



Maynooth Cycling – Submission on North South Corridor

Maynooth Cycling welcomes the intention to improve facilities and quality of service for pedestrians and cyclists in Maynooth. In particular, we strongly welcome the proposals for a 30km/h zone in the town centre, the reconfiguration of Leinster Street as a shared used zone with pedestrian priority, and a new pedestrian bridge at Mill Street. However, we have a number of concerns about the proposal as presented, and find that it has some major deficiencies. Our concerns and suggestions for improvements are:

1. Traffic signal sequencing

The proposal does not consider the sequencing of traffic lights. Currently lights are sequenced to maximise motorised traffic creating a major impediment to walking and cycling. Pedestrians are subjected to excessive wait times, and cyclists are halted unnecessarily at a number of junctions (see below). A simple adjustment of signals to facilitate pedestrians and cyclists would improve existing provision and is essential to the utility of any upgrade works.

2. Straffan road proposals.

The Straffan Road, at present, has an off-road cycle track which is well used. Whilst it has its limitations, it does have the benefit of segregation from traffic for most of its length. The proposed new track is largely on-road and for this reason is likely to reduce, rather than increase, cycling particularly among children. In addition, the treatment of junctions is poor and there is limited provision for cyclists to cross from one side of the road to the other. In particular:

- (a) At the junction with the Celbridge Road, cyclists travelling south to north should not be required to stop to allow cars to turn right from the Celbridge Road. They can continue on the cycle track without coming into contact with this traffic.
- (b) At the junction with the new link to Leinster Street, cyclists should be allowed to make a left turn onto the link road when the light for cars travelling north is red.
- (c) At the Glenroyal junction, there is no clear route for cyclists travelling in a southerly direction. This junction currently has barriers on the footpath and there is no indication that they will be removed.
- (d) The shared provision area north of the Glenroyal junction is of poor quality and there is no clear link between the route across the square (for which no works are proposed) and the shared cycle/footpath route. Further, it is unrealistic to expect that children travelling from the Straffan Road to the Girls School will cycle on-road and make a right turn in heavy traffic (which includes double decker buses) at the town square.
- (e) The partial cycle tracks at the junction with the Main Street are not continuous, and their use will impede pedestrians at a particularly busy junction.
- (f) A cyclist travelling south across the town, using Leinster Street, exiting from the new link route and wishing to proceed in a southerly direction must negotiate a difficult junction with no clear route. The current layout will require them to cross the footpath and dismount to cross the Straffan Road before proceeding. With current signalling priority, this will cause significant delay. Further, whilst waiting at the lights on the west side of the Straffan Road, they will block the footpath. This is indicative of the poorly thought-out design of junctions throughout the scheme.

3. Leinster Street

The proposed shared space at Leinster Street is generally welcomed. However, it could be significantly improved. A 2m wide footpath is shown on the shared zone. This defeats the purpose and message of shared space and will emphasise the 'natural' division between cars and people. Strategically placed planters/trees, on the other hand, would slow traffic and emphasise the shared nature of the space. This is a standard design feature of shared space provision in other European countries.

It should be possible for cyclists to turn left off Leinster Street towards the University, bypassing the traffic lights. At present, the short stretch of cycle track on the footpath is used for this purpose, creating potential conflicts with pedestrians. An upgraded cycle track or a separate traffic light is necessary.



4. Main Street/Mill Street/Parson Street Junction

The proposal for a diagonal crossing this junction makes no sense, since pedestrians cross diagonally during the all pedestrian stage in any event. Pedestrian flow at this junction could be accommodated with a green light for pedestrians crossing Leinster Street and Parsons Street and a right turn only for motorised traffic from Main Street for the majority of the traffic light cycle. Pedestrians largely ignore the

red lights on these route in any event and the lights should be adjusted to reflect practice.

5. Main Street

We are seriously concerned about the proposal to remove the off road cycle track on the Main Street. Whilst the existing cycle track is not fit for purpose, and the 30km/hr speed limited will, in principle, make the street more cycle friendly, it is not realistic to expect school age children to cycle on this busy road. Further, the level of traffic (including double decker buses) and width of the road means that cyclists must cycle in the centre of the traffic lane. It is completely unreasonable to expect primary school age children to cycle with this level of confidence. If the scheme is intended to promote cycling by children, a good quality, segregated cycle track here is essential.

6. Mill Street.

Cycle lanes on this street must be off-road or barrier segregated to accommodate the large number of children who could be expected to use them.

On the section of Mill Street past Manor Mills, where the footpath on the west side is unacceptably and dangerously narrow, space should be taken from the development on the east side of the road to facilitate widening of the footpath.

Retention of the slip lane at the junction with the Kilcock Road is completely unacceptable. This junction has a very high level of pedestrian traffic travelling to schools and the University. The slip lane is an additional barrier to pedestrians and very dangerous for cyclists proceeding northwards past the slip road. At peak times,

there is inadequate space on the existing footpath and traffic island for pedestrians waiting to cross. This junction should be reconfigured to give priority to pedestrians.

7. Moyglare Road.

A segregated, off road, cycle track must be provided on the Moyglare Road. The new schools are expected, over-time, to accommodate 2000 students. Currently, the majority of second level students walk to and from school every day. The location of the new school buildings will add an additional 15 minute (walking) journey time for students living to the south. Travel time, walking, for students from estates on the Dunboyne Road and Straffan Roads is currently 20 – 45 minutes. Cycling is an obvious alternative to the chaos that will be generated by children being driven to school.

The proposed, two way shared facility is wholly inadequate and will require cyclists to proceed in single file, at walking pace. They will be required to halt regularly to give way to pedestrians going in the same direction and to cyclists and pedestrians coming toward them.

The Moyglare Road provides an opportunity to demonstrate international best practice in cycling facilities. If done properly, there is potential for more than 1000 children to cycle to and from school every day. This will improve health and reduce traffic congestion. Additional space can be obtained by acquiring land and minimising carriageway width. This would have the additional advantage of signalling the commencement of an urbanised area to motor traffic, leading to passive enforcement of (currently largely ignored) speed limits on the Moyglare Road.

8. General

We would be interested to know whether the consultants have produced an estimate of the impact of the scheme of cycling levels in Maynooth.

In conclusion, whilst the intention of the proposed scheme is to be welcomed, the execution has significant limitations. We have highlighted only some of the major issues. In general, there seems to have been no attempt to imagine the experience of cycling, or walking, through Maynooth at peak traffic times. Maynooth is a compact town, is flat and has a large population of young people. It has the potential to become the gold standard for cycling provision in Ireland, an opportunity completely missed by the proposal.

The difficulties along the Moyglare Road have been created by the County Council's decision to allow a major development that will, without cycling provision, turn over 1000 pedestrian commuters into daily users of motorised transportation. The council therefore has a very particular obligation to produce proposals for a scheme that will actively encourage cycling.