



**ESTABLISHMENT OF
A
DUBLIN TRANSPORT AUTHORITY**

SUBMISSION TO

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

FEBRUARY 2006

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Engineers Ireland welcomes the establishment of the Dublin Transport Authority (DTA) and is committed to supporting it in achieving a shared vision for the region.

This submission outlines some of the considerations related to the establishment and operation of the DTA. These are summarised as follows:

- The independence and accountability of the DTA must be enshrined in legislation.
- The DTA must have the power to set transport policy for the region and the ability to control its implementation.
- If the DTA is to be effective, it must have access to funding and technical and commercial expertise.
- The powers of the DTA must include the control of land-use planning.
- The DTA must ensure that sustainability principles are considered in the evaluation, communication, delivery and operation of all transport projects under its remit.

Engineers Ireland requests the opportunity to meet with the group responsible for the establishment of the Dublin Transport Authority, to discuss this submission further.

2. REMIT OF THE AUTHORITY:

The planning, building and operation of an integrated transport system for the Greater Dublin Area is a complex engineering, town planning, economic, financial, social, environmental and political challenge. Currently, a wide range of bodies are involved in the transport planning, modelling, procurement and provision, including: -

- The Government, particularly the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government.
- Dublin City Council, Fingal County Council, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, South Dublin County Council
- Neighbouring local authorities including Meath, Kildare, Wicklow and Louth County Councils
- An Bord Pleanála
- The Dublin Transportation Office
- The National Roads Authority.
- The CIE group of companies, Dublin Bus, Bus Éireann and Iarnród Éireann
- The Rail Procurement Agency
- Dublin Airport Authority
- Dublin Port
- An Garda Síochána

Aside from the relevant government ministers, it is difficult to identify who has the overall authority and responsibility for addressing transportation and infrastructure provision for the Greater Dublin Area. This highlights the need for an overarching authority to develop the vision, and manage and coordinate an integrated approach to transport management and regulation in the area. Currently, with each individual body focusing on its area of responsibility, there is a genuine concern in relation to the overall coordination and integration of initiatives.

Examples in recent years from London and Munich demonstrate what can be achieved when a coordinated approach is taken. It is therefore vital that the Dublin Transport Authority (DTA) has the power to set transport policy and control implementation for the region, either through direct provision or by directing other responsible bodies. Its powers must include the control of land use planning in so far as it affects the provision of a sustainable transport system. The remit, powers and functions of the authority must be unambiguously set out. The independence and accountability of the authority must also be clearly defined in legislation, to ensure that it can withstand undue political influence while remaining accountable to the public at large. Ultimately the DTA must be held accountable for its own performance and the performance of the other bodies in delivering an integrated transport infrastructure for the greater Dublin region. In this respect, the DTA should publish and annually report against 5, 10 and 25-year plans for the delivery of its transport vision for Dublin.

Against this background, the DTA can provide valuable input to the development of transport policy nationally and perhaps be a model for a future National Transport Authority.

3. REPORTING STRUCTURE & STAFFING:

If the DTA is to report directly to the Minister for Transport, we strongly recommend that the DTA Board should include a representative from the Taoiseach's Department, to ensure coordination across other relevant Government Departments. Alternatively, the DTA could report directly to the Taoiseach's Department.

The structure should be that the Minister is responsible for strategic direction but that the DTA will have full autonomy in the *implementation* of approved plans.

The DTA board should have a majority representation of individuals with experience of international best practice in urban and inter-urban transport planning and delivery, with appropriate leadership and management skills to ensure effective delivery. In addition, the DTA should have a permanent staff to advise it on land use and transportation planning, engineering, finance and economics.

4. FUNDING:

In delivering an integrated, multi-billion Euro transport investment, it is vital that central exchequer funding is provided and clearly earmarked on a multi-annual basis for the entire scope of projects, including appropriate contingency sums, and that provision is made in initial design and budget for increased capacity. The DTA must be held responsible for getting value for money and should oversee the provision and operation of transportation infrastructure by other bodies. Financial independence is important to prevent political interference.

The capacity of the private sector to deliver and finance infrastructure projects using PPP's and DBFO's should be exploited where possible. The contribution of development levies collected by the local authorities is a further valuable source of funding.

5. SUPPORTING LEGISLATION

In addition to the enactment of appropriate legislation to establish the DTA and define its remit, its role and responsibilities should be provided for in the Strategic Infrastructure Bill.

The planning and development act 2000 should be amended to *require* that planning authorities comply with regional plans including regional transport plans approved by the DTA rather than just "having regard" to them.

6. SUSTAINABILITY:

The Transport 21 programme represents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to deliver a high-quality, integrated public transport system for Dublin. At the formal announcement of Transport 21, much of the launch was focused on the delivery of projects on time and on budget - it is of course vital that infrastructure projects are delivered in a value for money manner. It is particularly important to consider issues related to health & safety, sustainability, environmental impact, social inclusion and pedestrian facilities. Transport, energy, and land-use form a system. Significant change may occur during the next ten years to invalidate any master plan for transport, that excludes energy and land-use. Therefore, it would be prudent for the DTA to: -

- (i) Make provision for contingencies in the plan for Dublin e.g.
 - (b) shocks in the price of energy, or its availability, or both,
 - (c) changes in land-use, planned or unplanned,
 - (d) new regulations on emissions from vehicles, such as green-house gases.
- (ii) Assist the public and their representatives in clarifying the trade-offs that must be made between transport, energy, land-use and costs.
- (iii) Keep the public informed regularly on the development of strategic plans and the progress of specific projects.

7. HEALTH & SAFETY:

Transport 21 mentions safety specifically in the context of the railways, but the DTA should play an active role in the wider safety context and in particular to reduce the number of fatalities on roads. In the ten years planned for Transport 21, without a step change in our road-safety culture, we may expect 5,000 people to be killed in road accidents, 50,000 people to be seriously injured, and €10 billion worth of material damage.

The current national objective of reducing road deaths by 20% over 10 years should only be seen as a starting point. Our submission to Government in December 2002 on road safety ("Stop Road Carnage Now") recommended adopting a target of a 50% reduction in deaths and serious injury over a 5-year period. We should ultimately consider accepting Scandinavia as a model proclaiming the "zero option" as our goal i.e. a continuous reduction in crashes, personal injuries, and damage to property, until they reach zero, not dissimilar to the zero tolerance approach for smoking in the workplace.

Road safety is a socio-technical problem that requires the systems approach of safety engineering. Dangerous systems in other industries, which have achieved the "zero option", rely heavily on frequent and intensive training programmes, safety reviews and systems re-design. Such programmes, designed and executed to an engineering standard, have the potential to make a major impact on Ireland's transportation sector.

As a key driver of transport policy, the DTA will have an important role in influencing public and political attitudes to road safety, as well as driving the road safety agenda in the Greater Dublin Area.

8. RESEARCH:

Despite the significant increase in government spending on research in recent years, very little of this has been devoted to transport. In addition to copying best practice elsewhere, there is an opportunity for Ireland to solve its own transport problems through focused research, thereby becoming an exporter of best transport practice. The DTA should have an important role in supporting independent “transport, energy and land-use” research, in the areas of sustainability, health & safety and social inclusion.

9. MAIN PRIORITIES FOR THE DTA:

The remainder of this document gives some commentary on the different areas of DTA responsibility, e.g. roads, aviation, ports, public transport. However, we consider the initial priorities for the DTA to be: -

- Rapid development of the project pipeline. Very few of the Transport 21 projects relevant to Dublin are at detailed design stage.
- Establish the parameters for effective regulation for public transport in the Greater Dublin Area.
- Short-term measures designed to relieve congestion (e.g. provision of new buses).
- Delivery of the long promised comprehensive integrated ticketing system and a real-time passenger information system for all modes of public transport in the region.

10. ROAD NETWORK:

The Roads Programme in Transport 21 is focused on upgrading of our national routes. It is essential to provide a quality national road network, as virtually all of our goods are for export, with a high proportion distributed by road. Ireland has a high car dependency for personal travel. There are many reasons to lower our dependence on private car travel, from lowering the general costs of travel, to lowering the incidence of congestion, carbon emissions etc., and this is particularly relevant for the Dublin region. However, projected growth in population and car ownership will require continued investment in the road network to support economic performance.

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) sees development in the country being centred in higher density locations, strategically chosen. The roads programme in Transport 21 is focused on linking these centres by road. However, the roads will deliver higher capacity than the centres themselves have the capacity to absorb.

The free-flow conditions of the inter-urban motorway system cannot be replicated in an urban environment. A parallel system of Park and Ride sites needs to be provided for, at the edges of the built up areas.

While recognising the difficulty of delivering additional road capacity in an urban environment, there is an urgent need to increase orbital capacity around the city by: -

- Completion of the M50 upgrade,
- Completion of the outer ring road,
- Development of outer orbital route,
- Development of the Eastern Bypass and
- Improving the flow rates on radial routes.

A significant upgrade of the current traffic management systems and ITS (Intelligent Traffic Systems) to embrace newer, advanced technologies will have to be funded, to maximise / coordinate traffic flows within the constraints of the current road infrastructure as well as taking full advantage of new infrastructure.

11. PUBLIC TRANSPORT:

The establishment of the DTA provides the opportunity for coordinated regulation of public transport provision in the region. The DTA should manage the transition to an effectively regulated and integrated public transport system for Dublin.

In planning public transport (metro, LUAS, rail and bus), it is essential that a customer-centric approach be adopted with connectivity in the city centre a key aspect. Frequent, fast service with predictable journey time at an affordable cost is critical on all services if commuters are to be persuaded to switch from private to public transport. The enhancement of the journey times for the InterCity routes need to be improved to provide true time savings for passengers. Integrated ticketing within the Greater Dublin Area is vital, and should also accommodate long-distance commuters travelling from outside the area, transferring to other modes.

Rail provides the best opportunity for high capacity mass transit. A national high-speed rail network with efficient interconnection in the Dublin region is essential to support the predicted growth in population and economic activity in the short-term. Transport 21 identifies a suite of rail projects for the greater Dublin area. Priority should be given to the most congested routes, particularly those to the west of the city. The need to provide interconnectivity between the

Dublin mainline routes is crucial, requiring the development of the interconnector Tunnel. Track segregation out of Heuston is essential for the separation of the fast and slow trains.

The various rail systems (commuter, metro, LUAS, DART) need to be considered along with buses as a combined, integrated public transport system. There will be a number of locations where the various public transport services meet, St. Stephens Green as an example, where LUAS is at grade on the street, the Metro on the next level down and the Interconnector on the third level. These locations will need major co-operation by all of the planners and operators - the DTA should lead such projects in a co-ordinating role.

A clear opportunity exists to move more freight by rail, in particular from Dublin Port, Drogheda etc. This will require an upgrading of services within the ports to deal with rail freight.

The provision of affordable Park & Ride is also necessary to encourage modal switch from road to public transport.

12. AVIATION:

As an island economy, we depend heavily on the capacity and quality of our aviation links to support continued economic growth. The perceived quality of Ireland's air transportation infrastructure was the third lowest of the 16 countries surveyed by IMD and published in their World Competitiveness Yearbook in 2005. Dublin airport served more than 18 million passengers in 2005. Traffic is expected to increase to 30 million per annum by 2015.

The DTA should have the responsibility to ensure that an integrated and co-ordinated approach to planning and traffic management is implemented on both the air- and ground-side of Dublin airport. This is vital to ensure the airport becomes an efficient gateway for air travel into and out of Ireland.

Developments which need to be considered include additional terminals and a runway at the present airport site, a second airport, metro and other public transport links to Dublin City and elsewhere, car parking and the infrastructure needs of a growing workforce in the vicinity of the airport. The Authority should also play a key role in the improvement of safety, security, noise reduction and other initiatives in and around the airport.

13. DUBLIN PORTS:

Dublin and Dunlaoghaire ports are significant gateways for freight and passenger traffic and their development potential needs to be exploited in a way which best contributes to the greater Dublin region. Each port also presents major challenges in traffic management. Access to the ports is a particular concern and any future developments must include plans to develop the surrounding

infrastructure. Dublin Port is facing a capacity deficit within 2 years in lift-on-lift-off containers and bulk liquid handling. The Dublin Port Authority has proposed reclaiming and developing a 21 hectare site and a discussion document outlining an alternative of moving the port to Bremore has been floated by the Progressive Democrats. The DTA needs to produce a comprehensive vision under which the individual port authorities can develop in a co-ordinated way.