

# SCOTLAND'S ALLIANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT



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**To: Scottish Government Transforming Planning**

By email to: scotplan@gov.scot

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Dear Sir/Madam

## **Transform Scotland submissions to NPF4 'Call for Ideas' consultation**

We are submitting two proposals for National Developments: '**National Inter-City Rail Network**' and '**Light Rail Networks in Scotland's Major Cities**'. We are also jointly submitting two further National Development proposals: the '**National Walking and Cycling Infrastructure**' with Ramblers Scotland and Cycling UK Scotland; and, a '**National Low-Carbon Freight Network**' with the Rail Freight Group. However, we would like to take the opportunity to include this covering letter in order to present an overarching view representing the diverse interest of our member organisations.

We require a national transport strategy linking developments at urban and rural level throughout Scotland into a cohesive whole. In light of the Climate Emergency and the government's goal of reaching carbon neutrality by 2030 in Scotland, creating an integrated, efficient and zero-carbon transport network is becoming increasingly urgent. The benefits to be derived from the proposals we suggest include: less congested, more attractive cities; a healthier population as a result of providing safe options for cycling and walking; a more efficient business environment because of improved inter-city rail and improved public transport offerings. We see two main elements within this overarching perspective: Better Cities & Better Links.

### **1. Better Cities:**

Our cities suffer from traffic congestion as a result of the car culture that has developed since the Second World War in the UK, which has led to excessive amounts of road space being allocated to motor traffic with little or no consideration to the more active, healthy and sustainable modes of travel. This congestion also leads to substantial economic costs due to, for example, lost time and unnecessary fuel consumption.

This trend also explains, in part, the high levels of obesity exhibited in the UK population and the low levels of walking and cycling, due to lack of the high-quality infrastructure available in many of our European neighbours. In order to address this imbalance, Transform Scotland proposes the following measures:

- i. The development of segregated cycle lanes in the busier routes into towns and cities in order to allow safe cycling by commuters, shoppers and school children. This is an element of the 'National Walking & Cycling Infrastructure' proposal.

We campaign for walking, cycling and public transport to be the easiest and most affordable options for everyone. Our diverse membership brings together public, private and third sector organisations from across Scotland. We are a registered Scottish charity (SC041516).

- ii. A much greater role for buses as the solution to congestion. Bus is often overlooked as part of the solution to tackling the Climate Emergency. Yet bus has an important role to play, especially in Scotland: to reduce emissions, improve lives and places — a key part of a vision for net-zero Scotland. Scotland makes buses, providing the world with leading technology and clean, green buses. It is also home to the headquarters of global bus operators and is well placed to demonstrate to the world how bus can be part of the solution. We will be publishing further work in this area later this year, and we would be happy to share our thinking with you here at a later date.
- iii. The funding of public transport improvements to allow commuters viable alternatives to car travel. Projects that would help in this respect could include the extensions of the Glasgow and Edinburgh light rail networks and to reintroduce light rail in Aberdeen and Dundee. This is an element of the 'Light Rail Networks in Scotland's Major Cities' proposal.

## 2. Better Links:

Investment is also required to provide more sustainable links between our cities and towns. Transform Scotland proposes the following measures:

- i. The ongoing development of the National Cycle Network to link our major cities and to interface with the cycle networks described in 1(i) above. This will provide a major boost to tourism as well as providing enhanced cycle commuter journey opportunities. This is another element of the 'National Cycling & Walking Infrastructure' proposal.
- ii. A major upgrade to the inter-city rail service between Scotland's cities. Significant reductions in journey times could be achieved by the provision of dual track at selected locations and the reinstatement of a direct link between Inverkeithing and Perth by way of Kinross. This forms our 'National Inter-City Rail Network' proposal.
- iii. Enhanced freight movement throughout Scotland and reduce the volume of HGVs on roads and, as consequences, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and congestion on busier roads. This is the focus of the 'National Low-Carbon Freight Network' proposal.

The aim of these combined proposals is the development of a greener Scotland with less traffic on our roads, both passenger and freight, as a result of modal shifts from car to public transport and walking/cycling, and more freight moving long distances by rail.

This will not only deliver benefits in terms of a healthier, more active, and fitter population but will also bring about more people-friendly cities with enhanced surroundings and more people on the move by active means rather than by private car.

The adverse impacts of the climate crisis are becoming more obvious by the year and the sooner Scotland moves to a less car dependent society that utilises more sustainable energy sources the better. While NPF3 aimed to deliver a greener, more integrated and more equal transport network, it did not lead to significant change in the field of transport: there has been no significant change in key transport indicators in the intervening six years, with no reductions in Scottish climate emissions. NPF4 must commit to the transformative changes in transport that Scotland requires in order to create a transport network that is fit for the future.

The current Coronavirus pandemic reinforces the need for changed priorities towards creating robust sustainable transport infrastructure that are outlined above. Given the economic damage that the pandemic will cause, we expect that there will be calls for spending on infrastructure projects to be brought forward. Given the ongoing Climate Emergency, we propose two imperative features of all new infrastructure spending. Firstly, all new capital expenditure should be zero-carbon — not least to correct the systematic bias towards high-carbon capex carried out by Transport Scotland over the past decade. Secondly, in order to maximise multiplier effect benefits for the Scottish economy, priority should be given to capital expenditure projects which have greater potential to be carried out by Scottish companies and Local Authorities, which applies to the proposals that we are putting forward.

In this crisis the public has shown it is willing to make huge changes if the need is demonstrated. It appears to be showing greater respect for expert scientific advice, and the Government itself has shown itself prepared to take the advice of health experts. This suggests an opportunity for the Scottish Government to lead the transition towards something more positive.

Yours faithfully,



Colin Howden  
Director, Transform Scotland