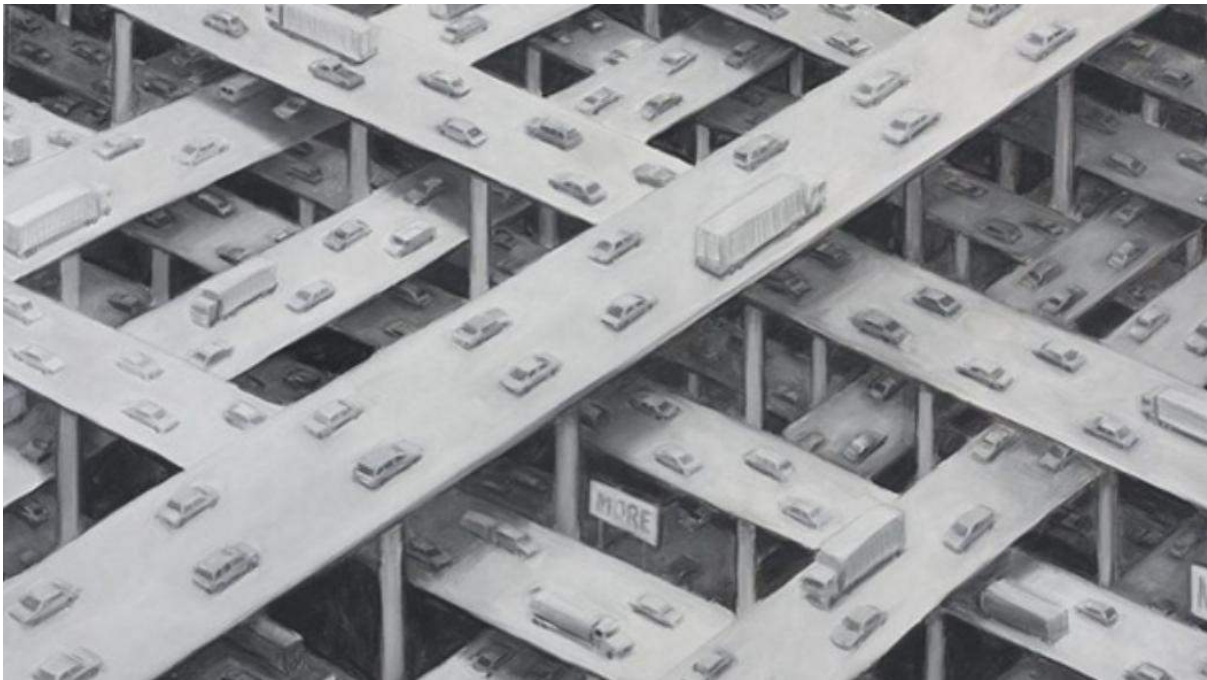


Ireland 2040

National Planning Framework Commentary



Ultimately, a large proportion of the planning issues Ireland is facing will be solved by the re-densification of our cities and towns and a deviation from the construction of abominable sprawling housing estates which have ruined our communities and natural environment, all for a cheap buck. It is paramount that our cities and towns become attractive places to live and work once again. Large portions of our urban areas are lying vacant, eliminating the sense of place and occasion that is necessary in order for urban areas to thrive. Reliance on cars as primary modes of transport is a mere excuse for solving the issue of moving people and it is leading to appalling total commute times of up to 2 or even 3 hours per day. Properly designed cycling infrastructure that connects important nodes in our towns and cities is relatively economical to build, and leads to drastic improvements in commute times, public health, general wellbeing, and it encourages spontaneous social interactions that are impossible in the automobile. The fact that Dublin and other Irish cities don't have an efficient and reasonably priced underground metro system is an absolute disgrace, especially when comparing it to the infrastructure enjoyed by far less developed countries.

While re-densifying our cities we must pay careful attention to walkability, the elimination of the car which will then allow for roads, streets and car parks to become extremely valuable pedestrianised public space. This space in turn can be used for cultural gatherings, sculpture galleries and an infinite number of other public amenities. Ensuring our shop fronts and city infrastructure are humanely scaled is imperative along with the careful planning of mix used developments and refurbishments of existing buildings, this will ensure a sense of local community which is lacking in our towns that are exponentially declining. Dense urban areas can be directly correlated to economic success. In summary, densification will lead to a stronger future Ireland.