

DTO Advice Note

Retail and Leisure Development

DUBLIN TRANSPORTATION OFFICE
Feb 2003

PREAMBLE

DTO Advice Notes – what and why are they?

The DTO Advice Notes are intended as guidance for Local Authorities and others involved in land use planning and development in the Greater Dublin Area. The need for additional guidance on integrated land use and transport policy was identified in A Platform for Change and is being provided in the Advice Notes. They set out the DTO approach to various issues within land use and transportation planning. The Advice Notes are not issued as a *fait accompli*, but will be updated and revised based on feedback received, new experience and knowledge. The DTO Advice Notes are not Government Guidelines, have no statutory basis and are not policy statements. The Advice Notes set out what the DTO considers to be current best practice.

In its role as a prescribed body, the DTO monitors planning applications, appeals and development plan policies in the GDA where these are likely to impact significantly upon DTO Strategy. The Advice Notes set out in an easily accessible form DTO attitudes towards various land use and transportation issues which have been expressed by the DTO in various reports on planning applications, appeals and development plans. The Advice Notes will be available to Local Authorities, consultants or any other interested parties, and will help to consolidate DTO opinion on a topic-by-topic basis. It is intended that they will be updated and augmented over time, and build into a volume or set of notes helping towards the implementation of the DTO Strategy.

The Advice Notes are written to encourage debate and formulation of new opinions and attitudes to integration of land use and transportation, which will help to further the objectives of the Strategic Planning Guidelines and Platform for Change. They are issued as a catalyst for discussion and dissemination of information relevant to the sustainable development of the GDA.

DTO Advice Note:

Retail and Leisure Development

Retail and leisure uses can be implemented so as to play a central role in sustainable urban development, by reducing reliance on the private car, improving residential areas and encouraging increased levels of walking, cycling and use of public transport. The retail and leisure sectors can only achieve such aims if they are supported by strong policies on urban containment and high densities for all categories of land use. **The Retail Planning Guidelines for Local Authorities (2000)** recognise and emphasise the importance of accessibility of retail facilities for all sections of society, and which is of a scale to allow the continued prosperity of traditional town centres and existing retail centres. Throughout the Guidelines, the importance of access and transport in relation to the location of retail and leisure facilities is detailed. Emphasis is placed on reducing reliance on the private car, and facilitating access by public transport and other modes.



Existing situation

Historically, land use planning for retail and leisure facilities has promoted car access as the primary mode in the design, scale and layout of such facilities. The outcome of such an approach is that retail and leisure uses are dispersed and often not associated with existing town/local centres. Such

developments assume car access, and in most instances, actively inhibit pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users in their layout, design, scale and location. Permitting retail and leisure development of this type is unsustainable environmentally and socially, and does not accord with current Government policy.¹ Some consequences of such patterns of development are:

- Retail and leisure developments are currently significant generators of car based travel
- The catchment population for retail and leisure developments are currently determined in terms of estimated drive times
- Access to retail and leisure facilities has implications in terms of social equity. The development of out-of-town or edge-of-centre car based facilities can be exclusive of non-car owners, elderly, disabled and young people. This type of centre is also unsustainable by promoting increased levels of energy consumption and consequent production of emissions
- Retail and leisure facilities have become increasingly dispersed and disassociated from existing local and neighbourhood centres. The preponderance of regional and district centres which are car based has limited choice by other modes of transport.
- The provision of dispersed retail and leisure facilities hinders

¹ DoE (1997) Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland
 DoE (2000) National Climate Change Strategy
 DoE (2000) Retail Planning Guidelines
 DoE (1999) Residential Density Guidelines
 DTO (2001) A Platform for Change

opportunities for linked or multi-purpose trips by public transport, walking and cycling.

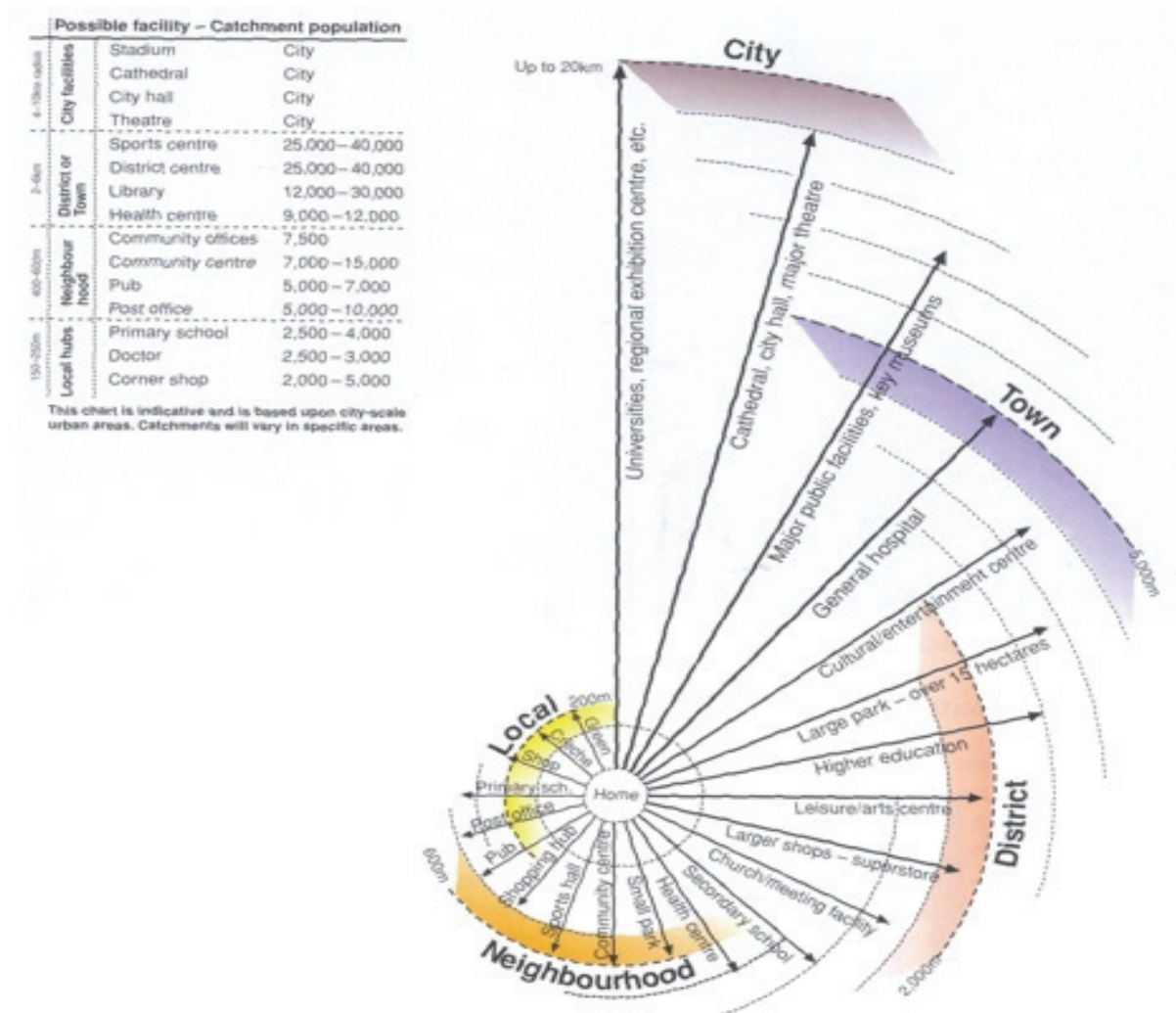
Proposed alternative

The DTO Strategy to 2016 states that development that generates a high volume of trips should be located in public transport corridors and not on strategic road corridors. It is also recommended that appropriate development is concentrated at the local level, and seeks to maximise the use of walking and cycling as key transportation modes while providing a high quality environment. This implies that land use patterns should be promoted which encourage the following:

- Neighbourhood centres well served by public transport
- Detailed layouts and design of developments which reflects the importance of walking and cycling as transportation modes by providing safe and direct access to local services (e.g. retailing, schools, employment and leisure) and public transport nodes
- Increased density close to public transport nodes
- Mixed use developments

The location of parking should not compromise policies aimed at concentration of development at a local level. Neither should it inhibit movement priority for pedestrians and cyclists.





In terms of defining the retail hierarchy more clearly, a move away from classifications on the basis of floor area and goods sold could be considered.

It may be more appropriate to think of purchasing goods in terms of the mode of transport to which those goods are most suited.

In assessing retail and leisure development proposals, the DTO recommend that the following criteria apply:

- **Determination of accessibility for any retail or**

- **leisure development should not be on the presumption of car based access. The use of travel time surveys should in the first instance be based on access by public transport to determine the appropriate catchment area. Walk times and access for bicycles must also be included in determination of catchment area.**

- **Retail and leisure developments should be linked with other land uses (such as residential, employment, education etc) by public transport to facilitate multi-purpose journeys**
- **The Platform for Change proposes a 'hub and spoke' transportation system. Within this system, the 'town' and 'district' centres will be the focus of local transport services. The viability of local transport services will depend on identification of appropriate catchment populations to support them.**
- **The impact assessment for retail and leisure developments should demonstrate how the local transportation network links with the wider strategic transport network. Such an approach is in accordance with DTO Strategy that it will be possible to make almost all journeys on the public transport network with just one interchange.**

Included in the appendix are two examples of catchment definition and access requirements for shopping and leisure. An example of catchment definition for education and employment is also included as an indication of opportunities to plan for mixed uses which allow for multi-purpose trips.

Notwithstanding the above, the demands of modern life have led

to the necessity for a large percentage of the population to bulk buy convenience goods on a weekly basis. While recognising that consumer's needs must be met by this type of retail facility in the short to medium term, the following caveats apply:

- **Retailing should not be located at motorway/ national road junctions**
- **Public transport, including taxis, must be an option for access**
- **Pedestrian and cycle access must be facilitated, particularly to local shops**
- **Parking charges should be used to achieve these objectives**
- **Parking charges should be used as a tool in the management of demand for car use**
- **Income generated from car parking should endeavour to be used to fund the provision of sustainable modes (e.g. by way of Mobility Management Plans)**
- **It is imperative that the mobility difficulties of MID² groups are taken into consideration in the layout and design of all new retail facilities**

² Mobility Impaired and Disabled – this includes all groups of people suffering with temporary or permanent impairments to their movement e.g. physical disability, the elderly, parents with small children, persons carrying baggage.

Integrated Framework Plans (IFPs)

currently being prepared for the Development Centres and other major centres³ will help to achieve the objectives for retail and leisure development set out above. The IFPs will provide for bus-based transport to local services, minimise car use for local trips and ensure interconnection with strategic public transport networks. The Framework Plans will identify centres of activity, from town centre, to neighbourhood and local centre.

Each centre will serve its catchment as a priority, but access to the wider urban area will also be facilitated, primarily by public transport. In this way, the population of the catchment area will not be limited to their nearest centre, but can choose amongst the hierarchy of retail and leisure centres. A separate Advice Note on Integrated Framework Plans for Land Use and Transportation is also available from the DTO.



³ DTO (2001) *A Platform for Change:2000 – 2016*, p. 60..

Benefits/conclusions

- The proposed new approach will facilitate walking, cycling and public transport access, which are more sustainable forms of transport
- Reducing reliance on the private car is more socially equitable
- The proposed approach focuses on communities, catchments and town centres
- Relating retail and leisure facilities to existing centres contributes towards consolidation of urban development in the GDA, which is in accordance with both DTO and SPG strategies
- One of the key elements of the DTO vision for the Greater Dublin Area is to achieve "*a Living City and Region, on a human scale, accessible to all and providing a good quality of life for its citizens*" (A Platform for Change, 2001). The proposed approach to retail and leisure development are a step to fulfilling this aim.

Appendix – examples of catchment definition for retail and leisure development

The following examples are indicative only. Comments and suggestions for adaptation to GDA circumstances are invited.

Type of facility	Indicators	Criteria for site comparison	Suggested Development Potential Thresholds
Shopping	1. Distance to nearest "district" centre including superstore and a good range of retail outlets (encasing multi-purpose trips)	Actual distance in km (recognising any barriers to movement).	Development opportunity – walking distance (1.5km) of centre
	2. Distance to nearest "local" centres		Development priority – close walking distance (400m)
Leisure	3. Access to open space (NB – a wide variety of indicators could be used)	Distance to park or other accessible open space offering play, and dog walking opportunities and a green landscape	Development opportunities – within walking distance (1.5km)
Employment	4. Distance to the dominant employment location e.g. the city centre	I. Actual distance in km II. Estimated travel time by public transport III. Estimated travel time by car (this takes into account the energy cost of congestion)	Development opportunity – cycling distance (5km) of centre Development priority – walking distance (1.5km) of centre
	5. Jobs/residents ratio in local area ⁴	I. Ratio in the ward/parish, or II. Ratio in an urban sector containing several wards	Development opportunity – ratio of > 0.7 Development priority – ratio of > 1.5
Education	6. Distance to primary schools 7. Distance to nearest comprehensive school	Actual distance in km (NB – circles on map in first instance, adjusted to recognise any major barriers)	Development opportunities – primary schools within close walking distance (400m); secondary school within walking distance (1km)

Source: University of West England (1995) *Sustainable Settlements: A guide for planners, designers and developers*

⁴ Job Ratio – this is calculated by dividing the number of local jobs in an area by the number of people working/work-seeking. A score over 1 indicates a high proportion of jobs. A recent study suggests a job ratio threshold of 0.7 above which the number of people in local jobs and travelling short distances is significantly better. That study was in the context of larger cities and uses the Ward as the unit of analysis. Further research is needed to evaluate the situation in smaller settlements and using other spatial units.

Location	Use Type	Accessibility Requirements	Specific Criteria/Policies
A	Major Regional Trip Generators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialist/durable goods shopping centres Major cultural/leisure attractions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within 400-800m of entrance to a railway station providing fast and regular services With centrality in relation to good quality urban public transport services, which should be adjacent or close to the station Easy, safe and convenient movement by foot and bike around the centre and to nearby residential areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible extension away from the station where very high quality local services are concentrated and link closely to it Max parking allowance 10-25% of theoretical demand Min of 4 urban PT routes with 5+ services/hr with potential speed and capacity commensurate with ensuring low car dependence For major cities the criteria can appropriately be stiffer in terms of public transport service speed, frequency and coverage
B	Major town/district generators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convenience shopping centres, including superstores and DIY warehouses Leisure centres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within 400m of an urban public transport hub providing good level of access in most directions Good access to walking and cycling Embedded within the built up area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Max parking allowance 25 – 50% of theoretical demand Min of 4 local PT routes (or 2 routes crossing) with 5+ services per hour (3+ for smaller towns) For major cities a B location should include high capacity rail/train services
C	Heavy Freight Generators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional warehouses Distribution centres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within 2km of direct access on to the national road network (normally motorway or dual carriageway) without passing through residential areas Direct access on to railways, waterways or coastal shipping or the potential to achieve direct access in the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75-100% parking allowance subject to a max number per hectare within 800m of a bus route with 2+ services/hour (to give the option to the able bodied)

The Dutch ABC policy

Source: adapted from *Sustainable Settlements*, p. 86.

