



Draft
**IRELAND'S
CYCLE
NETWORK**
Frequently Asked
Questions



CycleConnects – Ireland’s Cycle Network

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What is CycleConnects – Ireland’s Cycle Network?

CycleConnects is a proposed network of fully connected coherent and safe cycling routes in each county. This includes proposed cycle networks in towns with a population of at least 5,000 people (2016 Census) and fully connected networks in rural areas. The networks being consulted on include all counties outside of the Greater Dublin Area (ie. Dublin, Meath, Kildare and Wicklow).

At present, the plan does not prescribe any cycle infrastructure for the routes presented.

This plan is being developed as part of the National Development Plan 2021-2030 and the Climate Action Plan 2021.

What do the lines on the map mean?

The lines on the map indicate the proposed cycle routes that make up the County Cycle Networks. The different line types reflect the different route types being proposed. It is currently a combination of existing routes and planned routes in the future (i.e. greenways, National Road upgrades, proposed urban road upgrades).

The lines are indicative; route alignments and infrastructure types will be developed during the design and planning process of individual projects stemming from the network.

If there are any other routes you would like to be considered as part of the network, let us know.

What junctions are you looking to upgrade?

Junctions in urban areas with the potential to be upgraded are included. These are typically larger junctions and roundabouts that may currently pose a safety risk for cyclists. These are generally where one or more urban primary routes are proposed and/or major junctions such as signalised junctions, roundabouts, and crossroads. No junction upgrades are proposed outside urban areas but may be considered at a later stage.

How will this plan align with the Transport Infrastructure Ireland National Cycle Network?

Both plans have sought to align and overlap with one another to avoid parallel routes. While the TII NCN has illustrated a 4km wide corridor to allow flexibility in selection of routes, CycleConnects has sought to provide more detailed routes on specific roads on a more localised level. The NTA and TII project teams met regularly during the network planning processes.

When are you looking to deliver all of these routes?

It is proposed to begin delivering these routes to begin from 2023 onwards and will continue over the timescales of the National Development Plan 2021-2030.

How many of these routes will feature segregation?

Currently, no cycle infrastructure has been considered as part of the development of these routes. The priority has been to identify potential routes in order to develop a connected network to ensure all major towns and destinations in both the urban and rural areas are fully connected.

However, these routes will be used from next year to inform infrastructure upgrades in line with the National Cycle Manual and other cycle design guidance. Each project will be developed using the NTA's Project Approval Guidelines, covering options development, preliminary design, statutory processes, etc. It is envisaged that the design process for these routes will seek to achieve a high level of segregation.

How have the rural routes been selected?

The Rural Routes, shown as purple interurban lines, have been selected based on connecting as many populated areas as possible. This includes referencing the latest CSO Settlement data to highlight where people live in each county. GIS analysis has been undertaken to identify the most appropriate routes. The locations of schools and sports facilities were also used to inform route selection, as these are key trip attractors and should be serviced by interurban routes where possible.

Where multiple route options have been available between two large towns, various factors such as safety, gradient, connections to towns/settlements and directness have been considered. In many cases, a preference has been shown to select routes on 80kph roads rather than 100kph roads. This has sought to avoid high speed, high traffic roads for cyclist safety. By selecting quieter rural roads, this will lead to a more comfortable cycle for all users. It has generally been found that rural regional roads tend to connect more smaller towns and villages than National 100kph roads which will miss many of these towns. The exception to this is when a 100kph National Road is present with a wide hard shoulder and thus the potential for cyclist infrastructure, and potentially is located along the TII National Cycle Network.

Google Maps trip planner was also used to identify possible interurban routes, particularly in terms of flattest routes. Generally, routes with a gradient of more than 5% have been avoided but in some cases, particularly hillier counties, selecting very flat cycle routes was not possible.

No one cycles in my area so why are we doing this plan?

This plan aims to encourage people of all levels to cycle to cycle more. It aims to support new cyclists, those transitioning from other non-sustainable modes and improving conditions for existing cyclists. With more specific cycling routes, and the potential for the introduction of cycle infrastructure, it is hoped that more people will be encouraged to cycle.

Research conducted by National Travel Survey indicated that safer cycling routes is the main factor (31.7% of respondents) that would encourage respondents to cycle more in the future. The survey also noted that the introduction of more cycling specific routes would be another factor that would influence respondents (17.3%) to cycle more. A similar sentiment was as noted in the Cycling Ireland Big Bike to Work Poll 2021, with respondents noting that improved infrastructure for cyclists being a large factor that would improve cyclist safety.

Some Greenways are missing – will these be included

A number of greenways are still be assessed for feasibility, some of these, with routes still to be decided, have currently been excluded. If these develop further in the coming months, there is the possibility for them to be included in CycleConnects.

What involvement have the Local Authorities had in this?

Local Authorities have been involved in workshops to provide feedback on proposed routes. They were able to provide markups and suggestions for the proposed networks. Additionally, they have provided the team with information and local knowledge, including existing and proposed cycle

infrastructure and other important or relevant information to the development of the County Cycle Networks.

Does this plan feature Blueways?

Yes, Blueways have been shown as greenways (green lines) in the relevant mapping to allow for simpler categorisation of cycle routes. These have been integrated into the urban and interurban networks to increase connectivity.

Have the team looked at how the Dutch and Danish cycle networks

The team has conducted research into a number of international cycle networks. These include both the Dutch and Danish rural cycle networks. The research from these case studies informed the methodology used in the route development in this network.

These case studies can be viewed in elsewhere on the consultation portal.

Some cycle routes go through streets that are very narrow or are one-way – what cycle infrastructure is possible here?

Infrastructure for these type of streets will be agreed at a later stage. In many cases, inclusion of a one-way street could form part of a much longer cycle route in a town/city that will or have the potential to be used by cyclists. The exact arrangements that will be implemented on particular streets will form part of the development process for individual schemes, which will be the subject of separate consultation processes.

What Environmental Assessments have been done as part of these plans?

Strategic Environment Assessments (SEA), Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening and Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA) will be undertaken for each proposed county cycle network as illustrated in the consultation. The results of these assessments will be considered as part of the finalised CycleConnects in 2023.

I live in rural Ireland, how this benefit me?

There are many routes in this plan that will provide rural Ireland with cycle routes for potential cyclists. These routes include both interurban and greenway links to towns and villages as small as 500 people. By providing a comprehensive, safe and connected cycle network that services key trip attractors, it is hoped that the number of cyclists in rural Ireland will increase.

65% of respondents to the Big Bike to Work Poll 2021 by Connecting Ireland said that they cycle in rural locations regularly. This indicates a need for more specific cycle routes in these locations. The County Cycle Network aims to provide this.

Some routes are in areas where it is very hilly or steep, is this the best way to provide a cycle route here

Where possible, routes have sought to be provided along routes that are as flat as possible in all areas. Routes with a gradient of more than 5% have been avoided where possible. Due to topographic constraints in some regions, some routes do have an incline.

How can I submit my feedback?

Feedback can be submitted through on the online consultation portal.

How long does the consultation run for?

The public consultation runs for six weeks, from September 30th to November 11th 2022.