

Green Party Transport Policy



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Summary

The policies contained in this document are derived from/informed by the fundamental principles indicated in the Introduction.

Transport and the Economy

- A modern and efficient transport system is a key requirement for a successful economy and our policies must ensure that business and commerce, both internal and international, are supported by top quality transport infrastructure.
- To implement our policies will require (as well as organisation, prioritising and promotion) increased State subsidy for transport infrastructure and services for the common good.

Integration of Planning and Transport

- Good planning is crucial to achieving a transport system which meets the needs of the population. When considering new developments, the ease with which efficient public transport can be provided to service the area must be a central consideration.
- The National Transport Agency (NTA) will oversee public transport regulation and the co-ordination of the transport agencies such as the NRA, RPA, Irish ports and Irish Rail. We believe the NTA must be able to influence land use planning and that the strategic direction in this regard should be set by new elected regional authorities, as outlined in the Green Party Local Government policy.
- The Green Party would change the recently introduced property tax to a Site Value Tax in order that increases in the value of land near transport modes would primarily benefit the local authority rather than large land owners and developers. This would encourage better planning decisions in the future.
- We believe that physical infrastructure such as roads, rail lines, airports, city bus stations and port facilities must remain in public ownership – but we are open to the involvement of private operators in the provision of transport services where appropriate.

Buses

- Bus services will continue to provide the main transport connections within our cities and throughout the country.
- We would initiate an independent review of all bus routes to ensure that the best possible service is provided. We welcome initiatives such as Dublin Bus's Network Direct project, but we believe a more wide-ranging review will yield further improvements. We welcome the involvement of private bus operators who are serving routes not previously operated by CIE.

- We will introduce orbital routes which facilitate movement between suburbs. These will complement the existing radial routes which serve town centres.
- We will expand Quality Bus Corridors and introduce Bus Rapid Transit.
- We will continue to increase the amount of priority given to buses in our road space. We will continue the simplification, automation and integration of ticketing and fare structures to make bus usage more convenient and enjoyable.

Rail

- We favour greater investment in rail infrastructure as it is a more environmentally friendly and efficient alternative to road and air transport.
- We would give priority to the completion of the Kildare Route Project Phase 2, and the Navan Railway Line (extension from M3 Parkway station to Navan).
- Following the completion of the Kildare Route Project Phase 2, we would give priority to the Interconnector (DART Underground) between Spencer dock and Inchcore.
- We would keep open the proposed route of the Metro North from St. Stephen's Green to Swords if a viable case can be made for its construction.
- We will encourage greater use of rail freight through greater investment and policy.
- The Luas in Dublin should be extended to Finglas and light rail introduced in other cities.
- We advocate restoration of neglected station buildings, provision of better station facilities for travellers, more Park and Ride and designation of principal stations as transport hubs linking with buses.

Roads and Motor Vehicles

- Investment in public transport should be at least at the same level as that on roads and ultimately more should be spent on public transport than on roads.
- Spending on roads should only be considered when it meets safety, environmental and maintenance criteria. Spending on urban roads should facilitate the development of pedestrian and cyclist friendly town and city centres. Limited funds should be spent on interurban roads to ensure they are properly maintained and safe
- We strongly support the structuring of motor taxation measures (VRT, Motor Tax, Fuel Duty and Road Pricing) to encourage reduced emissions and lower fossil fuel usage. We will

encourage the greater use of taxis and of alternative energies – especially renewable energy where its energy return on energy invested (EROEI) ratio is better than 5:1. We will encourage the use of electric cars which will be powered by the increasing amounts of renewable energy which are coming on stream.

Cycling and Walking

- The Green Party will deliver on the commitments in the National Cycling Framework (Dept. of Transport, 2009). This includes a target of 10% commuting by bike by 2020 and requires radical action to be achieved by then. In 2011, only 2.3% of commuters cycled to work.
- To encourage cycling and walking, a multi-stranded approach is required encompassing safety, legislation, enforcement, training, infrastructure and promotion.

Sea Transport

- While more energy efficient than air, sea transport contributes significantly to air pollution and has no carbon control measures in place. The Green Party will lobby in Brussels for the inclusion of the shipping sector in either the Emissions Trading System or the Effort Sharing Decision and will work with the UK and France to declare all waters surrounding Ireland to be a Sulphur Emissions Control Area (SECA).
- We will increase the volume of ferry usage for passenger traffic by improving transport links to ports and making time-tables more convenient for users of the various modes of transport

Air Transport

- Air transport is the most climate intensive mode of transport and is responsible for 5% of all historic greenhouse gas damage to our planet. Ironically it benefits from zero taxes and various forms of state aids and subsidies. The Green Party will continue to lobby for the imposition of taxes and the removal of subsidies and will also lobby for the inclusion of air travel in the Emissions Trading Scheme.

Policy

1.1. Introduction

The Green Party's transport policy is based on green principles. Climate change presents us with the challenge of diminishing the amount of greenhouse gases going into the atmosphere. Transport is responsible for 30% of emissions outside the Emissions Trading Scheme. Under the EU's Climate and Energy Package, Ireland is required by 2020 to achieve a 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions outside the Emissions Trading Scheme, relative to 2005. However, the Environmental Protection Agency estimated in April 2013 that Ireland will exceed its 2020 target of 37.5 Megatonnes of CO₂ equivalent by 5 – 8 Megatonnes of CO₂ equivalent. Emissions from transport will contribute significantly to this overshoot. Transport emissions, rather than falling, are expected to increase over the period 2011 – 2020, by 12% to 22% - depending on the level of policy implementation achieved.¹

The peaking in oil supply will have, and is having, the biggest effect on transport in Ireland and in the world. In 2005-2006 conventional oil peaked, causing oil prices to rise sharply and triggering the 2008 financial collapse. This price rise also enabled unconventional oil to come on stream (tar sands, shale oil, deep water); these are expensive and have very little energy return on energy invested (EROEI); they also are heavily polluting and emit larger amounts of CO₂. These new sources of oil are expected to reduce in quantity in the next few years due to new fields being too expensive to drill profitably and the existing fields depleting. This will cause price rises and a plateau of oil production, followed by production reducing.

The earth is also faced with other diminishing resources, all of which requires that we find the most efficient use of energy sources. Hence our policy emphasises the use of public transport, which generally uses less energy than individual car transport, as well as walking and cycling, which have minimal energy consumption and pollution. The use of rail by freight reduces wear and tear on the roads. There must be incentives for the use of cars which are smaller, use less fuel, and have less emissions. In a society which needs to be sustainable, it is dubious to invest in motorway and airport plans which assume continual growth in traffic.

We seek a city life not dominated by cars. Commuting needs to be quick, and cities should not be developed in ways which cause long commuting journeys: therefore transport strategy needs to be linked with planning strategy so that increasing numbers of people live within a short distance from their work, or can commute to it quickly.

Our commitment to social justice means that we must pay particular attention to the fact that not everyone in our society can afford a private car, and children and many people with disabilities are also excluded. Social cohesion is also helped by the availability of public transport for activities not connected with work. We are committed to taking decisions at the lowest effective level, and therefore a role must be taken by regional and local authorities in decisions on transport.

¹ <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/air/airemissions/irelandsgreenhousegasemissionsprojections2012-2030.html>

For these reasons, green thinking is that over time the unnecessary movement of people and goods should be diminished. Where practicable, walking or cycling should have preference over mechanised transport; sharing of mechanised transport (e.g. public transport, car sharing) should have preference over individual usage; and sea transport should preference over air.

1.2. Transport and the Economy

1.2.1. Economic

An inefficient transport system costs us all. Traffic congestion, poor public transport and uneven provision of infrastructure all increase labour and transport costs, make it harder to do business, reduce Ireland's economic competitiveness and are a disincentive to investment.

Cycling, walking and public transport are all more efficient than everybody drive their own car. The Green Party will promote these sustainable and cost effective forms of transport. This would have other benefits too: a reduction of diseases such as stress-related and asthma will help relieve our straining health system, and increased productivity will boost the economy.

The unit cost (per passenger or tonne of freight) of what the Green Party advocates for rail travel and freight would be reduced by the increased volume that would ensue. The shortfall can be bridged by a medium-term rather than short-term approach, including gradually raising State subsidy (including of freight) to a level on a par with the several countries who attach due importance to public transport.

We favour:

- Subsidising uneconomic rail lines to encourage usage until they become more viable,
- Revision of fare structures to increase rail travel, and consequently overall revenue, such as by pricing single fares at little more than half return fares,
- A congestion charge for cars in cities.

Ireland has a globalised economy. Future economic health will depend on our ability to access international markets and provide attractive living and working environments with good public transport systems. The Green Party will deliver these.

1.2.2. Taxation

We advocate a gradual increase in carbon tax to encourage, *inter alia*, a shift from individual cars to public transport. At the same time, a meaningful proportion of the resultant increase in revenue should be used to support the changes it is intended to encourage.

The rates for excise duty and VAT on fuel for cars should be raised to balance the loss from less car usage.

1.2.3. Other Aspects

Other economic and taxation aspects of our transport policies are mentioned elsewhere in this document, notably in Sub-Section 7.1 and Section 12.

1.3. The Role of the State in Transport Provision

1.3.1. Generally

The primary role of the State in transport provision is to legislate, regulate and fund, where required, a sustainable transport system for the social, environmental and economic benefit of its people.

The National Transport Authority (NTA) will oversee the provision of public transport under the strategic direction of the Minister for Transport. This includes the relationship between transport and land use planning, public transport regulation, transport design standards, and co-ordination between transport agencies such as the NRA, RPA, Irish ports and Irish Rail. The NTA will work with both private and public transport operators with the objective of getting cooperation in working together to bring about a sustainable and efficient transport system.

It is vital that the NTA is able to influence land use planning to support transport investments. We believe that the strategic direction in this regard should be set by new elected regional authorities, as outlined in the Green Party Local Government policy. Regional and Local Authorities – in Dublin, the Dublin Regional Authority – will be the lead bodies for strategic planning of transport; the NTA will co-ordinate these plans across regional boundaries.

The Green Party will continue to develop the *Transport for Ireland* website along the same lines as the highly successful *Transport Direct* Website in Britain in aiding everyday passengers in putting together public transport routes.

1.3.2. Investment Priorities

All Infrastructure investment carried out by the state, whether in partnership or otherwise, brings with it a cost. Over a consistent period, public transport investment has shown itself to be much more cost effective both in terms of its initial construction costs per kilometre as against comparable motorway projects, and in terms of its multiple benefits such as lower traffic congestion and shorter commuting times, as well as reduced energy use and emissions output.

Owing to the reality that cars and public transport are fundamentally in competition for the same passengers, and that the motorways linking Dublin with the major cities are now complete, we will direct future capital investment toward public transport projects, consistent with our vision for a greener Ireland.

We would cancel further construction of the Atlantic Road Corridor linking Waterford with Letterkenny, and invest the savings in road safety improvements and public transport along the corridor and elsewhere, a more detailed analysis of which is contained further in this policy [Is it?]. We would re-examine all other road projects planned from a public transport perspective.

1.3.3. Integration of Transport Services

The creation of the independent Public Transport Regulator within the National Transport Authority will continue to allow for greater integration between inter-urban and local transport services. Improved scheduling on regional rail lines will also work toward increasing passenger numbers.

The Regulator will ensure proper connectivity between the different modes of public transport whether public or private, fair competition and the creation of a national web of public transport services.

Inter-urban bus services play an important role in Ireland. Where possible we would ensure that both public and private companies use a central bus station for inter-urban routes and should be located along side other public transport modes. An examination of the future use and viability of Busaras will prove crucial to this.

1.3.4. Planning and Transport

The Green Party would amend the property tax installed by the current coalition government to one of a Site Value Tax, whereby any increase in the value of land near transportation nodes should primarily benefit the local authority, as distinct from Central Government, and its community, rather than large land owners and property developers. We believe this is crucial in moving away from our country's legacy problems in planning & transport.

In General, the Green Party advocates closer integration between the concepts of spatial planning and transport provision, and will examine if any changes are necessary in government departments to deliver this goal.

We would arrange for brown-field sites to be designated as Sustainable Transport Zones where they satisfy certain criteria. Where feasible, we would give preference to such Zones for grant-aid for business start-ups over building industrial estates near motorway junctions (where there is little or no alternative to travelling to work by car).

The Green Party, in principle, is not opposed to the use of Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) in the development of new transport infrastructure. However, PPPs have presented various problems in past use, including the present tolling fiasco on the inter-urban motorways. Direct exchequer spending or other state borrowing mechanisms are preferable means of building, operating and maintaining strategically important infrastructure. Care must be taken to ensure that planning, construction and operational risks involved in any PPP project are fairly distributed in line with the likely costs and rewards.

We believe that physical infrastructure such as roads, rail lines, airports, city bus stations and port facilities must remain in public ownership, but we are open to the involvement of private operators in the provision of transport services where appropriate. In this sense, a scheme of tendering to provide the service rather than tendering for the infrastructure would be the most appropriate system to overcome the issue of cherry picking profitable routes. This is a vital component in ensuring the long-term viability of the state's transport services, while also providing for ample competition. We will further advance the presence of companies involved in rail freight operations on our network.

1.4. Buses

1.4.1. Context

Bus services will continue to provide the main transport connections between and within many of Ireland's towns and cities.

1.4.2. General

The *Network Direct* project undertaken by Dublin Bus has been successful in creating more effective, useful and reliable services in those areas that have been targeted, including 'clock-face' departure times and stop-specific departure times. Timetabling of routes is being redesigned to allow for more efficient connection between different parts of the city and not just between the suburbs and the centre. We would carry out a rationalisation of bus depots with a view to construct the proposed Grange Castle Bus Depot. This will improve existing routes in west Dublin and help create new bus links north and south of the Liffey. We would also examine the provision of urban bus services from an earlier commencement of 5am to a later finish of Midnight.

1.4.3. Routes

We would initiate an independent review into bus routes to ensure that the most wide-ranging, direct, frequent and cost effective services are provided, thus:

- The area currently served by Dublin Bus
- The areas currently served by Bus Éireann. In this regard:
 - Bus Éireann services are focussed too heavily on connecting a dozen bus stations across the country with each other and their peripheral towns, rather than connecting small and medium-size towns in their own right.
 - All towns of nominally 5,000 or more residents should be provided with a bus service linking the principal parts of the town to each other, rather than being a commuter service through the middle of the town.

City and large town suburbs are served by radial routes from their centres with few cross-routes. We will introduce orbital routes to increase the connectivity and efficiency of suburbs.

1.4.4. Carbon Emission

We will encourage the introduction of hybrid buses on inter-urban routes and emission-free buses in town and city centres. Further, we will look into the viability of fuelling fleets with biogas from anaerobic digestion using brown waste.

1.4.5. Priority of Buses

We would increase the priority of buses on roads (thereby reducing journey times for passengers and giving greater turnaround of buses, the latter permitting more frequent services and/or reduction in the number of buses required), in Dublin and the Provinces, by:

- Expanding the Quality Bus Corridor network,
- Constructing Bus Rapid Transit (the provision of high quality, dedicated bus corridors that combine the efficiency and reliability of light rail with the lower infrastructural costs of those for buses) on the less dense commuter routes,
- Priority traffic signalling for buses.

1.4.6. Ticketing and Fare Structure

Consistent with the previous sub-Section Priority of Buses (previous sub-section), we will implement measures to reduce time-consuming interaction between passengers and drivers at individual stops and increase efficiency of the bus network by:

- Facilitating further pre-purchasing of tickets, including the reinstatement of the discount
- For bulk purchase of tickets (in addition to the pre-paid commuter tickets that are already available).
- Introducing a flat fare for Dublin Bus one-off tickets, with Advanced tickets & Leap Card being proportionally cheaper. (Multiple layers of fares make travelling on Dublin Bus complex for irregular users and create administrative inefficiencies, holding up drivers and causing extra work for inspectors. It has caused particular problems for the Leap Card system, which has not benefitted the Dublin Bus system as it has the other modes of transport in the Capital.)
- Facilitating interchanging between the different modes of public transport and helping people to change without incurring another fare. We would examine a fare system that was based on your final destination rather than the number of interchanges, which would help people who were not on direct routes.

1.4.7. Bus Stop Facilities

We would improve bus stop locations by:

- Increasing the number of bus shelters and locating them for the convenience of passengers (for example, not where the criterion is advertising revenue from mainly motorists, rather where they are needed for passengers).
- Making bus shelters more vandal-proof.
- Adding CCTV cameras to real-time passenger information signs.

1.4.8. Rural Bus Transport

At Present, Bus Éireann services are focussed too heavily on connecting a dozen Bus stations across the country with each other and their peripheral towns, rather than connecting small and medium-size towns in their own right. In light of Ireland's unique spatial development, this limited vision of bus public transport is a serious impediment to the development of a truly all-inclusive bus service.

We would integrate (without reduction in service) the budgets for public school bus services and for public funded rural transport schemes into the main route structure of Bus Éireann, opening bus services to a wide range of people, as well as creating a more efficient way of spending that budget.

1.4.9. Bus Services in a Liberalised Market

Private buses are filling some of the gap between demand and what CIE provides. With better licensing, regulation and co-operation between public and private, more passengers could be carried whether by satisfying underlying demand and partly by attracting more passengers to public from private motorised transport. We aim to enable this. In so doing, we would, for certain services such as Dublin and the main provincial routes, invite tenders from CIE and private operators for the routes concerned. Private operators would operate use CIE livery. The CIE subsidiary should be a standard bearer to which other operators should be required to match or better, while still participating in a level playing field.

1.4.10. Coach Stations

There is a need to open the nation's coach stations to private operators to provide improved customer services and better connectivity to other transports modes. The stations need to be run independent of service providers.

1.5. Railways and Light Rail

1.5.1. Generally

Our Objective

Our objective is to facilitate travelling by rail as an available, convenient, speedy, comfortable and financially attractive alternative to road and air transport.

Park and Ride

Now is the time to select land for park-and-ride sites, zone them as such and purchase them (compulsorily) before they are used for other purposes and before the cost rises with the market.

Where park-and-ride facilities are not fully utilised, we would reduce the parking fee to encourage greater use. Where they are fully utilised, we would require local authorities to make it attractive to park near railway stations by designation of space for rail travellers and/or reduction of parking fees. Weekly and monthly ticked holders should be allowed a discount in parking charge; combined park-and-ride tickets should be made available.

Station Buildings

Railway Station buildings are mostly old and of architectural merit; only a small proportion of those are protected structures. The buildings have in general been neglected and provide little comfort for weary travellers. We advocate (i) restoring the buildings to their former condition and their future proper maintenance, (ii) the more worthy of them not already designated as protected structures being so designated, as befits their heritage and (iii) better facilities being provided for travellers.

The foregoing should considerably narrow the unwarranted large gap between the standard and status of railway and airport buildings.

Spin-offs from implementing our policy on buildings would be its value to tourism and to the towns themselves.

Heritage (Other than Buildings)

We would encourage continuing support of the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland (an all-Ireland body) in its work in both preservation of our railway heritage and bringing the past to the public through excursions and exhibitions.

1.5.2. Mainline and Provincial Passenger Rail

Lines, Routes and Services

The construction of suburban railway stations (such as Oranmore in Galway) have reduced the need for users to travel into city centre stations in order to catch the mainline train, significantly reducing door-to-door travel times. We would explore further possibilities for such stations.

Limerick city is served by four rail lines but little or no commuting rail services. We would create such new commuting services and introduce new stations in the city to enhance the demand for such a service. In particular, the construction of a new ‘Limerick Greenway’ station as a second major city station would make access to intercity and commuter services less time-consuming for current and potential passengers.

We support the completion of the Western Rail Corridor by consolidating the reopened section from Limerick to Galway as part of a direct Cork to Galway route, and the completion of the Phases onward to Tuam and Sligo. An upgrade of the Waterford-Limerick line could then link Waterford into this corridor directly. We will also reduce the level of services halting at Craughwell and Ardahan stations to speed up the Inter-City journey time. (See also under “Rail Freight” below.)

We would provide for faster and more frequent inter-urban trains by investing in signalling and track improvement. We support the current scheme that is adding two lines, with partial electrification, from Heuston to Kildare to separate fast and slow services .

We would seek to work with the Northern Ireland Executive, in liaison with the Green Party, to explore possibilities for expanding the rail network to facilitate cross-border travel by rail, such as (a) Dublin-Newry-Portadown-Omagh-Strabane-Derry and (b) Sligo-Derry, thereby working towards an all-Island rail grid.

Stations as Transport Hubs

Bus Services provide an excellent linkage with Railway stations in terms of meeting objectives of opening up the access to Public Transport. Where feasible, Rail Stations should be designated as transport hubs in many of our cities and towns, interchanging with other forms of public transport modes.

Trains and Coaches

We would ensure that every mainline train has an adequate bicycle storage facility and a clearly designated “quiet coach“.

We would promote the provision of privately owned or hired self-contained carriages to offer non-standard services, which could be fitted out by the private firm.

Time-tabling

For the convenience of the public and to promote rail travel we would require that timetabling of ferry and rail services is rational and efficient. We will work with the public transport providers in creating best outcomes, beyond timetabling, in terms of ticketing and tourist-oriented packages. This includes better promotion of ‘Sail Rail’.

1.5.3. Dublin Commuter Passenger Rail

The Kildare Route Project Phase 2 and the Navan Railway Line (extension from M3 Parkway station to Navan) have been deferred through insufficient finance. We would give priority to their completion when resources permit. The former will enable more frequent mainline trains and faster journeys for them.

Following the completion of the Kildare Route Project Phase 2, our priority for the Dublin commuter system is the building of the Interconnector (DART Underground) between Spencer Dock and Inchicore. This would integrate into the DART system the Arrow service on the Maynooth and M3 Parkway/Navan line and Kildare Route services from Hazelhatch. It would provide interchange to the Luas at Heuston, St Stephen's Green, Connolly and Broombridge. It would also provide access to the city centre at Christ Church and St Stephen's Green.

We would keep open the proposed route of the Metro North from St Stephen's Green to Swords for construction if a viable case can be made in the future.

1.5.4. Light Rail

Dublin

We welcome the work underway to connect the two existing Luas lines in the city centre via College Green and O'Connell Street, continuing the line north to Parnell Square to the old Broadstone rail line serving the new DIT campus at Grangegorman en-route to the Maynooth Rail Line at Broombridge. We would extend this rail line from Broombridge to Finglas.

We would keep alive the possibility of a light rail line beside or near to the M50, as it would enable motorists to park and ride to the City or between suburbs and provide access to industries along the motorway.

Cork

A light rail service, linking the bus & rail stations, as well as the city centre, UCC, the University Hospital & CIT must be planned and allowed for as part of any redevelopment of the Cork Docklands. Any such development would rapidly increase the population of that area of the city and would need to be provided for by advanced levels of public transport.

Limerick, Galway and Waterford

We will commission a study into the viability of Luas / BRT lines for the cities of Limerick, Galway and Waterford, also a (light rail) link to Shannon Airport off the existing Limerick/Ennis railway.

1.5.5. Rail Freight

Transporting freight by rail is cleaner, safer and will reduce the volume of heavy goods vehicles on Irish roads.

To encourage more goods to be transported by rail, the Green Party will continue to prioritise the development of the Western Rail Corridor as the key capital investment necessary to grow the volume of rail freight, allowing more rapid transport on existing freight routes such as Ballina-Waterford, and to create the potential for Claremorris to become a rail freight hub through its interface points with Galway, Sligo, Cork and Dublin, and beyond to the ports of Arklow, Rosslare, Belfast and Warrenpoint. (See also under “Mainline and Provincial Passenger Rail” above.)

We will arrange for some of the future investment in ports to be in Rosslare and Waterford as alternative ports to Dublin for container traffic. This will have the dual benefits of promoting balanced regional development and helping towards the viability of the rail lines near these ports.

We support government moves to open up freight services to competition, in the interests of efficiency.

We will arrange for funding for the building of railway spurs into industrial estates, where appropriate and proximate to rail routes, and prioritise the further development of those industrial areas nearest existing and planned railway lines.

We will oppose any plans by the Port of Cork to expand their existing port at Ringaskiddy. Our long-term vision for Cork is that any further expansion uses the existing Marino Point facilities on the Cobh-Cork Rail line and, for Waterford, or the under-capacity Belview Port rail facilities. Both feed into the national rail network and will aid the further development of rail freight.

We will promote the inclusion of goods carriage(s) and/or a goods compartment on passenger trains to enable the use of fast rail for lightweight/compact goods.

1.6. Roads and Motor Vehicles

1.6.1. Financial Context

In 2005 the total capital expenditure on roads was €1800m while the same figure for public transport was €426m, meaning for every €1 spent on public transport, €4 was spent on roads.

Over the course of our time in Government, the Green Party sought to reverse that ratio. We achieved a 1:3 Ratio in 2009, a 1:2 Ratio in 2010, and reached parity between levels of spending in 2011. We believe that future governments should attain parity in their spending on public transport and roads and strive towards increased investment in public transport ahead of expenditure on roads.

Spending should be continued on roads only when it meets the following criteria; that it meets maintenance, safety, and environmental objectives, for all road users. New Road Building should only be considered when it meets all these criteria, and can't be realised through the existing road network.

1.6.2. Urban Roads

We will create pedestrian-friendly town and city centres by:

- Reducing urban car parking spaces, and prohibiting free parking, while increasing investment in public transport and the promotion of car-sharing (including the harmonization of the various bodies promoting it)
- Moving car parking spaces progressively toward the outskirts of towns and cities to encourage the use of other modes of transport for the final legs of journeys, in the areas where congestion tends to be the highest.
- Providing shorter pedestrian waiting periods at traffic lights and prioritise traffic light cycles for pedestrians
- Encouraging night deliveries to reduce to the volume of traffic on city streets during daytime
- Examine 'Shared Space'², which is about the concept of residents, business owners and professionals as users deciding how the space is designated, as the appropriate development model for Urban Roads
- Restrict access to city centres by HGV's, at least during the day, and mandate distributors to use smaller vehicles; out-of-town marshalling yards would be needed to transfer goods between vehicles. This is standard practice in German cities ³.

1.6.3. Interurban Roads

The Green Party will provide for environmental and safety gains rather than new road capacity by:

- Upgrading and maintaining existing roads where necessary, to minimise their environmental impact,
- Standardising design of road type, junctions and signage to improve road safety,
- Amending cost-benefit analysis procedures so that the full social and environmental costs of road traffic are included.

Local Authorities should designate large sections of the country as 'HGV access only' zones to combat 'rat-runs' or dangerous short-cuts. Vehicles over 7.5 tonnes should only be allowed on minor roads for pick-up or delivery rather than transit where there is no alternative route.

1.6.4. Motorway Service Stations

We will re-examine the planned Motorway Service Stations and their positioning.

² <http://www.shared-space.org/>

³ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/bike-blog/2010/nov/18/hgv-city-ban-to-protect-cyclists>

An ideal service station would be half way between both ends of the motorway and not one near each end. Furthermore, future stations should be built at existing junctions; thus maximizing the use of the investment in those junctions, as well as being safer to road users who don't have to deal with more points of merging traffic, causing less land expense and being aesthetically better.

Provided they meet key criteria of instant access, and the availability of a minimum level and standard of fuel and food sales, and rest facilities; the NRA should integrate the already existing but officially unrecognised service stations, such as those at Cashel and The Heath, into the national signage network for these roads.

1.6.5. Speed Limits

In places throughout the country, speed limits are either too low, too high or inconsistent for similar situations. They should be reassessed nationally and procedures put in place for their revision where appropriate. In any situation, the real speed limit is what is safe at the time, which may well be less than the defined maximum; more publicity should be given to this. (See also sub-Section 8.2, second paragraph.)

1.6.6. Road Signage

Except on motorways, where international standards are followed, road signage - both in urban and rural areas – is often absent, misleading or inconsistent. We would commission a national strategy for road signage, to be followed by implementation.

1.7. The Tax System and Private Vehicles

1.7.1. General

Vehicle Taxation will remain a necessity in order to meet the demands of continued road maintenance and providing for investment in alternative public transport.

In 2009 & 2010 over 80% of new car purchases were in the most energy efficient 'A' & 'B' brackets.

We will work to continue to develop a multi-faceted approach to vehicle taxation, mindful of the multiple objectives in achieving a more efficient car stock, including reducing our dependence on costly oil imports, tackling climate change, traffic congestion and urban sprawl, as well as reducing noise and air pollution and promoting public transport alternatives.

1.7.2. Vehicle Registration Tax

Vehicle Registration Tax should first and foremost disincentivise the purchase of new vehicles, except in replacement of significantly older vehicles and reward the purchase of smaller vehicles & engines.

1.7.3. Motor Tax

Motor Tax, by contrast, must incentivise the purchase of low emission vehicles, creating a greener fleet on our roads. We will progressively lower the CO2 bands for vehicles, cognisant of the wider range of more efficient cars now available. As part of this reform, we will reduce the Band A Limit to 100g/km CO2 and introduce a new B band for the next cleanest cars. We will also restore the incentive difference between bands that was lessened by the 2012 Budget.

1.7.4. Fuel Duty

Fuel Duty is vital for the funding of State oil reserves, which are crucial to maintaining supply during probable global shortages. They are also crucial in protecting the economy from unpredictable price fluctuations.

1.7.5. Road Pricing

The Green Party will create a system that progressively shifts the emphasis of road tolling toward being a traffic management tool rather than a form of revenue generation.

One of the legacies of the Celtic Tiger years has been that, at present, toll booths are located without any logic from a transport perspective and where massive windfall profits accrue to private toll operators. The Inter-Urban Road Tolls, for instance, have a 30-Year concessionary period. We will phase out the current physical tolling booths over the remainder of this period with free-flowing electronic operations to allow for variable road pricing on a national basis.

The Green Party would replace the current single-point tolling system on the M50 with variable tolls on access routes. The Present system treats those using the motorway in the quietest period of the day the same as someone using it during a time of heavy traffic volume. Such a system is not fair or sensible.

Road pricing would not apply if the road was free from congestion but would apply at peak times, when it was necessary to deter travel to ensure consistent journey times, and would be similarly valued according to the length of the motorway used.

1.8. Reducing Car Dependency

In order to end the car-culture that has brought us our current transport chaos, much must be done in terms of improving planning and increasing investment in alternative transport modes, as we have outlined. It is also necessary to decouple the relationship between car use and car ownership. The Green Party will Adopt the approach to VRT specified above, as well as encouraging the growth of ["City" deleted] Car Clubs, by providing road space in cities and large towns for such enterprises to be established.

A valuable addition to generally-available transport can also be made by maximising use of private cars through car-pooling and car-sharing schemes.

1.9. Energy Alternatives

1.9.1. Electricity

Electric Vehicles provide exciting possibilities for the Irish context, set against increasingly successful green party-introduced targets to increase the share of electricity generated by renewable energy to 40% by 2020. Recharging of electric vehicles provides an excellent means of maintaining consistent demand on the national grid, in line with the consistent output of renewable energy sources, as most recharging would occur at night, when demand from elsewhere would be less.

The Green Party will work to expand electric vehicles as a share of the private vehicle fleet. We will preference the rollout of electric vehicles in areas such as public service vehicles (maintenance crew, ambulances etc.) and company vans, where they do not compete with methods of public transport. We will work alongside local authorities, businesses, and statutory organisations to achieve this.

1.9.2. Bio Fuels

There may be a limited use for bio fuels in transport, bearing in mind that the energy return on energy invested (EROEI) needs to be greater than 5:1 (many bio fuels such as ethanol take more energy to produce than the fuel emits). With oil production peaking and food production being heavily reliant on oil, land use should be prioritised for food production over bio fuels.

1.9.3. Other Alternatives

When reviewing policies from time to time, we will consider the current situation in respect of alternative fuels, such as natural gas and hydrogen, taking into account relevance, carbon emissions, availability and the market.

1.10. Taxis

1.10.1. Taxi Ranks

The lack of space at popular ranks in our cities result in large numbers of cruising taxis, thus increasing congestion, increasing pollution and making the taxi service more inefficient and less predictable. Aside from profound environmental concerns, this system does not operate in the interests of either producer or consumer.

Local Authorities should lease taxi spaces and kerbside space to taxi companies and co-operatives at rates similar to the expected revenue were these spaces to be used for private parking. These permanent spaces will permit the taxi operators to advertise their services, to publicise any advantages their service may offer, and differentiate themselves from the competition. The location of large ranks can be sign-posted, either by the Local Authority or by the taxi firms and the number of ranks can be greatly expanded as the Local Authority will not lose further revenue by providing them.

1.10.2. Taxis as Public Transport

There are real opportunities for taxis to make a greater contribution to public transport by means of shared use. This can include transporting groups from housing estates to public transport nodes or the workplace, by providing school transport, by providing links between residential areas and housing estates and by expanding the services offered to hospitals, clinics and social service customers.

Taxis can provide a viable and immediate alternative to car, and particularly second car use if the operators have the flexibility to agree terms with their customers. Operators have great potential to benefit from an assured and regular income from providing these services in addition to established taxi services.

1.11. Cycling

1.11.1. General

Cycling gives society multiple proven benefits⁴. Amongst them are high energy efficiency, very low pollution, healthier lifestyles and low cost to the user. At a time of financial constraints, the Green Party emphasises the very high financial returns to society from cycling investment. Creating a calmer road environment and reducing dependency on cars also improves the quality of life in urban areas and saves lives.

A key aim of Green Party Transport Policy is to deliver the commitments made in the existing National Cycling Policy Framework (Dept. of Transport, 2009). The Green Party is concerned that the vision behind the NCPF is in danger of being lost by the current government. The target of 10% commuting by bike by 2020 will not be met without radical action. In 2011, only 2.3% of commuters cycled to work⁵. 67% travelled to work by car, including passengers. This volume of motorised traffic creates congestion and has a negative impact on our urban environment and on our health. Notably, the NCPF places the reduction of motorised traffic in urban areas at the top of its “Hierarchy of Measures” for developing a strong cycling culture.

To encourage cycling a multi-stranded approach is required. Cycling has to be positioned as a safe, convenient and attractive alternative to transport by car and this will take legal, infrastructural and cultural change.

1.11.2. Legislation, Enforcement and Training

Traffic legislation needs to be revised to further protect the safety of more vulnerable road users. Ireland should introduce a 'hierarchy of care' system similar to that in Scandinavia, Germany and the Netherlands, which gives motorists a greater legal responsibility for the safety of vulnerable road users.

⁴ www.cyclist.ie/fact-sheets: The Benefits of Cycling

⁵ cso.ie, 2012, Statistical Yearbook

The introduction of 30 km/h speed limits should be accelerated in urban centres, residential areas and where cyclists are at increased risk due to issues e.g. large junctions. Councils should retain the right to introduce 30km/h limits wherever they are deemed desirable. Special attention must be devoted to reconsidering speed limits in all places where cyclists are brought onto the roads, such as by cycle paths, cycle networks and greenways (see sub-Section 8.5, fourth paragraph).

Developing zones in town and city centres free of motorised traffic assists the development of cycling.

Where removal of all traffic is not feasible, restrictions can be placed on goods delivery times and on heavy goods vehicles, which feature prominently in cyclist accidents. This policy has been successful in Dublin city centre.

The Regulations should state the requirement for drivers to yield to cyclists if crossing cycle lanes or cycle tracks, and allow drivers to cross solid white carriageway marking lines if overtaking cyclists or pedestrians. Minimum passing distance needs to be specified for overtaking cyclists and pedestrians based on speed. A general clearance of 1.5 metres should become standard and should feature in driver training. Cycle lanes should be in operation 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with no parking or standing allowed at any time.

The Green Party/Comhaontas Glas supports a change in Road Traffic legislation to allow cyclists, in certain situations, to pass a red traffic signal, but to give way to any pedestrian or vehicle which is already crossing the junction, as is the case in France.^{[1][2]} These situations would include signal controlled pedestrian crossings, left turns, or junctions where there is no traffic entering or leaving from the left. A suitable road sign will be placed below the traffic lights to identify such junctions.

Enforcement of existing traffic regulations on motorists and cyclists is inadequate. Greater Garda effectiveness in this regard is needed, particularly in urban areas. A Garda bike-theft unit to reduce bike theft should be considered, along with awareness-raising on locking bikes and provision of appropriate facilities for locking bikes.

Knowledge of the rights and needs of cyclists must be a requirement for obtaining a driving licence. Defensive driving must be central to driver training and testing, including for HGV drivers. Many cyclists are also ignorant of the law and lack basic bike handling and traffic skills. Cycle training should be part of primary education. This must include training in traffic skills. Adult cycle training courses should be supported by the state.

Bicycle safety requires both enforcement, to ensure that bicycles comply with legal standards, and incentives to encourage the use of better and safer equipment. Irish law should require that bicycles should be sold equipped with lights and bell (with the exception of racing and sports bikes). A reduction in Value Added Tax for essential equipment, such as bicycle lights and locks, clothing, reflective belts, protective rain clothing and replacement parts, should be examined.

1.11.3. Safer Infrastructure

Infrastructure should be designed with reduction of the risk to the most vulnerable group as the starting point. Large, complex, high capacity and high speed junctions often place cyclists in danger. 75 per cent of cycle accidents occur at junctions. In Ireland, the most serious cyclist accidents involve left-turning vehicles.

Filter lanes and slip roads should be redesigned to reduce the danger to cyclists. Roundabouts, when necessary, must be designed with the cyclists in mind. Existing roundabouts should be assessed from the perspective of cyclist safety and the junction redesigned if required.

Junctions must be designed so that cyclists do not lose priority or end up on the wrong part of the road. There must be no cycle lanes on the inside of left-only turning lanes. The junction design should ensure that cyclists are visible to motorists. It is positive to see advanced-stop-lines being introduced. This feature allows the cyclists to move ahead to a more visible position and ahead of left-turning traffic. Specific bicycle-traffic signal phases should be considered to assist bicycles to progress through junctions, including flashing orange left turns for cyclists.

Traffic-calming measures should be cyclist-friendly, such as ramps and barriers that can be by-passed by cyclists. Pinch-points, for example, squeeze cyclists into conflict situations with motor vehicles. Pinch-points, where necessary, should provide cyclist by-passes.

Road space should be taken to allow combined bus and cycle lanes to have a width of at least 4.5 m. Where this is not possible, they should be 3.0 m wide with vehicles prohibited from overtaking.

Factors inhibiting children from cycling to school should be tackled. In particular, segregated cycle ways should be considered. To avoid junction conflict, it is imperative that segregated facilities be designed with safety in mind, providing right of way for cyclists across side-roads. Cycling facilities should link residential areas with schools. Dual direction, traffic protected cycle tracks of ample width should be considered, especially where cyclists are faced with one-way streets.

The quality of road surfaces is of particular importance to cyclists and hence cycle lane/track maintenance must become a normal part of road maintenance. Existing cycling facilities which are unsafe, e.g. too narrow or uneven, should be improved or removed. New lanes/tracks should conform to the National Cycle Manual.

1.11.4. Convenience

Shorter travel times and flexibility are key advantages of cycling. Access policies, which local authorities are now initiating, provide new paths and short-cuts and these should take account of the needs of cyclists as well as pedestrians. One-way streets should be re-evaluated and more contra-flow lanes should be introduced.

The combination of bicycle and public transport benefits of both, by increasing the distance range for cyclists and making public transport more accessible, reducing the need for cars, and providing

more flexibility. Transport companies must be encouraged to promote integrated multimodal transport. Bicycle carriage on Bus Éireann buses should be introduced and inter-city and commuter train facilities upgraded. Secure cycle parking, including bike lockers, is essential at rail and bus stations; currently this is inadequate and bicycle theft is rampant. The Green Party demands better cooperation between public transport companies and the Gardai in combating bike theft.

The Dublin Bikes Scheme has been successful at integrating transport options, with some 40% of those using the scheme combining their journey with other public transport modes. We welcome plans to extend this scheme. All City Councils in Ireland should be mandated and supported to establish similar bike schemes in their administrative areas where viable. There must be safe and clearly signposted access routes for bicycles to train stations, airports and ports. Bicycle hire services at train and bus stations and airports should be encouraged.

1.11.5. Promotion

Promotion campaigns make a real impact in creating a cycle-friendly society. It is important to look at examples of successful initiatives internationally. The Green Party requires the promotion of cycling as an intelligent lifestyle choice, with an enhanced image, that offers a better experience.

Given the remarkable benefits of a strong cycling culture, it is vital to focus on the positive aspects of cycling, such as health, freedom, convenience, sociability, affordability and, for the wider Irish society, very high return on investment. Cycling promotion requires a joint effort by government departments including transport, tourism, sport, health, children, education and environment.

Further incentives should be given to encourage companies and institutions to install bicycle parking at their existing premises and provide showers. Employers should be encouraged to appoint a commuter representative to stimulate fresh thinking about commuting choices.

Cycle tourism is an under-valued asset in Ireland as shown by the success of the Great Western Greenway. The Green Party will promote greenway (including along disused railways) projects and the development of a National Cycle Network, including the inter-city cycle corridor network being developed by the National Roads Authority.

1.12. Walking

Walking is environmentally friendly and improves quality of life. It should be seen as an integral part of public health policy and, in that respect, highly cost-effective. We would encourage walking by:

- Development of a National Walkway Policy with provision of safe pedestrian routes linked, where appropriate, with public transport services, including in amenity areas such as along canals,
- Wider and better maintained footpaths; treatment of footpaths (not just roads) against freezing conditions,

- Improved facilities and greater priority for pedestrians at road crossings,
- Separation of cycle-ways from pedestrian-ways with better signage and, where feasible, raised kerbs, and
- Seeking enforcement of the law against cycling on footpaths.

1.13. Transport for Third Level Institutes

The recent growth in the size and population of third level institutes has resulted in an increase in car usage by students. Future plans by third level institutes should include commuter plans that prioritise non-car modes of travel over car usage. Such plans would include park-and-ride facilities, car pooling, and 'safe routes' from student villages and within campuses. We would promote better public transport serving the institutes.

1.14. Sea Transport

1.14.1. Generally

Shipping plays a vital role in connecting Ireland with the world. Most goods are transported to and from Ireland by ship. While shipping is substantially more energy efficient than aircraft, it contributes significantly to air pollution and has no carbon control measures in place.

1.14.2. Passenger Traffic

The Green Party will undertake to ensure reliable links by public transport from our population centres to our ferry ports; ensure that travelling abroad by surface modes continues to be free from tax and promote, through marketing campaigns, the benefits of surface travel (especially including the Sail-Rail link to the UK).

Improvements can be made now to encourage international surface passenger transport. These include:

- moving the shuttle bus terminus for Dublin Port closer to the Eden/Aston quay termini, and providing this bus at no cost to travellers,
- ensure the scheduling of a rail departure from Dublin to connect with each departure from Rosslare Europort,
- improvement of passenger facilities at Rosslare, particularly with regard to shelter and lighting,

- require ferry companies to provide an equivalent bus service if a late ferry causes passengers to miss the scheduled rail and/or bus services,
- coordinate public transport routes with rail operators in Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland, England and France to allow through ticketing on international services,
- work in partnership with First Great Western rail to create a direct rail service from Pembroke/Fishguard to London, coordinated with ferry times, as an extension to their existing service from London to South Wales, and
- Further necessary steps for the integration of train timetables across the Irish Sea include the reinstatement of 'Irish Mail' service with late evening departure from Euston connecting with night boat from Holyhead; and the establishment of the Stranraer to Birmingham/London sleeper.

1.14.3. Freight Traffic and the Green Economy

The Green Party will support EU legislation to require ferries at berth to be powered from on-shore energy with renewable sources. We will ensure that port fees are differentiated on the basis of environmental performance e.g. those ships with the after-treatment technology that reduces air pollution will receive a discount on their port fees.

We would act on the recommendations of the recent Irish Maritime Development Office Report by designating the three ports of Dublin, Cork and Shannon-Foynes as priority ports to meet the demands of the offshore renewables sector. This designation is in keeping with the development of these three regions as the primary entry points to the Irish Economy by Air, Sea, Road and Rail.⁶ Ports are important interfaces between two or more different transportation modes. The Dublin Port Tunnel, Waterford Bypass and N28 Cork Road Project have involved large investment in infrastructure and as such the three ports they serve should be prioritised for growth to most effectively utilise this investment. Investment in our ports will make Ireland more attractive as a base for exporting businesses.

The Green Party would encourage the development of LoLo (lift on lift off –i.e. container ships) facilities in place of more Carbon Intensive RoRo (roll on roll off – i.e. trucks) structures. LoLo also offers better interface possibilities with Rail Freight and is cheaper to operate. The cost factor creates a real potential to offer a better deal to Irish exporters, especially for longer-distance shipping.

The Green Party will keep the valuable Irish port infrastructure as a publicly owned resource. However, the Green Party is open to tendering (with certain safeguards) on operations, management, etc. of the Irish port infrastructure to ensure that maximum efficiency and the highest possible quality is maintained.

⁶ <http://www.imdo.ie/NR/rdonlyres/5ABD1D19-223B-4F2A-9506-15B860496AF0/0/IMDOIPORESReport.pdf>

The Green Party will lobby in Brussels for the inclusion of the shipping sector in either the Emissions Trading System or the Effort Sharing Decision. It is currently the only sector of the EU economy that is not included in any carbon regulation. In the meantime, the Green Party will support the proposed 'Monitoring, Reporting and Verification' legislation on the shipping sector's CO2 at EU level.

Shipping contributes 23% of the NOx pollution and 20% of the SOx pollution in Ireland. This pollution comes in the form of small particles that adversely affect human health, causing 50,000 premature deaths across Europe each year. There are agreements at EU level on Sulphur Emission Control Areas (SECAs) but Ireland did not enter into these, allowing ships to use fuel with a much higher sulphur content in Irish waters than in other Northern European waters, adversely affecting the health of Irish citizens. The Green Party will actively work with the UK and France to declare all waters surrounding Ireland to be a SECA. The Green Party will also support moves to reduce NOx pollution from shipping at a European level.

1.15. Air Travel

We recognize the damage to the environment of air travel, in particular through Climate Change. It is the most climate intensive mode of transport and worldwide is responsible for 5% of all historical greenhouse gas effects. Meanwhile the industry receives massive subsidies by being tax-free (no fuel tax or VAT) and receives large amounts of State aid for infrastructure and operations at regional airports. In addition it must be noted that the vast majority of air travel is undertaken by those that are better off than the average citizen.

The Green Party will continue to lobby to remove these large subsidies the aviation sector receives and work to remove the EU ban on taxing aviation fuel and prohibition on VAT for international airline tickets.

The Green Party will look at avenues in this country to remove these subsidies as well, taking into account the situation in the UK which is the largest aviation market in Europe (responsible for about 25% of all EU aviation) and has the biggest departure tax in Europe. It is clear that this under-taxed sector has to do a lot more before it is paying for its pollution or making an appropriate contribution to the general budget.

The Green Party continue to support the inclusion of aviation in the EU Emissions Trading System and will ensure any suggested amendment to this scheme is environmentally effective.

The Government subsidy to internal flights under the Public Service Obligation was phased out during our term of office from its average of €140 per passenger in 2008. This subsidy only served to take away funds that could have been better targeted at Surface Transport. With the Inter-urban motorways complete, we will continue to focus in Government on facilitating rapid public transport, through rail and bus services, between the regions, to ensure the presence of a clean and efficient alternative to the internal flight.

The Green Party will lobby aggressively in Brussels for the immediate completion of the single, Europe-wide air traffic control system. The maintenance of dozens of separate air traffic control bodies that still operate on national lines wastes millions of tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere each year.

Replacing international business flights with videoconferencing would cut costs for businesses while significantly cutting emissions.

ENDS