



Down the line: Cllr John Ryan at the Dooradoyle crossing which could be part of a rapid rail link around the city. (LL)

'Ryan Line' could help city traffic dart around

By **DYMPHNA BRACKEN**

A RADICAL plan to deal with the 80,000 cars using the roads into the city every working day is being proposed by Cllr John Ryan.

He is suggesting a detailed rail link plan for the city, which, he claims, will lessen traffic congestion considerably.

He points out that a rail line already exists around the city's outskirts and this would provide a commuter service running every 15 minutes from Colbert Station to Moyross and serving the Tipperary Road (15,000 cars pr day); Norwood Park, the Parkway, Dublin Road, (27,000 cars per day) and Corbally (14,000 cars per day).

Another line would run from the station to Ballinacurra West-on, Ballinacurra Gardens, Dooradoyle (31,000 cars per day) and Mungret Dock Road (18,000 cars per day).

Cllr Ryan believes his rail link plan would ease the city traffic problems considerably.

"It would help keep pollution levels down and make the city centre more people friendly," he said.

A park and ride scheme would be put in place allowing commuters from outside the city to park near sub-stations and ride into the city centre.

The city is experiencing an average traffic growth rate of three per cent each year. The number of cars entering the city will double in the next 12 years.

Cllr Ryan points out that there have been 5,180 road accidents in

the city between 1988 and 1995.

"During this period, 29 people died in road accidents and 148 people were seriously injured," he said.

He claims that a doubling of the number of cars on the roads would contribute to an increase in road accidents.

The city has 15.3 kilometres of national primary roads; 2.13 km of national secondary roads; 144.8 km of local roads and 17.48 km of regional roads.

"There is a static road structure in the city, yet the number of cars are increasing. Traffic congestion, parking problems, traffic accidents and pollution are all increasing. A radical solution is needed and needed now," said Cllr Ryan.

"Rail lines exist covering 80 per cent of the city. It would not involve major capital expenditure to get sub-stations open on these lines and carparks provided in their vicinity.

"These rail lines are currently in good operational condition," he claimed.

"We have to take a long-term view of the problem facing us. Do we want gridlock in the city, or a city centre which is people friendly?" asked Cllr Ryan.

This week, the Corporation and County Council commenced their traffic study of the city with motorists being stopped and asked about their movements in and around the city.

Motorists will obviously be hoping that the results of this survey or maybe the "Ryan Line" will speed up traffic flow in and around the city in the near future.

She has suggested that the proposal for Limerick should include the tourist route from the city centre to King John's Castle.

For the move to go-ahead, a proposal would have to be put to the Department of Justice by local interests, said Sen O'Sullivan a Labour candidate in Limerick East in the next election.

In Dublin, Temple Bar properties spearheaded their project and provided matching funding with the Department of Justice, while, nearer to home, the Tralee Chamber of Commerce has initiated a CCTV scheme for the town, paid for half-in half by the Department and Tralee business people.

Since the system was introduced in Temple Bar, she said, the Garda have reported that vehicle theft in the area has practically ceased to be a problem and that petty crime has been greatly reduced.

While extra gardai and prison spaces will certainly help to take criminals off the streets, Sen O'Sullivan claimed that they have to go hand-in-hand with effective long-term solutions and preventive measures.

Modern technology in Garda stations, she pointed out, cuts down on time spent on desk work and waiting around in court resulting in more time for gardai to be engaged in protecting the community.

The Criminal Assets Bureau, she said, has also been effective in targeting major criminals and removing their "untouchable status".

"If we are to succeed in the long term in preventing young people from being tempted into a life of crime, we have to give better support to organisations that

"There are no simple solutions that will on their own eradicate crime but that prevention must operate side-by side with punishment," she stated.

Minister to unveil facilities at RTC

HIGH tech libraries and computer facilities costing £5.5 million will be unveiled by the Minister for Education, Niamh Breathnach, when she officially opens phase two at the Limerick RTC, this Friday.

The new facilities also include new architectural technology studios, classrooms and staff accommodation.

A total of £17 million has been invested in the college over the past four years in land purchases, construction and equipment.

Jeanette McDonnell, charwoman of the governing body, paid tribute to the Minister for helping transform what had been overcrowded conditions a few years ago.

"Our next target is to secure some £6 million to finish the new Moylish campus and to refurbish Clare Street in the inner city for use by the School of Art and Design. We have shown a good return on the investment to date and we are confident we will achieve our goal," said Ms McDonnell.

She said the government had identified skills shortages in the electronics, software and mechanical engineering areas.

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