



Cork
County Council
Comhairle Contae Chorcaí

Douglas Land Use and Transportation Strategy (DLUTS) Summary

August 2013



Background

Douglas is a large and popular residential suburb of approximately 30,000 persons on the periphery of Cork City along a major ring road (N40), which has grown from an old textile milling village.

Recently, the town centre is showing signs of increased vacancy levels and there is a major problem of traffic congestion in peak periods. The Douglas Land Use and Transportation Strategy (DLUTS) was first identified in the Carrigaline Electoral Area Local Area Plan in 2011, where it was recognised that in order to ensure balanced land use growth in the future, it was necessary to retrofit a modern transportation network, in particular focusing on a major shift towards other transport modes in line with the national priority of Smarter Travel.

The overall aim of the Douglas Land Use and Transportation Strategy is to ensure that there is an integrated approach to land use planning, urban design and transportation engineering for the future development of the town. Specifically, the goals of this strategy were:

- to provide a framework for future planning decisions
- optimise the traffic and transport network
- provide a guide to the investment in transport infrastructure
- identify the capacity of the town centre for additional retail and other development
- inform the future use of two areas zoned 'Special Policy Areas' (Douglas Town Centre X-03a and the lands described as Douglas Golf Course X-03b) in the Carrigaline Electoral Area Local Area Plan (2011)."

The project was undertaken by the staff of Forward Planning and Strategic Development in Cork County Council in conjunction with MVA Consultancy, who were retained to provide traffic and transportation inputs. It began in April 2012 and was completed by July 2013.



DLUTS Context Map



DLUTS Study Area

Project preparation

The project preparation involved an evaluation of the existing situation on the ground and a number of surveys were conducted of land use, traffic and public realm. In order to provide solutions to the issues identified in the surveys, different scenarios were developed for two 10 year periods up to 2032. The preferred scenario identified a number of transportation proposals and public realm solutions that laid the foundation for an improved land use development framework.

One of the first tasks undertaken was the development of a vision statement for the project which would clearly express the purpose and aims of the project. The following is the statement that was developed:

DLUTS Vision Statement

To secure a successful vibrant urban centre with a more efficient transport network for Douglas, that provides an improved public realm, reduces congestion, encourages greater levels of walking & cycling, and improves the quality of life for the community, thereby enabling sustainable future growth.



Consultation with public and key stakeholders

The three public consultation events in April 2012, July 2012 and January 2013, were well attended by the residents, landowners, civic groups, business associations and general public. Comments were received, analysed and incorporated into the final text of the report. Individual meetings were also held with every significant landowner and key community groups during the project. All these reports were discussed at the Project Management Group (PMG) comprising key Council officials (Roads, Planning, Architects, Engineering and Management). A further level of consultation took place with the Public Agencies Consultative Group (PACG) comprising key stakeholders of NRA, NTA, Cork City Council, Bus Eireann, Health Services Executive, Department of Education, and An Garda Siochana. Finally, the findings of each stage of the project planning process was debated and agreed with the members of the Area Committee of County Council, which were called the Policy Group.

Main issues facing Douglas

Following a comprehensive number of surveys (land use, retail, traffic and public realm), the following set of issues emerged from the analysis:

Transportation

- Severe traffic congestion in peak periods
- Car dominance throughout the area
- Douglas is a pinch point for through traffic movements
- Many junctions require improvement
- Douglas not an employment destination with “bombshell effect” by commuting traffic
- East West movements difficult and slow with resultant adverse effects on the village centre and knock on effects on National Road Network
- Severance by National Roads
- Schools travel is a major problem which adds significantly to traffic congestion in peak periods
- Poor walking and cycling facilities in the area
- Difficult to provide a high quality public transport service for the area

Land Use

- Housing areas disconnected from village centre
- High population growth
- Uncoordinated piecemeal development
- Lack of daytime population
- Higher than average levels of convenience shopping in a total of 23000sqm of retail floor space
- High Vacancy Rate 20%
- Lower footfall and loss of vitality
- Barriers to connectivity between land uses
- Difficulties with connectivity between Douglas and the Cork City Centre

Public Realm

- Visually weak landscape and architectural urban edge
- Fragmented desire lines
- No sense of place in the village
- Barriers to pedestrian circulation
- Unattractive junctions
- Poor quality urban space and streetscape
- Car has high priority
- Community Park undervalued



Future Development Scenarios

In order to prepare a set of land use, transportation and public realm proposals, it was necessary to look at the development of alternative scenarios based on two 10 year time horizons; namely, the short to medium term (2012-2022) and the medium to long term (2022-2032).

The preferred scenario, after evaluation, looked at an option to develop the transport proposals in their entirety during the first tranche so that it may create conditions for longer term growth in land use development. Obviously, the problem of vacancy is a short term issue and needs to be filled before any new development should take place. The public realm proposals should also take place at the same time as both the transport and land use proposals are implemented in order to provide a better quality townscape.



Traffic and Transportation Proposals

In summary, the traffic and transportation proposals involve a number of investments in:

1. 23 key junctions to be upgraded to provide improved bus priority, pedestrian, cycle and traffic movements
2. 30 kph speed limit in village centre to improve safety and encourage a village atmosphere
3. East West Link Bridge linking Donnybrook Hill to the Carrigaline road to remove through traffic from village centre
4. 36 km of walking and cycling routes including Mangala/Ballybrack Stream, Tramore Valley Park and City connectivity
5. Public Transport priority on East Douglas St with the elimination of through traffic
6. One-way east bound on Church Road so as to improve road safety in the area
7. Key junctions incorporated into Cork City Council's SCOOT system to improve traffic efficiency
8. Schools Travel Planning with support from Green Flag for Schools programme



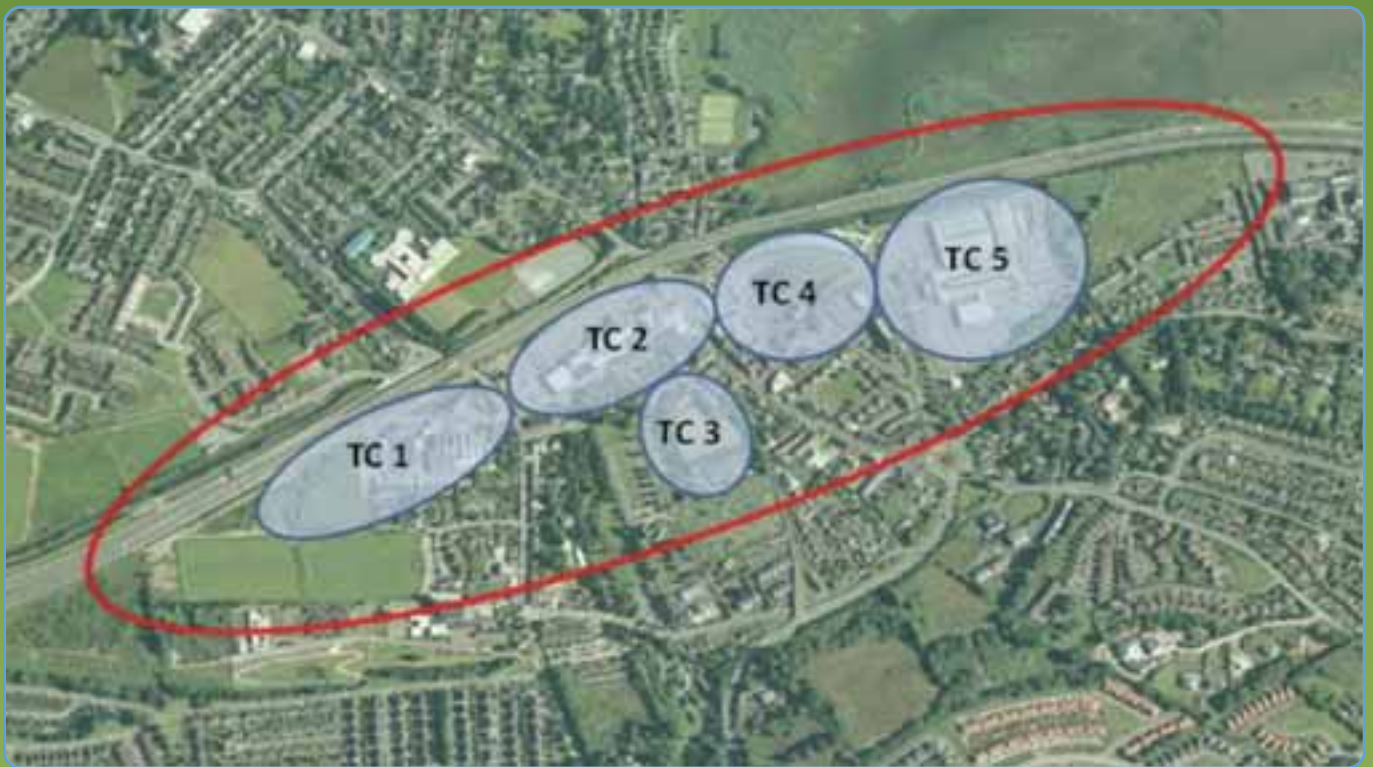
Some transport proposals of the future of Douglas

Land use proposals

1. In the short term, the land use priority is to fill the existing retail vacancy of 10,000m² and there is an opportunity to build new development on sites that have existing planning permissions.
2. In the longer term, when transport proposals have been implemented, it is proposed to consolidate the town centre into 5 connected precincts, namely:
 - TC 1 – St Patrick's Woollen Mills
 - TC 2 – Douglas Village Shopping Centre
 - TC 3 – Barry's Field
 - TC 4 – Cinema Site
 - TC 5 – Douglas Court Shopping Centre
3. In these precincts, it is policy to encourage mixed use development (retail, offices and residential) with the main aim to improve vibrancy and vitality through increased daytime population.
4. Introduce a Town Centre Management Partnership to co-ordinate activities and promote the village centre.

Community Facilities, Recreation and Amenities

1. Existing schools and Douglas Golf Course to remain in present locations
2. Urgent need for a multi-purpose leisure facility for sports and community clubs
3. Urgent need for additional playing fields in Douglas
4. Provide walkways/cycleways to connect Donnybrook along Mangla/Ballybrack Stream
5. Provide improvement to community park amenity area and provide pedestrian/cycle linkage to City Tramore Valley Park



Proposed Consolidation of the town centre into 5 precincts

Public Realm proposals

There is a need to increase permeability in Douglas Village by improving the pedestrian and cycling environment. Within the town centre, public realm improvements will include widening and improving footpaths thereby improving connectivity and safety between land uses. Four town centre gateways have been identified in Douglas which will be improved, including the two bridging points under the N40, the Fingerpost Roundabout and Daly's Corner. The beneficial desire lines between points of interest (shopping centres) have been identified and shall be improved/enhanced. Overall the public realm improvements will seek to bring order to Douglas and enhance the streetscape.

Some land use proposals for the future of Douglas



Benefits

Integrated approach to Public Realm Land Use and Transport Strategy will deliver:



Additional 7km on-street & off-street
Cycle Priority Measures

30kph Zone in Village Centre
increased safety for cyclists

Advanced stop lines for cyclists
at all key junctions



Shared Surface, pedestrian friendly area
linking Douglas Village Centre and East Village

30kph Zone in Village Centre
increased safety for pedestrians

Improved pedestrian crossing facilities

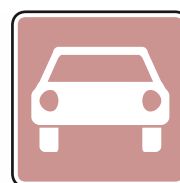
18km of off-street pedestrian routes



improved journey time and reliability
for 80% of bus routes serving Douglas Village

More Bus Priority

More efficient public transport operating
environment



Reduced traffic in Village Centre

Better use of Strategic Routes

key junctions improvements will ensure more
efficient traffic movement



**Improved Public Realm in the Village
Centre**

Increased footfall, improved vitality and
vibrancy

Reduce Vacancy



Some public realm proposals for Douglas in the future



Implementation

Tranche 1: Medium Term 2013 to 2022: Emphasis on investment in transport infrastructure, reducing vacancy and limited development in view of continued economic weakness

- Walking and Cycling
- Network Schools Travel Planning
- 30 kph zone
- All junctions enhanced
- Expand "SCOOT" system to incorporate key junctions
- East West Link Road. Traffic Circulation Plan. Reduction in vacancy. All committed development built on.
- Improved and enhanced public realm

Tranche 2: Long Term 2022 to 2032: Emphasis on performance monitoring of transport infrastructure with limited investment, elimination of vacancy and support for development of suitable land used in town centre precincts

- Continuous monitoring of transport network to ensure an efficient and safe movement environment for all users within Douglas while area develops
- Douglas to develop in accordance with the DLUTS strategy, in 5 town centre precincts.
- Continuous delivery of public realm improvements in tandem with additional development.

Summary

The DLUTS strategy will, for a modest investment in infrastructure, facilitate the sustainable transformation of Douglas into a more vibrant and economically sound business centre, providing jobs and improved public realm.

Douglas will be a more pleasant place to visit, do business in and a healthier place to live in. The DLUTS strategy plots out the road map that shows how all of this can be achieved without major investment and in a relatively short timeframe. The challenge to residents of Douglas is to embrace the strategy and change the way they make their day to day decisions on travel options to work, school, leisure and shopping.

After final approval, this strategy's recommendations will be incorporated into the statutory plan (Carrigaline Electoral Area Local Area Plan) by way of an amendment and the project will continue to be implemented by the local authority. Full report available online at www.corkcoco.ie.



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