



McCumiskey House, Richview | Clonskeagh Road
Dublin 14, D14 YR62

Phone: 01 2680180
Email: info@climatecouncil.ie

Minister Darragh O' Brien
Department of Transport
Leeson Lane
Dublin 2
D02 TR60
20th February 2026

minister@transport.gov.ie

[sent via email only]

Dear Minister O' Brien,

Re: Transport Policy and Congestion

Ireland's cities are growing increasingly congested resulting in huge levels of public frustration, increased transport emissions, significant loss of economic productivity and negative impacts on public health and quality of life for people stuck in prolonged traffic. For example, Dublin has recently been ranked as the third most congested city in Europe and 11th globally in 2025¹. The latest analysis of annual economic cost of congestion in the Greater Dublin Area was estimated at €336 million in 2022 and is projected to rise to over €1.5 billion by 2040². Furthermore, congestion can be responsible for an average of 34% of a vehicle's total carbon dioxide emissions observed in that study. The cost of congestion is also projected to rise in the regional cities of Cork, Galway and Waterford, with the forecast growth in cost particularly stark in the Galway Metropolitan Area where the cost of congestion is projected to rise from €35.3 million in 2022 to €106.9 million by 2040³. This increasing congestion is against a backdrop of challenging transport emissions and a growing probability that the sectoral emissions ceilings for neither the first nor second carbon budget periods will be achieved for the transport sector⁴. This

¹ [Dublin traffic report | TomTom Traffic Index](#)

² [The Economic Cost of Congestion in the Greater Dublin Area 2022-2040](#)

³ [Cost_of_Congestion_Regional_Cities_FINAL.pdf](#)

⁴ [CCAC-AR2025-Transport-final.pdf](#)

letter sets out advice to Government on immediate action required and investment needed to reduce transport emissions and alleviate congestion.

1. Shovel Ready Projects to Deliver Transport Oriented Development and the NDP

Behavioural science shows that it becomes increasingly difficult to change transportation behaviours once a habit is formed, particularly in the case of shifting to public transport. A key principle of both the Programme for Government and the National Development Plan is transport oriented development; ensuring sustainable transport is rolled out in tandem with housing and commercial development. Failure to provide public transport increases costs for homeowners and commuters, as well as increasing congestion and emissions.

In particular, the Council regrets any delay in the shovel ready Dart+ South West line and the Luas Finglas line which would increase public transport capacity to cater for a potential projected growth of over 27,000 homes in strategic housing developments in these areas⁵. Similarly, essential investment for new public transport infrastructure to address congestion and emissions have been identified in Galway and Cork (light railway for both) and further expansion of the Dublin Luas such as Luas Poolbeg and Luas Bray.

The Council strongly recommends that transport oriented development is implemented at the same time as housing development and that Government commits funding to these projects in Budget 2027.

2. Enhancing Park and Ride and local services to Cut Congestion

Park and ride infrastructure is a relatively quick and cost-effective measure to reduce emissions and alleviate congestion compared to other capital expenditure. It reduces the numbers of cars entering city streets by enabling drivers to switch to public transport at city entry points. The success of Park and Ride facilities is clearly evident by the recent additional investment in cities such as Oxford and Cambridge in the UK^{6,7}. An important feature of these successful Park and Ride initiatives is the low-cost to the user and ticket integration with public transport. The Council calls for the Bray Fassaroe Park and Ride to be operational before summer 2026, and for rapid roll-out of schemes at Lissenhall, Swords and Cappagh Park, Galway. Similar plans for park and ride infrastructure in the five cities⁸ should also be advanced along with sustained funding for their supporting

⁵ [The Core strategy and Settlement Strategy of the South Dublin County Development Plan](#) illustrates capacity for up to 27,562 units in Strategic Development Zones along the Dart+ SW line, which include Adamstown, Clonburris, Tallaght and West Rathcoole.

⁶ [Cambridge park & ride](#)

⁷ [What are the benefits of using Park&Ride?](#)

⁸ Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Waterford and Galway

services and associated fleet. Reliable and timely transport services to and from city centres would save commuters time and money, whilst also reducing emissions.

Similar quick turnaround opportunities exist to address congestion and emissions through further investment and roll-out of enhanced regional and local public transport services. The success of Local Link services across the country is testament to the role of innovative thinking, policy implementation and robust coordination and stakeholder engagement in addressing the challenges of delivering effective public transport.

3. Funding Priorities

Our cities are choking with congestion; our transport emissions are not reducing fast enough to meet our legally binding targets and the people of Ireland are growing increasingly frustrated with the ever-growing congestion and inadequate public transport options available to them. Expanding the road network is not the answer to alleviating congestion, as evidence shows that expanding road capacity actually induces growth in traffic volumes⁹. Increasing and improving public transport services is a more effective intervention for reducing congestion. Failure to deliver a modern, reliable and cost-effective public transport system does not meet national ambition, societal need or emissions reduction targets.

The Council is concerned at the limited funding for new public transport projects in Budget 2026. We strongly urge Government to increase investment in public transport and to maximise the eligible draw down of funding from the Infrastructure, Climate and Nature Fund by the Department of Transport going forward¹⁰.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further with your Department and remain available to meet with you at your convenience.

Yours sincerely,



Marie C. Donnelly

Chairperson

Climate Change Advisory Council

⁹ [Impact of Highway Capacity and Induced Travel on Passenger Vehicle Use and Greenhouse Gas Emissions](#)

¹⁰ [Expenditure Report Budget 2026 15_08_25](#)