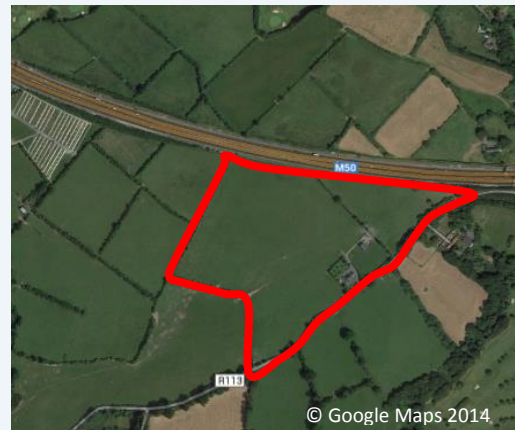


Site Selection and Feasibility: Assessing Transport Risks

1. Introduction

This note provides advice on transport related considerations at the earliest stages in the development planning process and is intended to be of assistance to developers and their advisors.

Considering a wide range of traffic and transport related risks at the earliest point in the development planning lifecycle, and their implications for the type of development proposed will enhance the likelihood of success and safeguard planned investment by reducing the time, cost and risk of bringing a new development to the market.



This note considers the two initial stages in the development planning process, namely:

- site selection and acquisition; and
- site feasibility.

2. Assessing Transport Risks – A Staged Approach

To minimise upfront costs, while at the same time identifying key traffic and transport risks that might undermine future development, a low cost, desk based assessment is warranted at site selection stage. Building upon this assessment, and in advance of incurring significant further design and related costs, a more analytical based assessment at feasibility stage is beneficial. These principles underpin the advice within this note.

3. Site Selection Checklist

The level of transport assessment will depend on the scale of planned investment, however in assessing the suitability of a potential site for a particular development type, *Transport Insights* recommends considering the following:

- What is the existing land use at the site?

- Does the existing land use generate significant vehicle trips?
- What type of development is proposed e.g. housing, office, retail etc.?
- Is the site likely to generate a significant number of vehicle trips?
- Is the site likely to require access from a national primary or secondary road?
- Is access to the site likely to be readily achievable from the existing road network (road width, alignment, visibility requirements etc.)?
- Is the local road network already congested?
- Are there other planned developments in the area with/ without planning approval?
- What are the local authority parking standards for the type of development proposed?
- Is the site located in an area with a quality public transport network (distance, frequency capacity, speed, reliability)?
- Is the site located beside appropriate walking and cycling routes?
- Is the site located:
 - close to urban centres or is it isolated?
 - within easy access to strategic employment locations?
 - within easy access to retail facilities?
 - in close proximity to local schools etc.?
- Are there any planned transport infrastructure improvements within the surrounding area? Has funding for these schemes been approved? Is development likely to be dependent on their delivery?
- What are the local transport policy constraints?
- Is the proposed development likely to require a Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA)?
- Is there a benefit in engaging with local and national transport authorities to confirm their views?

4. Additional Site Feasibility Considerations

In addition to considering the above mentioned items at site selection stage, the feasibility stage assessment would also include:

- Are the traffic impacts likely to be significant, can the impacts be mitigated without need for infrastructural enhancements, or if not, what type of improvements may be required?
- In the context of existing and anticipated future market demands and the size of development site, is it appropriate to sensitivity test a different quantity or type of development?

- If local authority engagement has not already taken place, would discussions with key personnel assist in determining if traffic and transport is likely to represent a substantial planning risk and identifying what options might be available to mitigate their impacts?



5. Summary

Analysis of the factors outlined above, and their implications for a particular site, requires an understanding of transport network characteristics and performance attributes. Additionally, it requires knowledge of statutory transport planning processes and an appreciation of related local authority considerations and analytical requirements. By engaging experienced transport advisors to provide inputs to site suitability and feasibility assessments, the time, cost and risk of bringing a subsequent development to fruition can be significantly reduced.

6. About Transport Insights

Transport Insights is an Irish based transport planning consultancy. Since establishment in early 2013, our client list includes asset managers, business groups, developers, bus operators, industry representatives, local authorities and national government agencies.

We offer a wide range of transport planning related services to clients in public and private sectors including capital investment planning; option appraisal and prioritisation; development and accessibility planning; public transport planning and tendering support; sustainable transport; traffic management; and transport strategy development.

Relevant recent Transport Insights experience includes:

- transport impact assessment of a Local Area Plan in North Co. Dublin comprising approximately 200 residential units (Fingal County Council);
- peer review of a transport study of strategic development proposals in Cork North Environs (Cork County Council); and
- support to National Transport Authority's Smarter Travel Workplaces programme.