



South East on Track

Submission to Greater Dublin
Area Transport Strategy
2022 - 2042

January 2022

1) Introduction

South East on Track is a volunteer based group from the South East of Ireland that seeks to improve rail based transport across the region.

The group campaigns to improve existing services via increased frequency of service and reduced journey times, as well as increasing the overall viability of the network by reversing the misguided closure to passenger traffic of the Rosslare (Wexford) to Waterford rail line in 2010.

For the purposes of this study, South East on Track will focus on the Dublin – Rosslare rail line as the main point of concern of the Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy.

2) Current Status

The Dublin Rosslare rail line currently has four trains each direction on weekdays from terminus to terminus. An additional northbound train departs from Gorey, and one additional Southbound train terminates at Wexford Town.

On the weekend, this decreases to three trains per direction per day.

The current service frequency essentially ensures that this transport corridor is unusable for a significant section of the travelling public. As noted in the NTA 2016 Rail Review, the line is referred to the Dublin-Wexford line as Wexford Town is as the “largest urban settlement on this line and in the region¹”

However, taking Wexford as an example, one can clearly see the issues with the current operation of the railway line. On weekdays, the first train to Wexford Town from Dublin arrives at 12:07pm. The final train to Dublin in the evening departs before 6pm at 17:55. Commuters to towns such as Wicklow, Rathdrum and Arklow must catch a final train southbound at 18:35 on weekdays.

Despite the current atrocious frequency of services, the line in recent years carries approximately 688,000 passenger journeys per year (see Figure 1) pre COVID. It is unknown why Irish Rail separate Dublin-Wicklow and Dublin-Rosslare passenger counts in the below table, but they can be taken to represent the whole line.

¹ https://www.nationaltransport.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/151116_2016_Rail_Review_Report_Complete_Online.pdf NTA 2016 Rail Review,p.5

	2018	2017	% Increase
DART	20.934	20.077	4.3%
Dublin Drogheda	5.512	5.270	4.6%
Dublin Maynooth	4.387	4.318	1.6%
Dublin Cork	3.458	3.148	9.9%
Dublin Kildare	2.921	2.641	10.6%
Dublin Galway	2.025	1.846	9.7%
Dublin Sligo	1.409	1.340	5.1%
Dublin Waterford	1.386	1.266	9.5%
Dublin Belfast	1.290	1.175	9.8%
Dublin Limerick	1.005	0.910	10.4%
Cork Cobh	0.908	0.908	-0.1%
Dublin Tralee	0.653	0.619	5.5%
Dublin Westport Ballina	0.577	0.559	3.2%
Cork Midleton	0.437	0.413	5.8%
Dublin Rosslare	0.366	0.348	5.3%
Dublin Wicklow	0.322	0.309	4.1%
Dublin M3 Parkway	0.156	0.157	-0.5%
Ennis/Athenry	0.138	0.134	2.8%
Limerick Jct Rosslare	0.041	0.035	17.6%
Limerick Ballybrophy	0.033	0.030	11.4%
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Total	47.960	45.505	5.4%
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Figure 1 - Pre COVID Passenger Data - Iarnród Éireann (via FOI)

The two counties served by the rail line show a significant external commuter market. According to 2016 Census figures, 49.6% of Wicklow workers leave their county for work, while 18.4% of Wexford workers do the same². More people who live in either Bray or Greystones go to Dublin for work than remain in their own county to work.³ Indeed, Bray Daly is already a busier station than any station in Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, bar Dun Laoghaire Mallin, and it is also busier than two stations in the Dublin City Council area (Sydney Parade and Sandymount).⁴

Due to the infrequency of the rail service, the modal share of public transport for these external

² <https://www.wexfordcoco.ie/sites/default/files/content/Planning/Profile-2-Commuting-Flows.pdf>

³ <https://www.wicklow.ie/Portals/0/Documents/Business/Business-Environment/Wicklow-Facts-Figures/Commuter%20Study%20Report.pdf>

⁴ https://www.nationaltransport.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/NTA_Heavy_Rail_Census_Report_2019..pdf

commuters remains poor, with 92.6% of Wexford external commuters⁵ and 68% of Wicklow⁶ external commuters using the private car as their means of commute. This is clearly not sustainable as Ireland attempts to meet its emission reduction targets, but with the rail service at its current slow, paltry levels, who can blame them?

While there has been massive investment in motorways in the GDA in the last 30 years, the DSER line has been merely maintained. While billions has been invested to speed up⁷ the car journey from Wexford and Wicklow to Dublin, the train journey has actually become slower in that period. Road improvements include bypasses on the M/N11 at Enniscorthy⁸, Gorey⁹, Arklow¹⁰, Rathnew/Ashford¹¹, and road expansion at the Glen of the Downs¹² and Sandyford/Kilmacud¹³.

Already, rail use amongst Wicklow commuters is nearly double that of bus users in the county at 7%¹⁴, but there is massive potential to reduce the percentage of commuters who drive with targeted investment in improving the capacity and frequency of the rail service provided.

Ireland has committed to reducing its greenhouse emissions by 51% by 2030¹⁵, and this has to mean a modal shift from 'one person, one car' travel to the use of the railways. Wicklow and Wexford both have massive potential in this regard.

⁵ <https://www.wexfordcoco.ie/sites/default/files/content/Planning/Profile-2-Commuting-Flows.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.wicklow.ie/Portals/0/Documents/Business/Business-Environment/Wicklow-Facts-Figures/Commuter%20Study%20Report.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/m50-upgrade-completed-1.863437>

⁸ <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/taoiseach-opens-enniscorthy-bypass-amid-locals-concerns-1.3960792>

⁹ <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/gorey-bypass-opened-to-public-1.812128>

¹⁰ <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/45m-arklow-by-pass-opens-ahead-of-schedule-1.1258655>

¹¹ <https://www.independent.ie/regionals/braypeople/news/new-dual-carriageway-warmly-welcomed-27614441.html>

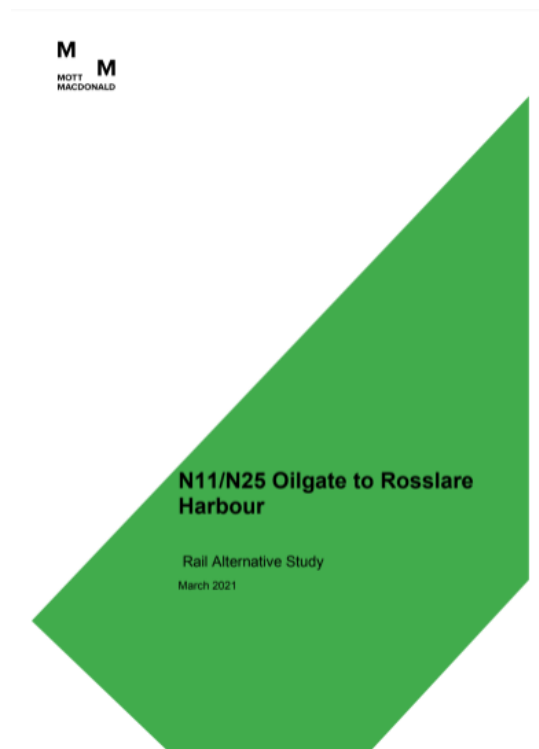
¹² <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/brennan-opens-controversial-n11-road-section-1.979268>

¹³ <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/brennan-opens-m50-link-road-in-dublin-1.1143170>

¹⁴ <https://www.nationaltransport.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Bray-to-Arklow-Study.pdf> section 3.4

¹⁵ <https://www.epa.ie/news-releases/news-releases-2021/ireland-will-not-meet-its-2020-greenhouse-gas-emissions-reduction-targets-action-is-needed-now-to-meet-2030-eu-targets.php>

3) Key documents



3.1) Rail Alternative Study

The rail alternative study on the Rosslare-Dublin rail line was prepared by Mott MacDonald in March 2021 as part of the supporting documentation for the proposed M11 extension from Oilgate to Rosslare Harbour in County Wexford.

Although primarily intended as a means of justifying the capital spend for the road improvement by claiming the existing rail line is inadequate for transport needs, the document has some key findings:

Disappointingly, the study only examines the rail lines potential between Bray and Rosslare Europort as *the assessment is limited to the route length from Bray and does not attempt to resolve the inevitable complications of integrating enhanced Rosslare Intercity services within the DART and/or DART+*

*services between Greystones and Dublin Connolly.*¹⁶

As delays north of Bray due to conflicts between the Inter City Service and the DART are a major part of the line's slow speed, we are unable to ascertain accurate improved journey times based on this report. However, there are some key findings.

- Service levels of a train every two hours and every 90 minutes are possible using existing infrastructure.
- To reach a frequency of an hourly train in each direction, a second platform with static passing loop would need to be added at Wexford O'Hanrahan station.
- An analysis using RouteRunner showed that Improved Journey times can be achieved by removing some speed restrictions on the line – dealing with some of these low line speed areas can decrease journey times by **27 minutes** between Bray and Rosslare in both directions.¹⁷
- Improving the attractiveness of the line would lead a theoretical **uplift of 250%** during the AM peak period

¹⁶ Mott MacDonald | N11/N25 Oilgate to Rosslare Harbour Rail Alternative Study, p.16

¹⁷ Mott MacDonald | N11/N25 Oilgate to Rosslare Harbour Rail Alternative Study, p. 31



3.2) Iarnród Éireann Strategy 2027

Iarnród Éireann's Strategy 2027 sets out IE's goals for the coming years and outlines service enhancements on a variety of lines across the Country.

For the Dublin – Rosslare line, IE proposes “[An] *Increase in services towards a two-hourly all day pattern*¹⁸”

Although such an improvement is to be welcomed, it is the minimum service level that should be expected

of a major commuter transport route in the twenty-first century. However, a cursory examination of IE's proposals for other lines demonstrate how once again the Dublin-Rosslare line is neglected by IE and the NTA. The Dublin-Waterford route will obtain an *100% increase* in services to an hourly service all day with some improvement in journey times. The Dublin-Sligo route will experience an *increase in services to two-hourly all day with hourly peak services along part of the line*. The NTA should ensure that IÉ achieves at minimum a two hourly service.

The document also states there will be an increase in Commuter Service Frequency to *Dundalk, Longford, Athlone, Portlaoise, Carlow and Gorey to every 20 minutes in peak and half hourly off peak* Such frequency to Gorey would be dearly welcomed by the residents of Wicklow, Arklow, and Gorey. Several of these services should extend to Wexford Town, currently the county's busiest station¹⁹, to provide additional connectivity for people south of Gorey.

¹⁸ Iarnrod Eireann 2027 Strategy, p33

¹⁹ https://www.nationaltransport.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/NTA_Heavy_Rail_Census_Report_2019..pdf

JACOBS

Greystones Service Improvement Study



NTA
Strategic Paper
 32106211/TP-076 | 02
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Document history and status

Revision	Date	Description	By	Review	Approved
01	16/02/18	For issue	Richard Eastman Chris Botton Stuart Donnell	John Peiser Alan Doolan	Richard Eastman
02	8.4.2019	Final formal submission to NTA	Richard Eastman Chris Botton Stuart Donnell	Alan Doolan	Richard Eastman

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Revision	Issue approved	Date issued	Issued to	Comments
01				

3.3) Greystones Service Improvement Study

Commissioned by the NTA, this study from 2019 examines potential methods of increasing train frequency along the single track section of the line between Greystones and Bray.

The recommendations of this report calling for increased line speed as well as some sections of double tracking should be implemented without delay. Increasing the frequency of trains per hour is vital for the future of the rail corridor.

4) Infrastructure Recommendations

South East on Track recommends the following actions be taken in relation to the Dublin – Rosslare railway line as part of the Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2022-2042.

4.1) Passing Loop Requirements

In addition to the passing and dynamic loops suggested in the Jacobs Greystones Service Improvement Study, opportunities for passing loops and additional tracking need to be examined **north of Bray**.

The conflicts between DART Traffic and the Inter City Trains due to infrastructural constraints is stark. The weekday “AM peak” train (ex Rosslare 5:35) shows a journey time from Wexford to Pearse station of two hours, forty two minutes. This same journey on a weekend train (Sunday ex Rosslare 18:05) takes only two hours, nine minutes – **a difference of thirty three minutes**.

Most of this difference occurs between Bray and Pearse – with the Bray – Pearse section taking 42 minutes on a weekday morning as opposed to 23 minutes at the weekend, due to the Intercity Train with limited stops being unable to overtake the frequently stopping DART.

Using the most recent edition of the public Timetable, South East on Track has prepared an analysis of the conflicts that occur between Inter City trains and the DART. Clashes are highlighted. As one can see from the attached figure, a northbound Intercity train will “catch” a DART that departed Bray 5 minutes before at Dalkey, a DART that departs 10 minutes before is reached by Blackrock, one 15 minutes before is reached at Sandymount, and a DART that departed 20 minutes before is caught by the time the IC train reaches Grand Canal Dock.

The current system of the Inter City trains being caught behind the DART and shuttling along at slow speeds behind a metro train that makes each stop is a poor experience for the long distance commuter.

NORTHBOUND	DART	Dart adjusted	20 MINUTE	15 MINUTE	10 MINUTE	5 MINUTE	ICR SUNDAY
GREYSTONES							8:07:00 PM
BRAY	8:55:00 AM	8:16:30 AM	7:56:30 AM	8:01:30 AM	8:06:30 AM	8:11:30 AM	8:16:30 PM
SHANKILL	9:00:00 AM	8:21:30 AM	8:01:30 AM	8:06:30 AM	8:11:30 AM	8:16:30 AM	8:19:30 PM
KILLINEY	9:02:30 AM	8:24:00 AM	8:04:00 AM	8:09:00 AM	8:14:00 AM	8:19:00 AM	8:21:00 PM
DALKEY	9:07:30 AM	8:29:00 AM	8:09:00 AM	8:14:00 AM	8:19:00 AM	8:24:00 AM	8:24:30 PM
GLENAGEARY	9:10:00 AM	8:31:30 AM	8:11:30 AM	8:16:30 AM	8:21:30 AM	8:26:30 AM	8:26:30 PM
SANDYCOVE	9:12:00 AM	8:33:30 AM	8:13:30 AM	8:18:30 AM	8:23:30 AM	8:28:30 AM	8:27:30 PM
DUN LAOGHAIRE	9:15:30 AM	8:37:00 AM	8:17:00 AM	8:22:00 AM	8:27:00 AM	8:32:00 AM	8:31:00 PM
SALTHILL	9:17:30 AM	8:39:00 AM	8:19:00 AM	8:24:00 AM	8:29:00 AM	8:34:00 AM	8:32:00 PM
SEAPOINT	9:19:30 AM	8:41:00 AM	8:21:00 AM	8:26:00 AM	8:31:00 AM	8:36:00 AM	8:32:30 PM
BLACKROCK	9:21:30 AM	8:43:00 AM	8:23:00 AM	8:28:00 AM	8:33:00 AM	8:38:00 AM	8:33:30 PM
BOOTERSTOWN	9:24:00 AM	8:45:30 AM	8:25:30 AM	8:30:30 AM	8:35:30 AM	8:40:30 AM	8:34:30 PM
SYDNEY PARADE	9:26:30 AM	8:48:00 AM	8:28:00 AM	8:33:00 AM	8:38:00 AM	8:43:00 AM	8:35:30 PM
SANDYMOUNT	9:29:00 AM	8:50:30 AM	8:30:30 AM	8:35:30 AM	8:40:30 AM	8:45:30 AM	8:36:00 PM
LANDSDOWNE ROAD	9:31:30 AM	8:53:00 AM	8:33:00 AM	8:38:00 AM	8:43:00 AM	8:48:00 AM	8:36:30 PM
GRAND CANAL DOCK	9:36:00 AM	8:57:30 AM	8:37:30 AM	8:42:30 AM	8:47:30 AM	8:52:30 AM	8:37:30 PM
PEARSE	9:39:30 AM	9:01:00 AM	8:41:00 AM	8:46:00 AM	8:51:00 AM	8:56:00 AM	8:39:00 PM
TARA STREET							
CONNOLLY							
SOUTHBOUND	DART	DART ADJUSTED	15 MINUTE	10 MINUTE	5 MINUTE	ICR SUNDAY	
CONNOLLY							
TARA STREET							
PEARSE	9:52:00 AM	9:46:00 AM	9:31:00 AM	9:36:00 AM	9:41:00 AM	9:46:00 AM	
GRAND CANAL DOCK	9:54:30 AM	9:48:30 AM	9:33:30 AM	9:38:30 AM	9:43:30 AM	9:47:30 AM	
LANDSDOWNE ROAD	9:57:30 AM	9:51:30 AM	9:36:30 AM	9:41:30 AM	9:46:30 AM	9:48:30 AM	
SANDYMOUNT	9:59:30 AM	9:53:30 AM	9:38:30 AM	9:43:30 AM	9:48:30 AM	9:49:30 AM	
SYDNEY PARADE	10:02:00 AM	9:56:00 AM	9:41:00 AM	9:46:00 AM	9:51:00 AM	9:50:30 AM	
BOOTERSTOWN	10:04:30 AM	9:58:30 AM	9:43:30 AM	9:48:30 AM	9:53:30 AM	9:51:30 AM	
BLACKROCK	10:07:00 AM	10:01:00 AM	9:46:00 AM	9:51:00 AM	9:56:00 AM	9:52:30 AM	
SEAPOINT	10:09:00 AM	10:03:00 AM	9:48:00 AM	9:53:00 AM	9:58:00 AM	9:53:30 AM	
SALTHILL	10:11:00 AM	10:05:00 AM	9:50:00 AM	9:55:00 AM	10:00:00 AM	9:54:00 AM	
DUN LAOGHAIRE	10:13:30 AM	10:07:30 AM	9:52:30 AM	9:57:30 AM	10:02:30 AM	9:56:30 AM	
SANDYCOVE	10:17:00 AM	10:11:00 AM	9:56:00 AM	10:01:00 AM	10:06:00 AM	10:00:30 AM	
GLENAGEARY	10:19:30 AM	10:13:30 AM	9:58:30 AM	10:03:30 AM	10:08:30 AM	10:02:30 AM	
DALKEY	10:22:00 AM	10:16:00 AM	10:01:00 AM	10:06:00 AM	10:11:00 AM	10:06:00 AM	
KILLINEY	10:26:30 AM	10:20:30 AM	10:05:30 AM	10:10:30 AM	10:15:30 AM	10:09:30 AM	
SHANKILL	10:29:30 AM	10:23:30 AM	10:08:30 AM	10:13:30 AM	10:18:30 AM	10:12:30 AM	
BRAY	10:35:00 AM	10:29:00 AM	10:14:00 AM	10:19:00 AM	10:24:00 AM	10:16:00 AM	

Figure 2 - SEOT analysis of DART / ICR conflicts

As such, as part of the GDA Transport Strategy 2022-2042, a full analysis should be performed of the Bray – Pearse section of the rail line to examine where additional tracking, passing loops, or dynamic loops could be added. Although the line passes through a densely populated urban area, there are sections where the footprint of the rail line could be expanded to accommodate a third or even fourth track.

Such arrangements are common in other countries, which allow Intercity and regional trains to quickly pass local services which stop at every station.

Figure 3 shows a common feature of the German urban rail network, a passing loop on the exterior of the station which allows trains to pass stationary trains which are stopped in the station.

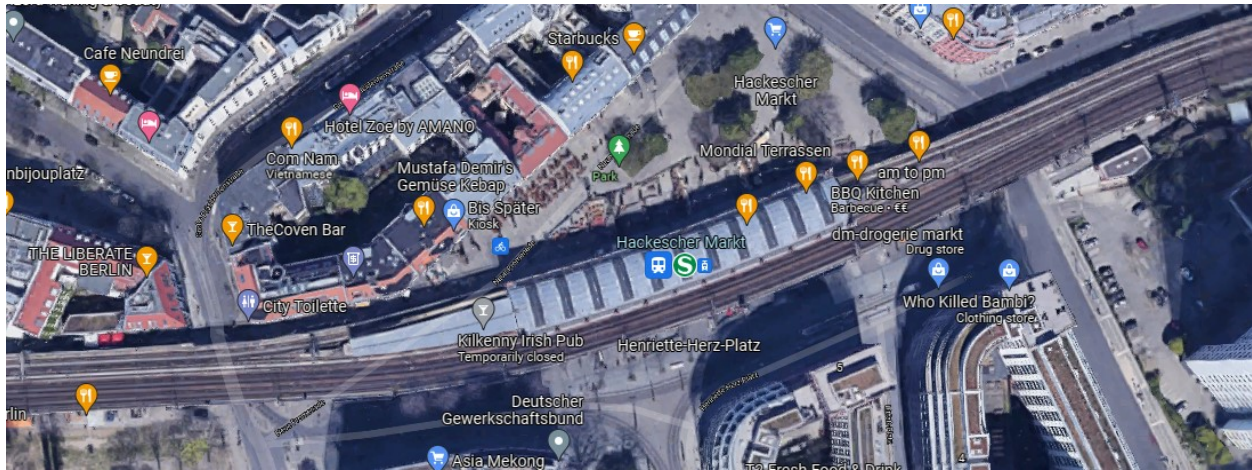


Figure 3 - Hackscher Markt Station - Berlin. Image via Google Maps

This can also be achieved through triple tracking through stations, as currently exists at Bray Station. (see figure 4) – the NTA should explore expressing the Inter City train through Bray Station to improve journey times, allowing passengers from further South destined for Bray to change to the DART in Greystones.

This could provide for south Wicklow and Wexford commuter services to travel through north Wicklow quickly. This quicker and therefore more appealing service has the potential to relieve congestion on DLR roads as people choose public transport options. There is even potential for Park and Ride facilities at a station south of Greystones to allow commuters to partially complete their commute on public transport, with the increased speeds offered by passing loops and through services at Bray increasing the appeal of the service.



Figure 4 - Bray Station - showing passing opportunity

It is deeply disappointing that the proposed Woodbrook Station has been granted planning permission without allowing for the potential of adding additional track. The proposed design for Woodbrook Station should be revised to include allowances for future additional tracks.

Similarly, various locations north of Bray should be examined, particularly in the Blackrock & Sandymount areas. Furthermore, the track arrangements and station design of Grand Canal Dock should be examined to ascertain if further overtaking and passing opportunities are available here.

Key deliverables: A study to ascertain potential additional tracking and passing locations between Bray and Pearse Station.

4.2) DART+ (DART+ Coastal South)

DART+ promises to be an important development in rail transport and infrastructure in Ireland.

South East on Track welcomes the proposed extension of the DART system to Wicklow Town and would encourage continuing electrification of the rail line further south.

However, as part of DART+, the Rosslare line must not be relegated to the status of requiring interchange with the DART system at Bray or Greystones (or even Wicklow) – although this

may be possible of occasional services, such a change would most likely decrease the appeal of the rail line to Rosslare and present an unacceptable journey to most potential commuters using the rail line.

The potential for DART+ Coastal to negatively impact Inter City services must be mitigated. Contained in the supporting documents for DART+ West, document Annex-3-4A Appendix A Peak Hour Service Plans contains a service plan that includes no through paths for the Rosslare-Dublin commuter service into the capital, instead allocating all services south of Greystones to an interchange located there. Such a solution would be unacceptable for commuters living south of Greystones and brings into serious question the viability of extending the DART south of Greystones to Wicklow.

Route	Bundle 6 - Option 2	Scenarios 1-3	Scenario 5 & 6
Northern Line			
Belfast to Connolly (Enterprise)	1	1	1
Connolly to Rosslare Europort (Diesel)			
Greystones to Rosslare Europort (Diesel)	1	1	1
Dundalk to Drogheda [Shuttle]			
Dundalk to Connolly (Diesel)			
Dundalk to Bray	2		
Drogheda to Bray			8
Drogheda to Docklands			
Drogheda to Dundalk		2	2
Drogheda to GCD	4	4	8
Drogheda to Connolly			
Drogheda to Dún Laoghaire			
Drogheda to Bray			
Malahide to Greystones			
Malahide to Bray	3	3	
Clongriffin to Dún Laoghaire	3	3	
Howth to Howth Jn [Shuttle]	6	6	6
Connolly to Bray			
Clongriffin to Bray			
Kildare / Northern Lines			
Drogheda to Hazelhatch			

South East on Track is disappointed to note that although the NTA commits in the draft strategy to undertaking “an assessment of the need for further infrastructural enhancements on the Northern Line to facilitate the combination of intercity and commuter services on this line”²⁰, there is no such commitment for the southern (Rosslare) line. This should be immediately rectified.

Similarly, the Jacobs study for the Arklow to Bray area (November 2021) notes that double tracking, or part thereof, between Greystones and Bray could require “significant capital expenditure”²¹. In the period we are in where our repeated failure to meet our emission

²⁰ NTA GDA Transport Strategy 2022-42, p. 150

²¹ <https://www.nationaltransport.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Bray-to-Arklow-Study.pdf> section 4.5.2

reduction targets²² could cost the state billions²³, South East on Track believes it is far wiser to use the money to invest in improving rail-based public transport options.

Key deliverables:

A study to ascertain potential additional tracking and passing locations between Greystones and Pearse Station.

Improvements to Greystones, Bray, and Dun Laoghaire stations to increase train frequency.

4.3) Bray-Rosslare Section

As noted from the Mott McDonald 2021 Rail Alternative Study, removal of speed restrictions on the Bray-Rosslare section of the line can cut journey times by 27 minutes for a stopping service.

Key Deliverables:

Implement the infrastructural improvements required to remove speed restrictions on the Bray-Rosslare sections as outlined in the Mott McDonald Report.

5) Operational Recommendations

5.1) Train Frequency

As previously noted, the current operational status of the Rosslare-Dublin rail line is extremely poor. Infrequent trains and poor rolling stock have meant that there is a historic under utilization of the rail line by potential passengers along the rail line. Irish Rail and the NTA have

²² <https://www.epa.ie/news-releases/news-releases-2021/ireland-will-not-meet-its-2020-greenhouse-gas-emissions-reduction-targets-action-is-needed-now-to-meet-2030-eu-targets.php>

²³ <https://www.irishtimes.com/business/transport-and-tourism/ireland-would-face-multibillion-eu-fines-over-emissions-target-failure-1.3924909>

neglected the Rosslare–Dublin rail line for well over a decade. A quick comparison of the last pre-recession timetable with the current version illustrates this point.

In 2008, the terminus of the line, Rosslare Europort had (6) arrivals at 7:18, 10:28, 15:53, 18:50, 20:37 and 21:35. In 2022, this has shrunk to (4), with arrivals at 12:31, 16:33, 19:41, and 20:42.

With departures, there is a similar story. The 2008 timetable shows departures at 5:35, 7:05, 7:40, 13:00, 17:40, and 18:55, whereas in 2022, this has decreased to departures at 5:35, 7:20, 12:55 and 17:30.

However, the recent Mott McDonald report estimates that increasing the attractiveness of the rail line would lead to an uplift of approximately 250%, without investing on infrastructure upgrades. However, *improvement beyond Iarnród Éireann's proposed train every two hours would be required to match capacity to the full AM peak theoretical passenger uplift.*²⁴

As such, to obtain this significant growth in the rail market, achieve modal shift, and fulfill a plethora of National Strategic Outcomes, the NTA should ensure that frequency **beyond** IE's proposed two hourly service to Rosslare is provided.

This level of frequency to Wexford/Rosslare should **not** be solely achieved via the utilisation of a Greystones/Bray DART interchange, involving a Wexford or Rosslare shuttle.

Key Deliverables:

Hourly peak, and 90 minute off peak, all day, both directions service on the Dublin – Rosslare Rail Line.

5.2) Rolling Stock

Averaging approximately three hours, the Dublin–Rosslare rail line is one of the longest duration rail trips in the country. It is therefore unacceptable and deeply disappointing that Iarnród Éireann continue to operate Commuter Rolling Stock (the 29000 Class) on this line, while utilizing the more comfortable Inter City Rolling Stock (22000 Class) on shorter journeys in the Greater Dublin Region.

Although inappropriate rolling stock can sometimes be assigned due to significant operational issues, currently Iarnród Éireann regularly schedule commuter rolling stock on this Inter City line. With the new order of additional carriages for the 22000 Class, the NTA must ensure that Irish Rail always operate their designated Inter City DMUs on this route.

²⁴ Mott McDonald, N11/N25 Oiglate to Rosslare Harbour Rail Alternative Study, p. 87

Key Deliverables: Ensure Iarnród Éireann always assign appropriate Inter City rolling stock (22000 Class or future equivalent) to the Dublin – Rosslare rail line.



Figure 5 - Iarnród Éireann 29000 Class Train - Wexford January 3, 2022

5.3) Ticketing & Fares

With the introduction of the 90 minute fare in the Greater Dublin area, anachronisms such as expensive fares from Rosslare-Gorey should be brought down to appeal more to inter regional travel along the line.

The current promotional fares for Wexford, Rosslare Strand, and Rosslare Europort Stations should be continued and promoted by Irish Rail.

Leap Card ticketing should be extended to all stations along the Dublin – Rosslare railway line.

The NTA should explore options to include a top-up discounted “city ticket” as part of the Inter City ticket fare. This type of arrangement is common in other countries, where a public transport pass for the destination city can be added as a small surcharge to the inter city ticket.

With the cost of running a car set to increase in the 2020s, and the cost of purchasing EVs still beyond many, IÉ should be emphasising the potential savings available by taking the train.

6) Notes on Section 15 – Freight, Delivery and Servicing

*At the peak of the Covid-19 crisis in April 2020, the estimated decrease in daily fossil CO₂ emissions due to global confinement was -17%. While the Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions kept increasing in 2019, the CO₂ emissions decreased by about 6% in 2020 due to the economic activities' loss with the Covid-19 crisis. It will take an annual emission reduction of exactly this magnitude to limit climate change to a 1.5 °C warming over the next decades. These figures show **how challenging it will be to reach the climate goals of the Paris Climate Agreement** and the decarbonisation targets of the European Green Deal. Furthermore, most changes observed during the crisis do not reflect structural changes in the economic, transport or energy systems. Surface transport, being the second most emitting sector in the EU, accounts for nearly half the decrease in emissions during confinement. It is the one of the key sectors for reaching both the EU targets and the Paris Agreement objectives²⁵.*

6.1) EU Green Deal

The main aim of the European Green Deal is to transform the economy and society to engage it towards a sustainable path. This will require a public investment programme together with major efforts to direct private capital towards climate and environmental action. The Green Deal is composed of various elements going from “a zero pollution ambition for a toxic-free environment” to “mobilizing industry for a clean and circular economy”. The strategic element for the railway sector is named “**accelerating the shift to sustainable and smart mobility**”²⁶.

It is clearly stated that a modal shift shall be privileged for freight transportation as today 75% of inland freight is carried by road while a substantial part of goods should shift towards rail and inland waterways. In the strategy, the objective is set to double rail freight traffic by 2050.

Ireland along with other EU countries signed up to these objectives “The Future of Rail Freight in Europe” during the Ministerial Conference on “Innovative Rail Transport – connecting, sustainable, digital” in Berlin on 21st September 2020 (the so-called “Berlin declaration”). Quite often unfortunately while Ireland participates in these EU initiatives and supports the main aims at the implementation level this country fails to adhere to the overall strategy.

In that 2020 agreement the document outlines the Green Deal status “the European Commission includes rail freight as a top priority for shifting towards climate-friendly transport, as rail is one of the most environmentally friendly modes of transport. We expect this initiative not only to bring fresh approaches and ideas to rail freight, but also to build on all the experience gained and best practice already developed by the Rail Freight Corridors. The

²⁵ FOSTERING THE RAILWAY SECTOR THROUGH THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL PART 2 FREIGHT

²⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0789>

outstandingly low carbon footprint of rail freight resulting from the wide-scale use of electric traction, the high energy efficiency inherent in the rail system, the suitability for high transport volumes and other environmentally friendly drive systems encourage us to continue the development of fully carbon-neutral rail freight. Effective mitigation of the impact of rail noise is another substantial contribution towards further enhancing the environmental advantage of rail freight.

The agreement signed by Ireland called for “enhanced EU support for rail infrastructure projects essential to develop rail freight by developing a high-capacity network, removing bottlenecks and interoperability barriers and increasing the capacity of intermodal terminals. Welcome in particular the Connecting Europe Facility’s objective to further support key rail projects in the period 2021-2027²⁷. The EU TEN-T corridor network is an integrated plan that includes Ireland in joining the coordination of linking into freight corridors operating in EU and working towards a modal shift to rail.

6.2) Ireland’s commitment

The Ireland “imperative to reduce the impact of transport systems on the environment is highlighted by objectives to deliver a 51% reduction in emissions by 2030 and to achieve net-Zero carbon by 2050. Irish Rail (IR) are cognisant of this challenge and believe that Rail Freight has a unique opportunity to become a cornerstone of sustainable freight transportation in Ireland and contribute to the achievement of these targets”²⁸.

“Rail freight generates 76% less emissions (per tonne-km) than road haulage and as such there is an opportunity for rail to become a cornerstone of a sustainable freight network across Ireland. With transport accounting for approximately one fifth of all emissions nationally the expansion of modern rail freight facilities and services can help develop an attractive alternative to road haulage, encourage modal shift from road to rail and support decarbonisation and environmental targets across the regions”.

IR strategy “includes a plan to develop a network of intermodal freight facilities in collaboration with the freight and logistics industry, starting with strategic terminals in Limerick and Dublin”. Here we see the first indication that rail freight can contribute strategically to transport planning in Dublin.

Dublin has an existing network of railway lines crossing the city from all directions with lines that are often double tracked leading to the centre of the city and high population and work centres including rail link to the port. The priority on this network is rightly towards passenger traffic however over a 24hr period these lines are not used to the maximum levels from 21hr to 06hr when the corridors can be used for freight traffic.

²⁷ [innovative-rail-transport-21-09-2020.pdf \(bmvi.de\)](#)

²⁸ [IE_Rail-Freight-2040-Strategy_Public_Final_20210715.pdf \(irishrail.ie\)](#)

6.3) Port traffic

The stated IÉ rail objective of freight terminal is not obvious in Dublin and only recently Dublin port announced the building of a major truck terminal²⁹ to feed the port near Dublin airport at a time when Ireland has committed to modal shift rail. This is an example of where national stated transport objectives at EU level do not match the actual implementation on the ground.

IÉ have stated in the 2021 strategy that, “operations at Dublin Port will be developed to optimise the integration of rail freight within the port and support it in responding to longer term capacity challenges”³⁰. This objective is made less than a year after Dublin port terminated the freight movements of the Ballina freight train due to port congestion, the only single container traffic using the port currently. The only reason that rail freight has continued at Dublin port is because of the zinc ore train freight from Tara mines that is shipped from Dublin without which the rail link would have hardly survived.

According to IÉ strategy, Dublin is the “busiest port in the country, (with approximately 14,000 inbound and outbound articulated HGV journeys per week) has sufficient scale to support additional rail freight services. It is also evident that 52% of the traffic travelling to Dublin Port originates from over 70km from the Port while the remaining 48% comes from within 70 kilometres of the port. Additionally, 38% of traffic emerging from the port is travelling to destinations 70kms or more from the port while 61% of traffic is travelling to locations within 70km”. Is there a role for Rosslare/Waterford to reduce the port traffic by transferring goods to these ports that have seen their importance grow post Brexit? Does the new context in 2022 imply that more container traffic moves through the SE ports and that Ireland examines the rail access to these ports which is already in place and can be enhanced by connecting both SE ports by reopening the railway between both which was mothballed in 2020. This is the type of strategic decision making that leads to modal shift and would facilitate freight traffic from West of Ireland to the SE diverting traffic from Dublin centre or transferring to rail.

IÉ describe the freight business as a “narrow market heavily dependent on the operations of a small number of valued customers, and therefore highly sensitive to market and economic trends³¹”. This is a position very different to some decades ago when most of Ireland’s largest producers used rail freight services as an integral component of their distribution system. The reality is that IÉ, because of an absence of political transport policy, vacated the freight market and removed the handling capacity all over the country to a point where it was no longer viable

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<https://www.bing.com/images/search?q=dublin+port+new+truck+terminal+m50&qpv=t=dublin+port+new+truck+terminal+m50&tsc=ImageHoverTitle&FORM=IGRE>

³⁰ [IE Rail-Freight-2040-Strategy Public Final 20210715.pdf \(irishrail.ie\)](https://www.irishrail.ie/Admin/getmedia/685e9919-f012-4018-879b-06618bb536af/IE_Rail-Freight-2040-Strategy_Public_Final_20210715.pdf)

³¹ IE Rail Freight 2040 Strategy, p.6 https://www.irishrail.ie/Admin/getmedia/685e9919-f012-4018-879b-06618bb536af/IE_Rail-Freight-2040-Strategy_Public_Final_20210715.pdf

to move freight by rail. Government policy did not subsidise rail freight and so it was at a competitive disadvantage compared to road transport shifting the business to motorways.

Dublin city has been at a major loss as a result of the absence of transport freight policy in that the country's main port is located in the centre of the city with minimal rail freight handling capacity and the network around the country has reached a state where only Waterford port retains rail freight handling capacity. Foynes and Cork are designated as TEN-T corridors though neither is currently rail freight connected. The argument then is that if other ports were rail freight connected more freight traffic could enter Dublin on trains rather than at the ports for transfer to trucks.

A common argument in Ireland against rail freight was that distances are too short on the island to make the change competitive. According to IÉ 2040 strategy rail freight is “competitive over shorter distances. Rail can be competitive over reasonably short distances with the average rail freight distances travelled in the UK and EU at 150km and 220km respectively and with much of Ireland's freight travelling within this range. ‘On distances exceeding 150km the average costs of moving goods by rail are usually lower than road’ Increasingly, companies are choosing to use rail for its efficient performance and competitiveness along with its recognised sustainability benefits, even over shorter distances. IKEA, for example, with Maersk have recently begun using rail to transport their products a distance of 100km from Barcelona to Tarragona in Spain after successfully applying a similar solution in Italy”.

6.4) Focus on Dublin

According to IÉ demand analysis - existing and projected articulated Heavy Goods Vehicle traffic across Ireland, and at Tier 1 Ports (Dublin, Port of Foynes and Port of Cork). A 74% increase in HGV traffic nationally by 2040 (as identified by Transport Infrastructure Ireland projections) has informed an assessment of the scale of the market and identified the most heavily used routes where freight services could potentially transfer to rail given the right operating conditions and cost profile. The highest county to county flows all involve trips to Dublin along the main interurban networks. The 4th and 5th highest flows are from Cork to Tipperary and Clare, showing the importance of this urban centre in the south-west region. How much of this flow of freight could be transferred to rail given that the Cork-Tipperary axis is well served by railways?

6.5) Conclusion

Dublin as the main population centre and capital is a manifestation of the transport issues nationally. It's not possible to isolate the Dublin transport situation without factoring in the national transport picture and rail freight is a key measure in the calculation.

A mindset change is required politically to lead policy and then at structural departmental and Iarnród Éireann levels to reach implementation targets. It's clear from a number of recent initiatives like the Dublin port truck terminal and the initial closing of the rail link to Dublin port in 2021 that Govt stated strategy at EU level is not achieved or realisable on the ground. Such

disconnect between strategy and implementation must be addressed to prioritise rail freight development to eliminate congestion within Dublin centre and to positively contribute to Dublin overall transport planning to reach climate goals 2050.

7) Proposed Amendments to NTA GDA Transport Strategy 2022-2042

Proposed amendments are highlighted in yellow.

SECTION 12.4 DART+ and Rail, p. 147

12.4.6 DART+ Coastal South

DART+ Coastal South includes the following:

- Elimination of level crossings to reduce rail/road conflict that limits train capacity;
- Provision of new grade-separated pedestrian, cycle and vehicle crossings as required;
- Subject to modelling and assessment, station modifications at Bray and Greystones to enhance train service capacity; and

REVISE TO:

DART+ Coastal South includes the following:

- Elimination of level crossings to reduce rail/road conflict that limits train capacity;
- Provision of new grade-separated pedestrian, cycle and vehicle crossings as required;
- Subject to modelling and assessment, station modifications at Bray and Greystones to enhance train service capacity; and
- A study of potential passing and overtaking opportunities between Bray and Pearse station to enhance train service capacity and journey speed
- Commitment to double track all, or part thereof, of the line between Greystones and Bray

SECTION 12.4.11 Regional and Intercity Services, p.150

The NTA will support the delivery of improved regional and intercity services to enhance connectivity within and to the GDA. The improvement of frequency and capacity of services will help to promote public transport usage between settlements within the GDA. The NTA will continue to work with Irish Rail to make improvements to services within the region.

As part of these improvements, the NTA, in conjunction with Irish Rail, will undertake an assessment of the need for further infrastructural enhancements on the Northern Line to facilitate the combination of intercity and commuter services on this line

REVISE TO:

The NTA will support the delivery of improved regional and intercity services to enhance connectivity within and to the GDA. The improvement of frequency and capacity of services will help to promote public transport usage between settlements within the GDA **as well as improving access to the GDA from the regions.** The NTA will continue to work with Irish Rail to make improvements to services within the region.

As part of these improvements, the NTA, in conjunction with Irish Rail, will undertake an assessment of the need for further infrastructural enhancements on the Northern **and Rosslare Lines** to facilitate the combination of intercity and commuter services on **these lines. A study of potential passing and overtaking opportunities between Greystones and Pearse station will be performed to investigate enhancing train service capacity and journey speed, including the use of double tracking between Greystones and Bray.**

SECTION 15.5 Rail Freight, p. 183

p. 184: CURRENT: **Measure FREIGHT4 – Rail Freight**

The NTA will support Irish Rail in the implementation of the outcomes of the Rail Freight 2040 Strategy.

Revise to:

Measure FREIGHT4 – Rail Freight

The NTA will support Irish Rail in the implementation of the outcomes of the Rail Freight 2040 Strategy. **The NTA will investigate potential infrastructure improvements such as sidings and passing loops required to facilitate an increased rail freight sector.**