

# Review of the Transport Strategy for the **Greater Dublin Area**

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Issues Paper



The background image shows the interior of a bus. It features rows of blue and grey upholstered seats. Yellow handrails are visible, including a vertical one in the foreground and horizontal ones above the seats. A bus door is visible on the left side. The overall lighting is bright, suggesting daytime.

# **Review of the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area**

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The Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035 was formally adopted in February 2016.

That Strategy set out to contribute to the economic, social and cultural progress of the Greater Dublin Area by providing for the efficient, effective and sustainable movement of people and goods. In other words, it is about making the Dublin region a better place for those people who live and work there, and for those who visit.

It is doing this by providing a framework for the planning and delivery of transport infrastructure and services in the Greater Dublin Area. It has also provided a transport planning policy around which other agencies involved in land use planning, environmental protection and delivery of other infrastructure, such as housing, water and power, can align their own investment priorities.

It has been an essential component, along with investment programmes in other sectors, for the development of the Greater Dublin Area, which covers the counties of Dublin, Meath, Kildare and Wicklow.

Major projects provided for in the strategy include:

- Luas Cross City
- Reopening of the Phoenix Park Tunnel Rail Line
- On-going roll out of cycle tracks and greenways
- Metrolink
- DART+ Programme; and
- Investment in bus priority and bus service improvements – BusConnects

The National Transport Authority (NTA) has now started to review the 2016 - 2035 Transport Strategy. This review will assess the implementation of the current plan, and look to produce an updated strategy which will set out the framework for investment in transport infrastructure and services, taking us to 2042.

Of course no transport strategy can ever be a standalone document. A transport strategy will always be part of a larger picture of overall national policies that must work towards a single set of overall objectives. To a large extent, policies and objectives around issues such as land use, development, population distribution, investment, sustainability, and climate action for example are determined by other state agencies and authorities, but must be fully reflected in any transport strategy.

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In this instance, the revision of our transport 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, and finalised in January 2020. These objectives in turn are consistent with the National Planning Framework and the National Development Plan as set out in Project Ireland 2040.

Our Strategy will also be based on national policies on sustainability as set out in climate action and low carbon legislation, and in climate action plans. The potential impacts of the on-going Covid-19 pandemic, beyond the short-term, will also be taken into account.

We now need your help. We need to know what you think should be considered in the preparation of the new Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area.

## Why are we doing this?

The Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy was adopted in early 2016, but there is no doubt that we are in a different and rapidly changing world compared to even four years ago. However, this provides us with an opportunity to assess the existing plans, to re-examine assumptions and re-prioritise solutions.

And while we are living in times of some uncertainty, we now have a chance to strengthen the Strategy so that it will be fit for purpose well into the future.

We need to ensure that the policies and proposals we bring forward are the ones that are the most relevant and focused on transforming people's quality of life by making it easier for people to get around.

In particular we need to consider:

- Adapting to a post-Covid life in the Greater Dublin Area
- Delivering a sustainable transport network which meets climate change requirements; and
- Looking to the future when it comes to transport technologies and new transport options (e.g. Electric bikes, scooters etc.).

The NTA is required by legislation to review the strategy every six years and by starting this review now, it enables us to get all of the data, information and views of the public and stakeholders in time to complete this task by early 2022.



Next year, we will publish a draft of our revised Strategy. That will include specifics on all our proposals for the region, investment plans, projections, transport modelling etc. At that stage we will be inviting members of the public to consider the plan in detail; assess it in terms of future transport needs at regional, local and even household level; and provide us with feedback on what we are putting forward, so that we can get a sense as to whether we are on the right track when it comes to making Dublin a better place to live in, to work in and to visit.

But for now, we want to get an overall sense as to what people's priorities are in relation to transport in the Greater Dublin Area.

- What are the things that we should look at first while working on this plan?
- How should we evaluate future transport needs?
- What are the key components to a forward-looking transport strategy?
- What does the future of transport in this region look like to you?

## Transport Strategy Progress Report

Since the Transport Strategy was adopted in 2016, the NTA, along with the Councils, other transport delivery agencies and transport operators, have worked hard to build and develop the projects and proposals. Here are a few of the highlights from the last four years work:

### Walking and Cycling



- › We have invested tens of millions of euro in walking and cycling across the Greater Dublin Area since 2016, and have delivered significant additional investment for these modes under the Covid-19 and Stimulus programmes in 2020.
- › Some example projects include the new cycleway along the seafront in Clontarf, the off-road pedestrian/cycling route between Baldoyle and Portmarnock, The Royal Canal Greenway from North Strand Road into the Docklands among dozens of notable schemes.

## Bus



- We have commenced the largest ever investment programme in Dublin's bus network – BusConnects. This will deliver full bus priority on all the main corridors and a significantly improved service network.
- The NTA has invested heavily in the renewal of the bus infrastructure, including bus stopping facilities, Real Time Passenger Information and fleet improvements.
- Since 2016, an additional 180 buses have been added into the bus fleet providing the subsidised bus services in the Dublin region
- Investment in the rural Local Link services, notably in Kildare, Meath, Wicklow and Fingal counties.

## Rail



- › In conjunction with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), in December 2017 we opened Luas Cross City, linking the Red and Green lines and providing an interchange between commuter rail and Luas at Broombridge.
- › In conjunction with TII, as part of the Luas capacity enhancement project, the length of trams on the Green Line and the size of the overall tram fleet have both been increased. By early next year, all of the existing trams on the Green Line will have been extended to 55-metres, and the overall tram fleet will have grown from 67 trams in 2016 to 81 trams.
- › In conjunction with Iarnród Éireann, in 2016, passenger services were reintroduced into the refurbished Phoenix Park Tunnel, providing direct rail access from the suburbs and towns of the south west of the region into Dublin City Centre.
- › In 2018, a 10-minute all-day DART service was introduced on the rail network
- › A major upgrade of the city centre railway signalling system was completed in 2020, which allows a significant increase in the number of trains that can operate in the city central area, including a 50% increase in the number of trains able to cross the Loop Line Bridge over the Liffey.



## Roads



- › The Strategic Road Network in the GDA has continued to evolve, with modifications and safety improvements in all counties.
- › The M7 enhancement project and Osberstown Interchange are now complete, improving national road accessibility to strategic employment locations on this corridor.
- › Numerous other regional and local road projects have been completed.

## In the Pipeline

- › Metrolink - scheduled to go to planning mid-2021.
- › DART West - scheduled to go to planning mid-2021.
- › Luas Finglas - has just completed a public consultation on its Emerging Preferred Route and submissions are now being evaluated before moving to the next design stage.
- › BusConnects Core Bus Corridors - scheduled to go to planning early 2021.
- › BusConnects new services Network - implementation to be under way Q1 2021.
- › Cycle Network - a major programme of cycling expansion is underway, which will deliver many of the priority routes of the planned cycle network.
- › Fleet Expansion:
  - › 41 extra Intercity rail carriages for delivery in 2022
  - › 280 double-deck hybrid buses for delivery over 2020 and 2021
  - › Up to 600 electric / battery-electric carriages for DART, for delivery from 2024 onwards

## What are the main challenges?

While the ultimate challenge for transport planning will always be about moving people efficiently at the times they need to or want to travel, the factors behind this ‘travel demand’ can change over time and can lead to different patterns. Also, other wider influences can have a significant impact on where we travel and how we get there. Here are some of the main challenges as we see them:

### Challenges

#### Climate Change and the Environment

As sustainability comes into sharper focus, we will increasingly see transport point the way towards a net zero-emissions future. This means more walking and cycling, making public transport more attractive than the private car, and it also means trams, trains and buses, transitioning from fossil fuels to more sustainable sources.

- › Public transport in a net-zero-emissions Ireland.
- › The possible need for resilience in Dublin’s transport system to deal with climate change impact.
- › The role of transport in improving urban and rural environments, so that they are better places for people to live, work and visit.
- › Changes in travel patterns that emerge from the Covid pandemic.

#### Growth and change

The Dublin region has changed significantly in recent years and is predicted to change further in the coming years. We know that there will be more people living and working in the region in the decades ahead and we know that the distribution of population will change to reflect that. It is vital that future public transport investment and services anticipate those changes.

- › Impact of a changing age profile on transport planning.
- › The location of jobs, schools and colleges and how will people get there.
- › The future for ‘bricks-and-mortar’ retail, and what does that mean for the movement of people around cities and towns.

## Health and Equality

A good transport network, based on sound foundations of sustainability and accessibility, has the potential to be an engine for positive change. It can do this by opening up access to social and economic opportunities such as education and employment, particularly for those who would otherwise be unable to avail of them. It can also have a positive impact on overall health and wellbeing among the people and communities that it serves, and these considerations should inform future transport decisions.

- Transport as a catalyst for reducing disadvantage in communities.
- Affordability of public transport so it remains reliable and useful for families with lower disposable incomes.
- Role of public transport in further improving accessibility for people with disabilities.
- Promoting active commuting for its benefits to people's health and to the environment.

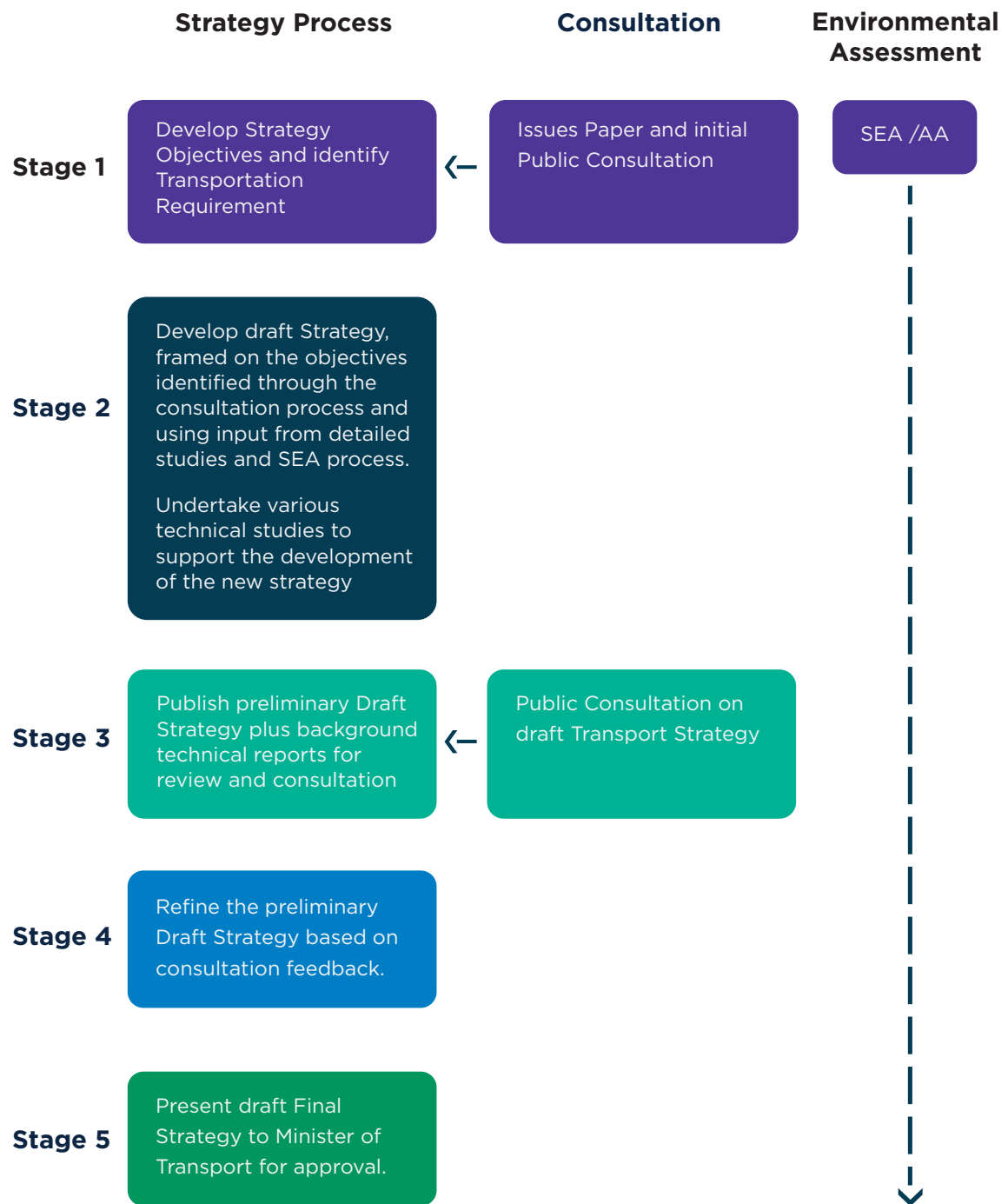
## The Economy

A reliable, efficient and affordable public transport network can be a major driver of economic activity, jobs, investment and prosperity. We now have the opportunity to re-examine our transport priorities to ensure maximum economic benefits for cities and regions in the years to come. Benefits that work better for people who live, work and visit there. How can efficient public transport network achieve this, is by;

- Improving connectivity to maximise the potential of our labour force.
- Identifying transport investment required to facilitate expansion of jobs and employment.
- Acting as a catalyst for entrepreneurship and innovation.
- Optimising our transport network for the distribution of products and goods to markets.
- Reducing the effects of congestion on the economy and workers.

## Strategy Process

We aim to complete this review process by the end of 2021 so that it can be approved by the Minister for Transport in early 2022. This is a tight timeline, and there are a series of elements which need to be completed to develop the new transport strategy.





## Have your say

We are at Stage 1 of the process outlined above, and we now need your assistance in the development of the Transport Strategy policy direction and objectives. Given the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions, and for your safety and convenience, our 1st round of consultation will be undertaken online.

To give your feedback, we would appreciate if you could use our online consultation form, which can also facilitate the attachment of written submissions, if required.

All information can be found at **[www.nationaltransport.ie](http://www.nationaltransport.ie)**. The feedback gathered will help us reflect the views of the people living and working in the Greater Dublin Area in our preparation of the Draft Transport Strategy:

Link to Feedback form **[here](#)**.

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