hierarchy referred to in the document, of: Maintain > Optimise > Improve > New.

The restoration of the Rosslare line and the relocation of Plunkett station. There is no consideration of the potential of short-hop, commuter services to/from Mooncoin, Carrick, or Kilkenny, or Mullinavat and Ballyhale, for example, using smaller trains, or how these services could link with bus services to the hospital, SETU or industrial estate. Also, it is not communicated how the TFI city bikes scheme will interact with the rail station – will a TFI bike station be added at the station? The existing infrastructure (lines and track) can be optimised to benefit public transport capacity. WMATS is missing this opportunity of capitalising on this.

We want to see:

14. Increased the frequency of Waterford to Dublin line, including consideration of early commuting and late-night trains
15. Re-opening the Waterford-Rosslare line to passengers, including, adding a new station at Belview - Waterford port
16. Increased frequency and speed of services on the Limerick-Waterford route
17. Open new (and disused) stations on the Clonmel to Waterford route (e.g.: Mooncoin, Fiddown) to service the regions on the line in a frequent commuter service
18. Addition of a commuter station at Newrath, to tie-in with the (only) planned Park & Ride, planned for Newrath
19. Increased bike capacity on all train routes, nationally.
20. Secure bike parking at train stations.
21. TFI city bike stations at the train station
22. Assessing the feasibility of re-opening the Cork to Waterford rail line

ROAD NETWORK

With the stated WMATS intervention hierarchy in mind, of: Maintain > Optimise > Improve > New, why does WMATS propose the new **Ferrybank relief road, Abbey Road to Belmont road** and a **Third downstream river crossing** when transport routes for pedestrians and cyclist only can be established? This is dismaying. This proposal is contradictory to the objective of the plan to increase sustainable travel. Permeability can be increased through sustainable means.

In the case of the **downstream river crossing**, while the hospital is located in a relatively inaccessible location, as mentioned above, addressing the various requests made here by us, and implementing WMATS measures to reduce traffic

volumes to the hospital and into the city. The impact on traffic flow to and from the hospital can be assessed and responded to.

As the existing second river crossing, Thomas Francis Meagher bridge, is under-utilised, a cost-benefit analysis of building a third road over crossing, with the cost of reducing tolls for some or all vehicles must be addressed. This proposal contradicts the stated aims 02, 04, 06, 07 and 08,



and again, complying with the WMATS intervention hierarchy: Maintain > Optimise > Improve > New.

We want to see:

23. A commitment in the revised WMATS to commit to **build no new roads** for motorised traffic before a sizeable proportion (60%) of all the WMATS plans have been implemented and objectively measured and assessed.
24. As objective cost-benefit analysis of the tolling on TFM bridge.
25. A cost-benefit analysis of tolling on Rice bridge for personal motorised vehicles (PMVs), with multiple and single occupancy.
26. WMATS does not address any target for reducing traffic speeds in the city. We want to see an implementation timeframe for reducing speed limits to 30 km/hour inside the outer ring road.
27. Ramps: get rid of them all and add road pinch-points that are narrow and direct focused, careful driving. Ramps tend to irritate drivers, who often speed-up between them. They are a nuisance for cyclists.

PARKING

To increase safety for pedestrians and cyclists and reduce the space allocated to cars in the city.

We want to see:

28. **No tolerance** for on-pavement and on-cycle route parking implementation via on-the-spot fines that are a true deterrent.
29. A plan to **reduce on-street parking spaces** in city to enable permeation by pedestrians and cyclist, to improve the living quality in the urban realm.
30. Address school parking chaos by implementing **no-parking zones within 500 metres** of schools gates, to direct parents to alternative, sustainable ways of travel to school.
31. Targets on **implementation one-way streets**, to tackle on street parking, and increase permeability and road safety



Draft WMATS feedback from Waterford BUG

FREIGHT

In WMATS chapter 12, the map of the WMA shows that the 3.5 tonne weight restriction is limited. It also shows that both **HGVs and five axle freight lorries** can cross Rice bridge. The only place in the city where 5 axle freight is not allowed in on the Quay and ~the Viking triangle area. For Waterford to become a safer place to live, breathe, walk and cycle restricting access to the city centre via Rice bridge is a now a must.

We propose:

32. HGVs and five axle lorries are not allowed to use Rice bridge
33. Alternative smaller vehicles to these, need to be identified and specified for entry into the city inside the Outer Ring Road
34. A park and collect system can be used for HGVs and five axle lorries, to unload to businesses within those limits.



CLIMATE ACTION

Chapter 14 refers to complimenting many climate action goals but includes no targets for emissions. However, implementation of the plan consistently will rely on a commitment to measure pollutants and drive to living sustainably. We want to see:

35. Meaningful targets for emissions reductions measured at various points in the WMA area consistently over the period of this plan. These chosen parameters should follow international best practice.

MEASURES

All of the measures for implementation must be measured over the period of the plan using meaningful parameters to reflect their impact on the intended improvement.

We want to see:

36. SMART, meaningful measures for the implemented measures. [This related to request No.1 & 2, above.]
37. Measuring parameters should reflect the current best international practice, e.g.: modal shift in transport, Air Quality Index. [This related to request No.1 & 2, above.]
38. A holistic oversight and management of the implementation of the plan, in tandem with monitoring the measures.
39. Adjusting the plan based on the objective data from on-going measurements, can allow implementation to be adapted, corrected, or optimised.

Yours faithfully,

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