



Draft Wicklow Town – Rathnew LAP Submission - Report

Who are you:	Private Individual
Name:	Róisín McCullagh
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Topic

Overall Vision and Strategy of LAP

Submission

Please see attached pdf on cycling, playgrounds and public transport like the DART

File

Lap submission 2024.pdf, 1.93MB

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According to the National Cycle Manual (NCM): *“Directness is the most important requirement for network planning. Delays, detours, gaps or interruptions should be avoided. Major trip patterns should be as close to **“as the crow flies”** as possible. A well designed urban cycle network should confer an **advantage** in terms of average distance or journey time when compared with other transport networks. It is **illogical to discontinue cycling provision near busy destinations to accommodate or maintain other traffic flow.***



Ever since the implementation of the one-way system in the town centre, the WT1 has been **broken** and is no longer **bi-directional**. Cyclists coming from the South-East side of town no longer have a direct route to/through their town centre. The NCM clearly outlines how by adding a contra-lane for cyclists this could be overcome. If the one-way system in the town centre were changed to **Low Speed Zones (LSZ)**, priority could be given **first** to the pedestrian, **second** to the cyclist and vehicles would not be permitted to exceed **25km**.



The entrance to the LSZ could be ramped up to pavement height to encourage traffic to slow down, there would be **no** pavements which in turn would create a larger footprint for pedestrians, reduce potential trip hazards, while facilitating buggy/wheelchair access. Where the road is wider, rather than the current double parallel parking system, there would be ample space for diagonal parking slots instead (see diagram below).

As The Bayview Hotel is currently being restored and intends building an underground car park with the front entrance serving as a pedestrian access to Main St, it would make sense to reinstate vehicular access to High St from Kilmantin Hill for

vehicles **<3.5ton**, running East to West with a contra flow for cyclists. Also for the sake of cyclists coming up Fitzwilliam Rd, High St would be given priority where it meets Dispensary Ln/New St and Hillside/Bayview Rd.

All of the one way streets where possible should have contra lanes for cyclists – Quarantine Hill, Salthouse Ln, Bridge St, Church St, Fitzwilliam Rd, Mortons Ln, and especially Church Hill as it serves as an important feeder route for two schools, the Glebe, EGS and their church. All uphill roads should have cycle lanes as well as all roads leading to schools, playgrounds, sports complexes, any public amenity that serves childrens' needs so that the younger generation is given every opportunity and encouragement to use their bikes rather than seeking a lift from their parents. All WT cycling routes with the exception of Low Speed Zones should have bidirectional lanes, which will help other vehicles to be more vigilant and slow down.

All ramps should be removed and replaced with chicanes.



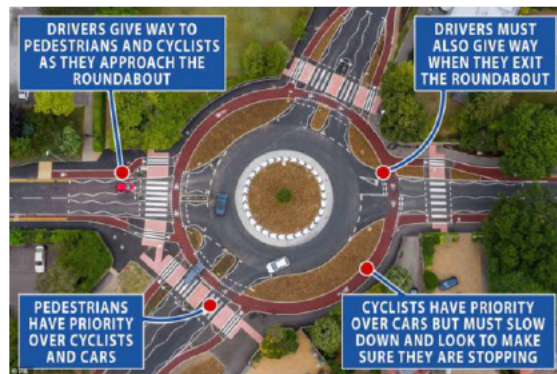
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Wherever possible, housing estates should have pedestrian/cyclist access routes from one estate to the next to allow them to take the shortest route, ie. people from Keatingstown should be able to cut through housing estates to access the shops, rather than take their cars (see diagram below). A curious feature of the SMP is the **WT2**, which as you can see on page 1, follows the Port Road, before turning South to run right through the heart of our Victorian Train Station. One assumes it is in anticipation of the DART coming to Wicklow. Surely it would make more sense to upgrade the other derelict bridge and laneway (268m West of the station) to cater for cyclists coming from the North, thereby preserving as much of the Victorian features as possible.



Another problem with the existing cycle lanes is the lack of maintenance and upkeep. In Rathnew, for example, when Cllr Snell complained about them disappearing over two years ago, they were still visible. Overgrown hedgerows, potholes, blocked drainage resulting in debris, resurfaced roads where the gullies and manholes have not been made flush and are often as deep as the potholes themselves, these are just some of the common issues that cyclists (and drivers) swerve to avoid and the National Cycle Manual (NCM) makes frequent references to these throughout their manual to ensure they are not overlooked.

Equally frustrating is the fact that the cycle lanes simply stop whenever they reach a challenging feature such as tunnels, roundabouts or village/town centres and these are precisely the spots where cyclists tend to meet the most aggressive and unyielding drivers. When the first cycle lanes appeared almost a decade ago, it was assumed they would eventually get around to addressing these contentious areas, but as yet nothing has happened. The NCM shows clearly how cycle lanes should be incorporated on roundabouts and “*In particular, the confluence of cycle routes as they approach and exit from bridges and pinchpoints should be specifically detailed*”. Perhaps the best way to resolve the issue at Bollorney tunnel would be to create a pinch point or choker like the one they have on the Strand Rd in Bray, as large vehicles already tend to approach it from the middle of the road while yielding to oncoming traffic.



Here is a more detailed image of a typical roundabout one would find if driving in Europe mainland. Between Ashford and Wicklow Town centre there are four roundabouts (there should be a fifth at Whitegates) and yet we expect our pedestrians and cyclists to take their lives into their own hands trying to circumnavigate them.

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It's vital that we create safer roads for our pedestrians and cyclists now because very soon the volume of traffic will have doubled. In Ashford alone there is approved permission for 638 new houses, with another 250 in the pipeline. It won't be long before the population of Ashford reaches 4000. That's a lot of school children that could be cycling to school and most of them will be going to schools in Wicklow.

Playgrounds on Estates:

Younger children still need to be able to play with their peers in an environment that is reasonably safe and close to home without their parents having to hop in a car and drive them to the Murrough, Balleynerginn or Rathnew playgrounds. In much of Europe, practically **every** housing estate has their own playground, and yet, with a population of 16.5 thousand people, Wicklow/Rathnew has **3** and one of them is approximately 1/2km from the nearest house. So I looked at a map of Wicklow town and all its snugly packed housing estates all shamefully cut off from one another, marked the existing playgrounds in pink and where I think the council could add some more amenities for kids in yellow, because we should be doing a lot more to encourage our younger generation to go outside and play.

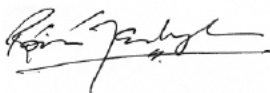
I also think it should become Council policy, to not allow the building of any new estates without adding as small playground for smaller kids alongside a common grassland area for bigger kids.

Public Transport:

We desperately need more trains and buses to encourage people to avoid using cars. The DART is absolutely essential and we were promised it would be here by 2025.

I hope this helps and please feel free to contact me should you have any questions about any of the above.

Kind regards



Róisín McCullagh

