



Maynooth Cycling Campaign  
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Maynooth  
Co Kildare

## Consultation on 30 km/h speed limits

Maynooth Cycling Campaign welcomes the consultation on introducing 30 km/h speed limits in residential estates throughout Kildare. **We strongly favour a default speed limit of 30 km/h in all residential estates, as well as in all areas of high pedestrian and cycle use.**

We believe there is a need for a fundamental shift in how road authorities manage traffic to enable pedestrians to use our roads and streets safely, to allow children to play outdoors, to cater people of all ages and abilities on bicycles in all age categories, and to allow people of all ages to walk to school, shops and friends and family. There is a need to ensure that drivers fully understand their responsibilities, and that Councils put in place necessary speed limits to slow traffic. Road traffic planning and provision for many years has been for the benefit of the motorist to the detriment of other road users including pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users, older and very young people, and those with disabilities.

### 30 km/h speed limits in residential estates and elsewhere

Maynooth Cycling Campaign favours the introduction of 30 km/h speed limits in all residential estates. Lower speeds reduce the potential for collisions and, importantly, reduce the severity of injury in the collisions that do occur. Reducing vehicle speeds to 30 km/h will make roads safer for everyone — children and adults (including the elderly, the infirm and the disabled), pedestrians, cyclists of all ages, and motorists.

Indeed, there is no need, demand nor ability to travel at 50 km/h or higher on many of those roads. As people only drive short distances on these roads and most of them are not through routes, the effect on journey times would be negligible.

In addition to improving safety, lower speed limits would encourage parents to allow their children to move about independently due to greater safety. This would benefit their fitness and general health, would contribute to combating the rising levels of obesity in our society, and would encourage greater social interaction. People are intimidated by fast-moving traffic and are more comfortable moving about in areas with lower speeds. The improved safety, and perception of safety, provided by lower speed limits can transform city streets and residential estates into more vibrant living spaces, providing a better living environment, with benefits for the quality of life of residents and visitors alike.

In Maynooth, we favour the introduction of 30 km/h speed limits in *all* residential areas. In addition, because of the heavy pedestrian traffic and lack of wide, separated footpaths and cycle paths on most of the other roads, most of these should also have a 30 km/h limit, leaving only the Meadowbrook Link Road and Straffan Road south of the Celbridge Road junction at 50 km/h. In effect, this means that 30 km/h would be the default speed limit within Maynooth.

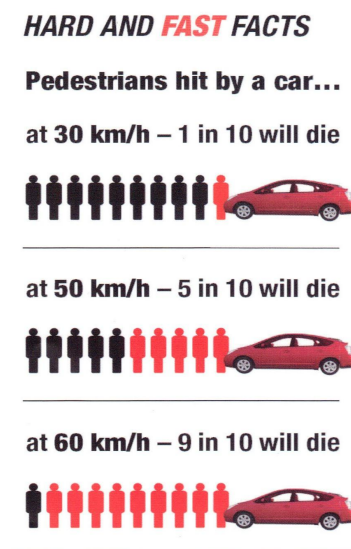
Without going into detail, we believe the same approach should be followed in all towns and villages in Kildare: 30 km/h in all residential areas, and following this, introducing 30 km/h also in the centres of towns and villages, and that periodic 30 km/h zones be implemented around all schools and other places of assembly (cinemas, theatres, community centre, religious buildings, etc.), that have large numbers of people arriving and / or departing at the same time.

## Other issues

We recognise that a speed limit reduction will not be successful in reducing speed and improving safety unless it is accompanied by improved enforcement and appropriate road design. We support the recommendation in the Design Manual for Urban Streets (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, together with the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2013), the official guidance policy for local authorities in relation to street design, that insofar as possible lower speed limits should be accompanied by psychological and physical measures to encourage observance. We are conscious that such measures will frequently be necessary to secure compliance with the provisions in the Guidelines for Setting and Managing Speed Limits in Ireland (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, 2015).

## Benefits of lower speed limits

Regarding personal safety, 30 km/h is fundamentally safer than 50 km/h for pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users. It is well established that lower impact speeds result in fewer and less severe injuries. The following image illustrates this:



Wherever 30 km/h has been introduced as the default speed limit, safety figures have improved, and there are fewer collisions and injuries. Throughout Europe, 30 km/h is fast becoming the default urban speed limit for cities, towns and villages. In some cities, speed limits as low as 10 km/h are in place in “home zones”.

However, speed reductions give, not only a safety dividend, but also a socio-economic dividend, which makes the urban space a nicer place to live. Lower speeds result in less noise and pollution and greater fuel efficiency (high fuel consumption is associated with stop-start traffic, not slow traffic). On residential roads and shopping streets, people simply don't want to be exposed to the noise, fumes and dangers from higher speed traffic. Experience elsewhere has been that the

introduction of 30 km/h urban speed limits leads to an increase in the number of people walking and cycling, and thus to healthier lives.

While 50 km/h is not particularly noisy or polluting in itself, the acceleration from stop to 50 km/h is much noisier and more polluting than the acceleration from stop to 30 km/h. Air pollution currently kills more than 1,000 per year in Ireland, primarily through asthma, cancers and other pulmonary illnesses. Reduced acceleration also means improved fuel economy and lower vehicle maintenance costs.

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport's Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) recommends that where cyclists and pedestrians are present in large numbers lower speed limits should be applied. It also recommends lower speed limits where vehicle movement priorities are low, such as on local streets.

By discouraging walking and cycling, higher speeds have wider implications for society in impairing social interaction on the street (causing isolation), effects on the balance of trade (from the import of vehicles and fuels), health issues from lack of exercise and exposure to pollution, and lack of passive supervision, allowing crime to go undetected. The objective of any safety measures should be more than to reduce the number of casualties, but also to empower vulnerable road users, especially children, disabled, and older people, so that they can be an active part of and avail of all of the facilities in their community and not be intimidated by traffic.

## Conclusion

Maynooth Cycling Campaign welcomes the opportunity to introduce more widespread 30 km/h zones in Kildare. We are disappointed that the consultation does not specifically extend to town and village centres and areas outside schools. We are also disappointed that no updates have been made on the [www.speedlimits.ie](http://www.speedlimits.ie) website.

We note that the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport circular of April 2015 required councils to complete the new speed limit implementation by May 2017, and assume that it is the Council's intention to do so.

In conclusion, we urge the Council to join other councils in Ireland and across the continent in reducing speed limits as soon as possible. This will be an appropriate legacy for Jake Brennan and other road victims.