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A Chara,

The Irish Planning Institute (IPI) welcomes the opportunity to participate in the review of the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA). This is a welcome opportunity to bring the GDA Transport Strategy up to date in light of Covid-19, the changing economic landscape, the growing imperatives of climate action and recent developments in planning policy. The Irish Planning Institute is the largest professional membership body for spatial planners operating on the island of Ireland. Some 900 IPI Members work right across the planning system – in planning consultancies, for developers, in Planning Authorities, semi-state organisations, An Bord Pleanála, and central government.

This submission will discuss the following points:

- Land Use Planning and Transport Planning Policy;
- Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan;
- Travel Patterns and Trends;
- The implications of a GDA Transport Strategy for Climate Action;
- Transport Infrastructure & Services Investment;
- Density & Transport Oriented Development;
- Multi-Modal;
- Technological Innovation;
- Permeability & Connectivity;
- Speed Limits.

Land-Use Planning & Transport Planning Policy

The Authority is undoubtedly aware that there have been significant legislative and policy developments in planning and spatial policy in recent years. Starting with a new national spatial plan – Project Ireland 2040, the National Planning Framework, and the subsequent Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies. Consideration of spatial planning policy must be integrated into the review of the Transport Strategy for the GDA as land-use and transport policies are inherently linked and mutually reinforcing. In this regard, it is welcomed that the NTA state that the upcoming Strategy will be consistent with the spatial planning policies and objectives set out in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) as adopted by the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly

(EMRA). The planning system is ideally placed to act as the coordinating forum to resolve the key challenges facing an integrated approach to transport and land use planning.

Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan

The Eastern Midland Regional Assembly Regional Spatial Economic Strategy contains the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) for Dublin City and its metropolitan hinterland. For the first time there is a holistic statutory plan for the wider Dublin Metropolitan Area. The MASP supports a target population of 1.65 million people, representing an additional 250,000 people in the metropolitan area by 2031. The MASP identifies a number of strategic development corridors comprising the city core and a number of radial linear public transport corridors that extend from the city core through the suburbs and into the broader hinterland. The urban development locations within the corridors are identified based on their capacities quantified and the enabling infrastructure requirements is phased for delivery in order to realise development potential. The strategic guidance set out in the MASP as part of the EMRA RSES must be adhered to in the preparation of the GDA Transport Strategy.

Travel Patterns & Trends

Covid-19 has profoundly impacted commuter travel patterns and trends within the GDA and prompted new remote working trends. This new trend is welcomed in terms of de-coupling dependency from daily commuting over long distances as well as reducing traffic congestion. The IPI foresees a continuation of the 'working from home' paradigm in some degree post Covid-19 which will reduce environmental impacts and assist in achieving climate action policy targets. Nonetheless, this positive trend could also result in living and travel patterns that become unsustainable. For example, policies supporting new housing in rural areas will give rise to increase car-based travel patterns. The IPI recommends careful monitoring and understanding of these potential impacts, followed by appropriate policy responses.

The implications of a GDA Transport Strategy for Climate Action

The Irish Planning Institute believes that a viable and sustainable transport strategy must make significant inroads into reducing the carbon footprint of the GDA, as transport is one of the main generators of Green House Gas Emissions. The IPI considers that the shift towards sustainable transport is a dynamic that needs to be significantly increased to mitigate against climate change and reduction of GHGs. This shift can also provide extensive mobility and accessibility to all services and support a dynamic, innovative economy.

In particular, the Institute strongly advocates for transport electrification to ensure a green sustainable future. The electrification of transport requires the integration of vehicles into a reliable and affordable as well as accessible infrastructure for the supply of energy. The electrification of transport is essential for meeting our 2019 Climate Action Plan targets and EU 2030 commitments, and this must be reflected in the review.

Transport Infrastructure & Services Investment

The National Planning Framework and the current review of the National Development Plan point towards a clear political and capital investment commitment to prioritising sustainable transport projects. The fact that there is sufficient investment available at present, to maintain infrastructure and services at a steady rate, and certainly to forward-fund significant new capital and operational requirements, poses a substantial opportunity for major new development imperatives and sustainable spatial development in the GDA. In this regard, prioritisation should be given to key public transport and accessibility projects that can have a transformational impact upon the sustainable development of the GDA.

Density & Transport Oriented Development

In line with the National Planning Framework, density is an important policy instrument that has the potential to achieve a compact urban form. Dispersed transport patterns pose substantial challenges in providing efficient and effective public transport services or suitable active travel networks, leading to a greater dependence on private car usage. Critical mass is required to sustain any mode of transport. Investment in a particular mode of transportation is only of benefit where it can be demonstrated that its usage will also increase. In this regard, a density gradient near public transport nodes is required; both low and high-density development is needed, but high-density development should always be nearer to public transport nodes. Transport-oriented development is key and should be applied to future development to develop a symbiotic relationship between dense, compact urban form and public transport existing and planned.

Multi-Modal

The IPI suggests consideration must be given to the 'first mile' and 'last mile' before and after public transport use and making this more active travel-friendly to encourage a modal shift. There is an opportunity to provide for multi-modal transport solutions through spatial planning by planning good interchange facilities. In line with this, there needs to be substantial development of sustainable and comprehensive public transport networks. Cycling and walking must be encouraged through greater integration, accessibility, connectivity, priority and permeability of these facilities.

Technological Innovation

The IPI supports policy evolving to reflect changes in technology innovation and the NTA harnessing technology to maximise the existing system's potential. In particular, several innovations may shape public transport in the future, including; Mobility as a Service (MaaS). There is a need for policy to explore and support opportunities to deliver technological innovation.

Permeability & Connectivity

Permeability and connectivity are essential factors in urban road traffic design to promote active travel usage. Temporary mobility measures introduced during Covid-19 have positively impacted the quality of the public realm in the GDA. These measures may lead to permanent changes in the public realm design and act as a catalyst for additional interventions. The IPI believes that there should be a greater focus on retrofitting the existing urban environment to enhance connectivity and permeability. All new developments should provide for optimum levels of connectivity and permeability, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists, through smart design.

Speed Limits

Within urban areas, the IPI strongly advocates for a default speed limit of 30 km/h with exceptions to be granted in specific areas on a case-by-case basis. Dozens of European cities have already introduced 30 km/h speed limits to protect pedestrians, cyclists and vulnerable road users. Research demonstrates that the introduction of 30km/h speed limits can improve both road safety and air quality. The adoption of a default speed limit of 30km/h in urban areas is necessary to enable pedestrians and cyclists of all ages to use roads and streets safely.

The IPI strongly recommends that Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) guidelines are appropriately cross-referenced and reinforced in future policy where appropriate, as this will ensure road design, road safety, permeability and connectivity are effectively addressed.

The Irish Planning Institute appreciates the opportunity to give its views on the public consultation on the revision of the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area. If the Institute can be of any further assistance to this important initiative, please do not hesitate to contact us and we look forward to having an opportunity to comment on further publications.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Norton'.

Dr Conor Norton MIPI

President 2020 - 2021

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