

# Transport Strategies: Critical Success Factors

This note provides advice on the key elements of a successful transport strategy. These strategies are generally commissioned by central, regional or local government, and form part of a structured planning framework, to inform policy – in particular spatial/ land use and economic development plans or social inclusion initiatives, and/ or development of capital investment programmes.

As such, maximising the effectiveness of a transport strategy and setting it in the wider land use planning context, while ensuring its deliverability are of the utmost importance – these represent the strategy's **critical success factors**.

This note should be read alongside Transport Insights' "[Why do I need a transport strategy?](#)" blog article.

## Pre-Development – Lessons Learnt

**Why?** Most strategies have 20+ year horizons and are updated in accordance with reviews of related policies or programmes – generally at 5-6 year cycles. Before developing a new transport strategy, evaluating the success of an existing strategy can help ensure that lessons are learnt – which elements were successful, which less so, and reasons why!

A successful transport strategy can be assessed through its effectiveness and deliverability, however evaluating success in this way is complex, and key “success indicators” may need to be identified. These could include:

- To what extent have strategy components been advanced to delivery?
- Were the strategy's budget assumptions correct?
- If elements have been delivered, were their transport impacts as anticipated?
- Have the expected (or assumed) land use changes, and associated community benefits come to fruition?

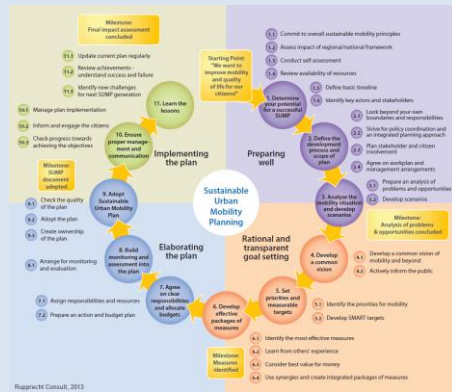


## Scoping the Update Process

**Why?** Development of a transport strategy rarely follows a prescribed approach, however successful ones generally share many common elements as illustrated in the planning cycle flowchart from the EU funded [Guidelines for Developing and Implementing a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan \(SUMP\)](#), overleaf. A comprehensive scoping exercise will ensure the process is robust, and help in securing stakeholder and subsequent political/ public support.

- Has a review of international contemporary best practice informed the planned update process?

- Has the update process been scoped to ensure compliance with legislative requirements, e.g. Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive?
- Has stakeholder engagement been undertaken at the scoping stage and informed the determination of the update process? Has this been used as an opportunity to agree the extent of further engagement?
- Has the scope to enhance alignment between land use/spatial planning and economic development strategies and the transport strategy been explored and agreed with stakeholders?



## Setting Objectives

**Why?** In essence they represent the strategy's *raison d'être* – the transport related land use, economic, social and environmental outcomes sought through development of the strategy. They will also underpin the appraisal of potential strategy components, and key decisions regarding its ultimate composition.

- Are existing transport problems, e.g. traffic congestion, public transport overcrowding etc. sufficiently well understood? What data has underpinned this analysis, and is it robust? What modes are affected? Where on the transport network are problems experienced, and how frequently, e.g. AM, PM or all day?
- How are transport problems likely to evolve in the future? How have these problems been identified, e.g. multi-modal transport model? What are the key drivers of transport demand growth, e.g. planned development? What level of confidence do you have in the robustness of the model outputs?
- Are selected strategy objectives underpinned by a sound understanding of current and future transport problems, and their economic, social and environmental implications – the strategy's challenges?
- Are they sufficiently robust against externalities (unexpected land use changes, economic pressures etc.)?



## Option Development

**Why?** To ensure broadest consideration of the full "toolkit" of potential interventions, maximising confidence that the strategy contains the most appropriate set of complimentary measures.

- Has international best practice research identified a wide range of options to address the strategy objectives? Do these include management, behavioural change, information and promotion, spatial planning and policy interventions; alongside more traditional infrastructure and service interventions?

- Has the role of the private sector been considered, and specifically its role in the current transport network, and potential in satisfying future transport demand? This could include private bus and coach operators, and the role of shared taxis.

### Option Appraisal

**Why?** To provide a structured, systematic and transparent basis for assessing the merit of potential strategy components, thus ensuring a robust basis for decision making.

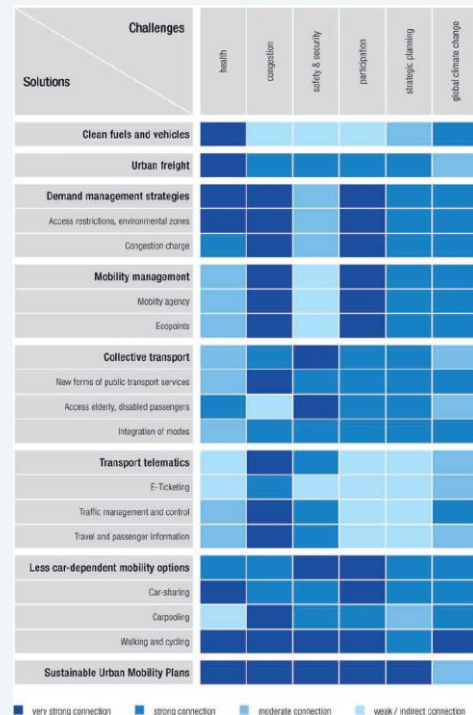
- Has a structured and transparent appraisal system been developed to assess the potential of options, and packages?
- Are the appraisal criteria clearly aligned with the strategy objectives and deliverability criteria (affordability, acceptability, technical feasibility, and value for money)?
- To what extent has stakeholder engagement informed the sifting process and its application, i.e. scoring?
- Are measures that may play an important complimentary role alongside other measures retained for further consideration in the development of packages, e.g. traffic management restrictions complimenting delivery of a new public transport scheme, or city centre goods vehicle restrictions complimenting development of a freight consolidation centre?



### Package Development

**Why?** To assess the effectiveness of shortlisted options in a greater level of detail, and together as part of a comprehensive package of measures – the Strategy.

- Have a series of contrasting packages been developed and appraised, and refined into a short-list of integrated packages? What rationale has underpinned the development of packages, e.g. exposing trade-offs between different approaches, thus demonstrating a need for potentially unpopular elements such as fiscal interventions etc.?
- Have short-listed schemes been developed in sufficient detail to identify challenges to delivery? Have they been costed, and have timelines for implementation (including planning) been determined?



- To what extent do short-listed schemes simultaneously address both current and future transport problems, therefore de-risking the dependency of key strategy components on external factors, in particular land use developments?
- Has a greater level of scheme development been undertaken for those schemes that are envisaged for implementation in the short to medium term?
- Has more detailed appraisal of short-listed options, and identification of the emerging preferred packages of measures been informed by transport modelling? Does the model represent an appropriate analytical tool for appraisal, or does it need to be enhanced? Has the value for money of potential measures been determined?
- Has adequate consideration been given to the programming of interventions and interdependencies?
- Are key stakeholders supportive of the emerging strategy?
- Is there political buy-in from within Government and opposition parties to the emerging strategy?

Developing a transport strategy that is both effective and deliverable requires targeted inputs from transport planners with a range of complementary skills and experience. Recent Transport Insights' experience includes:

- Metro Line Extension Feasibility Study support on behalf of the European Investment Bank (November 2014 to January 2015);
- Cork South Ring Road (N40) Demand Management Study advice to Cork City and County Councils (March 2014, ongoing);
- Smarter Travel Workplaces support to the National Transport Authority (December 2013, ongoing); and
- Advice to domestic bus operators and related submissions, in response to a range of central government policies and initiatives, including [bus contracts](#) and [transport studies](#) (September 2013, ongoing).

Profiles of Transport Insights' key team members, and a selection of recently completed projects can be found under the [About](#) and [Case Studies](#) pages respectively of Transport Insights' website.