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The Senior Planner,
Planning Policy Unit,
Cork County Council,
Floor 13,
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Cork

5th May 2015

Re: Proposed Amendments to the Midleton Electoral Area Local Area Plan 2011

Dear Sir,

In respect of the proposed amendments and associated documents, the National Transport Authority (the Authority) has the following comments to make, for the Council's consideration.

Overall view

The Authority supports the consolidation of Metropolitan Area-generated population and employment growth within Cork City/ environs and settlements within certain corridors where it can be demonstrated that the associated development supports the basis for investment in improved and better connected public transport services over time, thus allowing for a reduction in car dependency as further growth occurs.

As it is considered that the prioritisation of development and development consolidation within the Key Development Areas and Metropolitan Growth Towns on the City Centre to Midleton corridor can support this objective, the Authority would support in principle, the development objectives underpinning the proposed amendments.

To put the above comments in context, they are guided by the following principles in guiding the location of future development at the strategic (Metropolitan Area) level and in the prioritisation of development locations and planning for development at the local level:

- A transition to higher development densities within each development centre and along defined strategic public transport corridors to allow for a reduction in trip lengths and provide a stronger demand for higher frequency public transport services over time;
- A transition to more consolidated development forms of development supporting alternative forms of travel to the private car;
- A strong presumption in favour of walking and cycling for local trips within each settlement centre;
- A strong presumption in favour of public transport and cycling for trips within and between development centres;

- A stronger correlation between development density, population/ employment intensity and centrality within the Metropolitan Area in general and within each settlement centre in turn;
- A stronger emphasis on sequential expansion, focused on the most central parts of the Metropolitan Area (City/environs, defined 'district' centres and Metropolitan Growth Towns within defined strategic public transport corridors; and
- A movement away from discrete single-use development areas towards mixed use development formats.

Water Rock and Carrigtwohill Masterplans

The provision for substantial further population growth in these areas should be contingent on the following:

- As both masterplan areas form part of a series of settlements and employment clusters along a strategic road and rail corridor, both the management of general traffic, including the prioritisation of future public transport services needs to be planned for on the basis of anticipated future trip demand patterns within the corridor as a whole and an examination of public transport route patterns and service options which bring service patterns and demand patterns into the closest possible alignment. Of particular importance will be the promotion of public transport accessibility to Little Island, Cork City Centre, UCC, CIT and other significant destinations within the Cork Metropolitan Area;
- The provision of good connectivity by bus, walking and cycling modes, between new development areas and existing local destinations - such as schools, town/village centres and rail stations and bus-based public transport services;
- The provision of high levels of permeability within and between new development areas which facilitate the operation of bus services through these areas, at an early stage in their development, with an emphasis on legibility, accessibility and travel-time reliability;
- Provision of connectivity, particularly by walking, cycling and public transport, between the subject masterplan lands and other zoned development lands within the settlement boundaries;
- The application of development densities that will generate demand for higher frequency public transport services through the consolidation of that demand within effective walking distance of planned public transport infrastructure. It needs to be demonstrated that the densities proposed in the masterplan studies, facilitate this objective;
- The facilitation of greater integration between transport modes, including bus and rail service integration and accessibility to park & ride at rail stations which minimises impact on non-car modes;
- Traffic management around local facilities and settlements centres to support the effectiveness of public transport, walking and cycling.

Comments on Amendment No.2: *Water Rock X-01, Carrigtwohill X-01*

Water Rock - 1.4.28; Carrigtwohill – 1.4.45

Reference is made to all other required road infrastructure improvement, being the responsibility of the NRA, NTA and the developers. The Authority currently manages the Department of Transport's funding of Sustainable Transport projects within the Cork Metropolitan Area. The current 5 year transport investment programme includes projects primarily with Cork City and the Douglas area. However, the Authority has limited scope for additional investment other than what is currently provided for, but would nonetheless welcome the opportunity to discuss the Council's proposals for the development of sustainable transport infrastructure and public transport services in both Carrigtwohill and Midleton.

Water Rock - 1.4.28; Carrigtwohill - 1.2.32

Reference is made to Cork County Council, the NTA and Irish Rail being responsible for the preparation of a Metropolitan Cork Suburban Rail Network Study.

At this time, the Authority is not currently committed to the preparation of a Metropolitan Rail Network Study (with the other stakeholders mentioned) and to date, no terms of reference for such a study have been discussed or agreed the Authority. The Authority would welcome the opportunity to discuss this proposal with the local authority and Irish Rail. The outcome of any such study should inform specific interventions or investment commitments referenced in the local area plan, including service patterns/ service frequency improvements, the provision of/ prioritisation of additional stations, determination of station locations, contingent transport demand/ mode split/ trip patterns, or integration with other modes.

Given the strong focus, evident in both masterplan areas on the rail station nodes and the use of rail as a means of achieving modal shift to public transport over time, the determination of certain aspects of the masterplans, including, development phasing and provision any additional stations ought to be informed by proposed study.

I trust the Authority's views will be taken into consideration in the finalisation of the proposed amendments.

Yours sincerely,



Michael Mac Aree
Head of Planning