

News Release

3rd June 2018

NI public demonstrate 'Waste of Space' on our roads - Road Share film urges Northern Ireland to tackle traffic congestion

(Embargo 04.06.18) Today, Sunday 3rd June, 105 volunteers, 90 cars, two buses, one Glider vehicle and 48 bicycles, gathered in Belfast City Centre to demonstrate the advantages of sustainable travel in a bid to combat congestion in towns and cities here.

Championed by Translink, The Department for Infrastructure, Belfast City Council and The Institution of Civil Engineers, a short 'Road Share' film and still images tell an important story about how transport choices impact the health*, well-being and overall prosperity of everyone in Northern Ireland.

As traffic congestion in NI continues to hit the headlines**, 'Road Share' succinctly illustrates and compares the typical space occupied in a city street by four common modes of transport - cars, buses, cycling and walking - transporting the equivalent number of people.

'Road Share' involved the closure of one of the most instantly recognisable and often congested roads in Belfast – Oxford Street. The project used 105 people, as this is the capacity of the new Glider vehicle; a striking new rapid transit system for Belfast starting service this September.

Speaking at the making of the film, **Translink Group Chief Executive Chris Conway, said:**

“Public Transport is well known for its many benefits in busy cities: improving air quality, well-being, saving money and reducing traffic. Equally, catching the bus or train can help save something that all cities desperately require more of - space.

“Today's Road Share exercise in Belfast very clearly demonstrates how moving large numbers of people by car around cities is not efficient, particularly during commuting times.

“On the eve of our third annual Bus + Train Week, we hope this short film and striking images will communicate a strong and clear message – space in our cities is limited and we all have a responsibility to share the road using more sustainable transport modes whenever possible.

“I would like to thank everyone involved today, for giving their time and support to help us tell this important transport story.”

Supporting the Road Share initiative, the **Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Nuala McAllister**, said:

“Belfast City Council is committed to the development of a sustainable city, and this includes the development of sustainable transport. The reduction of congestion, not only in the city centre but on our main arterial routes, is a priority, and can only be of benefit not only to the city and its economy, but also to the health and well-being of our citizens. I hope that the images and video generated by today’s exercise will highlight the role each and every one of us has in the development of Belfast as a truly accessible and healthy city of the future.”

Also speaking at the filming, **Moira Doherty, Director of Public Transport, Department for Infrastructure** said:

“The draft Programme for Government sets out a clear ambition to transform how we travel by increasing the number of people walking, cycling and using public transport.

“We know that encouraging more people to consider sustainable travel options will help to reduce congestion on our roads, protect the environment and, importantly, lead to improved physical and mental well-being. The Department is therefore pleased to support this innovative event which demonstrates very clearly the impact of the over reliance on private cars on our roads.

As we approach Bus and Train Week I would encourage people to leave the car at home and give the bus or train a go. If we all start to think about how we might shift some of our journeys from the car to public transport, walking or cycling we can help to drive economic growth and create healthier towns and cities for now and the future.”

‘Road Share’ also forms part of ‘Mobility Month – Connecting People and Opportunities’ during NI Year of Infrastructure [#Infra2018] co-ordinated by the Institution of Civil Engineers. The #Infra2018 campaign aims to show the public just how infrastructure impacts our lives, connecting and protecting, enabling investment and boosting overall quality of life.

-ENDS-

Notes to Editors

- Bus + Train Week will take place from 4 – 10 June 2018 and is a Northern Ireland-wide Translink campaign that celebrates public transport and its benefits to the community. Translink customers can enjoy discount travel tickets, exclusive partner offers, giveaways and competitions as well as a range of in-station activities. For full details visit www.translink.co.uk/busandtrainweek/ .

- *[MedicalExpress.com](https://www.medicalexpress.com) (22 May 2018) Report 'Ditching the car may reduce your risk of dying from heart disease and stroke by almost a third'.
- **INRIX Transport Report (February 2018): Congestion in Northern Ireland cost the economy here over £1billion last year and motorists in Belfast spent on average 21 hours stuck in rush hour traffic.
- A recent Bike Life Report also showed that a four metre-wide road lane can move 800-1100 people in cars per hour, compared to 5,000 -10,000 people on bikes. The most efficient use of road space is by bus which can move 8,000 – 12,000 passengers.
- Representing an investment of over £90 million, Glider is an Executive Flagship Project that supports the delivery of the draft Programme for Government and Belfast City Council's Belfast Agenda. Glider commuters will enjoy enhanced connectivity providing direct cross-city services between east and west Belfast, linking into Titanic Quarter. Find out more at www.translink.co.uk/gliderbelfast/

Journeys and more at www.translink.co.uk