MINISTERIAL ADVISORY GROUP
FOR ARCHITECTURE AND THE BUILT
ENVIRONMENT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

REVIEW OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY 2011 – A SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FUTURE RESPONSE TO THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION

JUNE 2011

RAISING EXPECTATIONS

REVIEW OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY 2011
A SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FUTURE

The following is the response of the Ministerial Advisory Group for Architecture and the Built Environment to the public consultation on the Review of the Regional Transportation Strategy.

Arthur Acheson
Chair of the MAG
June 2011

Regional Transportation Strategy 2011 –
A Sustainable Transport Future

Public Consultation Document

Contents

1 Introduction 1
1.1 How to respond 2
2 Where we are now 3
2.1 Transportation: at the hub of our daily lives 3
2.2 The context 4
2.3 The current Regional Transportation Strategy 11
2.4 Trends in transport 17
2.5 Challenges for transport to 2025 19
2.6 Conclusion 23
3 Where do we want to get to? 25
3.1 A sustainable transport future 25
3.2 High Level Transport Aims 27
3.3 Strategic Objectives 29
3.4 Conclusion 33
4 How will we get there? 35
4.1 The current strategy – Transport Plans 35
4.2 Transportation interventions 365 Making choices 45
5.1 A new approach to implementation – a Transportation Policy Prioritisation Framework 45
5.2 Policy prioritisation in practice 47
6 What will we do next? 53
Glossary 55
Annex 1 – Assessment i
Equality Impact i
Strategic Environmental Assessment i
Other Assessments i
Habitats Directive ii31

1 Introduction

The Department for Regional Development is reviewing the current Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) 2002-2012 and has developed proposals for a revised draft Regional Transportation Strategy with support for sustainable economic growth at its core. While growing the economy is the priority, economic growth cannot be taken forward in isolation from determined efforts to protect our environment and help transform our society. This consultation document outlines where the current RTS has taken us, where we believe we need to get to in the future and how we intend to get there. It proposes a series of strategic objectives designed to achieve the transportation vision for the region underpinned by a series of policies and programmes.

This consultation document maps out the future direction for transportation here beyond 2015 when the current transport plans are timed to expire.

We do recognise however that at the time of publication this document does not fully reflect a number of key issues such the Budget settlement, the results of ISNI 3 or the emerging Regional Economic Strategy and so the outworking of these, and other strategic plans will need to be considered before a final document is published.

The purpose of the consultation is therefore to share our initial thinking and to seek views that will inform the process and assist in producing a strategy that is inclusive, realistic, meaningful and relevant.

2

1.1 How to respond

We have set out in this consultation document our vision for the future, the challenges that face us and how we envisage addressing those challenges to achieve a sustainable transport future. We do not however, presume to have all the answers and it is accepted that others may have an alternative view. It is important that we hear those views and opinions and consider them.

You can send us your views on the issues that feature in this document and on any other relevant issues which may not have been covered to the address below. We

Commentary

1. Introduction

Support for sustainable economic growth is one aspect of a transportation strategy. Sustainability in terms of social and environmental effects must also be at the core of the strategy.

The current RTS has failed to meet objectives of environmental and social sustainability.

The consultation document describes the same objectives but does not offer solutions to the problems that have worsened during the present RTS.

The strategic objectives are worth nothing since they repeat the formula of the failed RTS.

have set out some questions at the end of various sections that may help you express your views. We are particularly interested in what you think of the proposed Strategic Objectives and how you rank them in the table on page 34.

If you require this document in an accessible format please contact us.

We would like to receive your response by 28 June 2011.

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In accordance with the requirement of the Freedom of information act (2000) all information contained in your response may be subject to publication or disclosure.
This may include personal information such as your name and address. If you want your response or your name and address to remain confidential, you should explain why confidentiality is necessary. Your request will be granted only if it is consistent with freedom of information obligations. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your email system will not be regarded as binding on the Department.

2 Where we are now

2.1 Transportation: at the hub of our daily lives

The work undertaken in developing this revised Regional Transportation Strategy is designed to support the Executive's overall aim, as set out in the draft Programme for Government, that is to build a safe, peaceful, fair and prosperous society in Northern Ireland, with respect for the rule of law and where everyone enjoys a better quality of life now and in the years to come[1].

The Executive's key focus is to develop our economy subject to available resources, which

2. The current position

2.1 It is agreed that the RTS should support the Executive's overall aim which is to build a safe, peaceful, fair and prosperous society in Northern Ireland, with respect for the rule of law and where everyone enjoys a better quality of life now and in the years to come. Developing the economy will **create** resources and should not be subject to available resources.

is particularly challenging given the global economic climate. Both the Executive's draft Budget and the new Economic Strategy are designed to contribute to developing our economy, focusing on increasing wealth and employment creation through export led economic growth balanced across the region. The transportation network is vital to the economy. It connects businesses with their customers and suppliers and allows people to gain access to jobs, as well as important education and health services and leisure opportunities. The revised Regional Transportation Strategy will be important in guiding decisions on investment in transportation. Our transport network has to allow people and goods to move efficiently. It is not about moving vehicles but about making sure that people and businesses can access the places and services they need in a sustainable way.

As we face a prolonged period of reduced public expenditure, making the right choices on transport will be more important than ever. Achieving this will mean addressing some fundamental challenges, making the most of what we already have, and making some difficult choices.

[1] Draft Programme for Government 2011-2015, Office of the First Minister Deputy First Minister, 2010, www.pfgbudgetni.gov.uk4

[2] Europe 2020: a European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. European Commission, March 2010.

[3] A sustainable future for transport: towards an integrated, technology-led and user friendly system, European Commission Communication, June 2009

[4] DECISION No 406/2009/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 23 April 2009 on the effort of Member States to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions to meet the Communitys greenhouse gas emission reduction commitments up to 2020

[5] http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/legislation/cc_act_08/cc_act_08.aspx

[6] http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/what_we_do/lc_uk/carbon_budgets/carbon_budgets.aspx

[7] Everyone's Involved: Sustainable Development Strategy

[8] Everyone's Involved – Sustainable Development Strategy, OFMdFM, May 2010

2.2 The context

We are not unique in the issues we face; they are the same across the European Union. The Europe 2020 strategy is a plan for economic renewal which aims to create jobs, encourage 'green' economic growth and create

Export led economic growth may be generated from electronic transfer of information as well as from physical movement of products.

It is agreed that the transportation network is vital to the economy. To help to build a fair as well as prosperous society, the network must be universally available without taking account of available individual resources. Cost prohibits some people from using the network – these people do not have access to cars and public transport is too expensive.

The over-use of this catch-phrase about "not being about moving vehicles" is not convincing because vehicles will be used for almost 100% of medium and longer journeys. Even shorter journeys will continue to involve vehicles to provide the capacity to carry goods as well as people and to enable society to cope with inclement weather.

It is agreed that there are fundamental challenges. Meeting these challenges will involve major shifts in allocation of resources.

2.2 The context

It is a great over-simplification to state that the issues are the same across the European Union. There are many different issues because of the different ways that societies have created settlement patterns and transportation habits.

an inclusive society. Its main targets include the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 20% from 1990 levels, to have 20% of energy consumption from renewable energy, and to increase energy efficiency by 20%.

The European Commission's Communication on transport sets the proposed policy objectives which are reflected in this Strategy. They include the integration of transport, increased sustainability, improved road safety and the use of advanced technological solutions.
The European Union has also set an agreed target for a 20% reduction in EU greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 (rising to 30% when there is a successful outcome to international climate negotiations) and a 50% reduction by 2050 compared to 1990 levels

The Climate Change Act 2008 set a legally binding greenhouse gas emissions reduction target for the United Kingdom against a 1990 baseline of 34% for 2020 and of at least 80% for 2050 and introduced five-yearly carbon budgets to ensure these are met. The UK Coalition Government has confirmed its commitment to meeting the targets and carbon budgets set out in the Climate Change Act.

The Executive and Assembly here have consented to the extension of the Climate Change Act 2008, and are contributing to UK carbon budgets and targets. The Executive has made a commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25% on 1990 levels by 2025, working for a sustainable future through the Sustainable Development Strategy.

We also want to make sure that a refreshed Regional Transportation Strategy supports the Executive's overall regional spatial strategy. We have reviewed the 2001 Regional Development Strategy and produced a revised Strategy for consultation which encourages patterns of development to enable society to meet future needs sustainably. It promotes the location of homes near jobs and services to reduce the need to travel as well as development at sites already well served by sustainable transport and developing clusters of towns to maximise their potential.

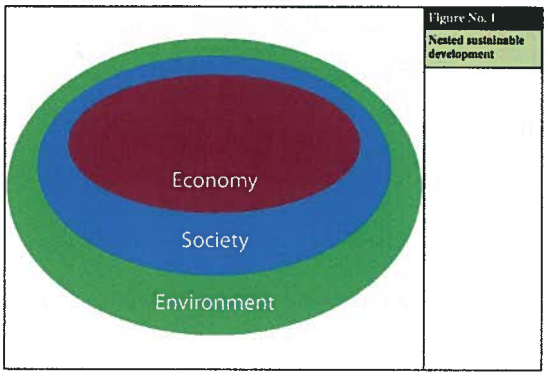
Northern Ireland's performance in transportation over the lifetime of the current RDS has seen an increase and not a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from transportation; the vast majority of these emissions come from private vehicles.

Regrettably, the Regional Development Strategy does not emphasise the importance of redeveloping vacant land in existing settlements.

It acknowledges an out-of town "regional shopping centre".

Far from promoting homes near jobs and services, the RDS review accepts that under PPS21, every farm could have a new dwelling every ten years – creating the potential for over 48,000 new individual dwellings scattered across the whole of the Northern Ireland countryside by 2025. The towns are thereby weakened and the concept of clustering is meaningless as people move out to green field housing and use private cars to go out-of-town shopping.

Sustainability is centred on the economy, but set within the context of both societal and environmental constraints. For this regional Transportation Strategy to be sustainable, it must meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Our society and economies are completely dependent on the environment which encompasses them and are therefore bound to its limits and capabilities.



[9] Regional Development Strategy, DRD, 2001

[10] Ott, K. (2003). "The Case for Strong Sustainability." In: Ott, K. & P. Thapa (eds.) (2003) .Greifswald's Environmental Ethics. Greifswald: Steinbecker Verlag Ulrich Rose.

While these 3 factors are the major drivers for sustainable policies, the implementation of policy is linked to wider spending priorities and limitations. The Executive's draft Budget 2011-15 set out its spending priorities as:

- stimulating the economy;
- tackling disadvantage;
- protecting the most vulnerable in society; and
- protecting frontline services.

The draft Executive Budget indicated a reduction in available capital of 40% in real terms and a real terms reduction in current expenditure of 8% by 2014/15. The Department for Regional Development's allocation should help to continue to improve elements of our transportation infrastructure and the majority of our existing programmes, albeit at a much reduced level than in recent times.

It is agreed that economy, society and environment must be collectively sustainable.

A sustainable transportation strategy depends less on government budget spending on the transportation network and more on finding ways to encourage sustainable choices.

Most money spent on transport in Northern Ireland is spent privately.

Private use of vehicles consumes most fuel, causing most greenhouse gas emissions.

Public resources should be diverted away from existing programmes which have caused transportation in Northern Ireland to be the only sector where greenhouse gas emissions have increased during the period of the existing programmes under the current RTS. Existing programmes have the intended or unintended consequences of encouraging more use of private vehicles. The capacity of existing transportation infrastructure could be increased if ways can be found to ensure that private vehicle-kilometres are reduced in favour of public vehicle-kilometres.

Economic Factors

Transportation provides the essential link between production, distribution and consumption which underpins all economic activity.

The freight and logistics industry is highly important to our economic well being both as an employer and in serving producers and consumers, importers and exporters and the service industries alike.

As an employer, the transport sector adds to the wealth of the economy. In March 2010, just under 45,000 people were in transport-related employment, or about 1 person in 6 of those in employment.

Beyond the direct contribution of the transport sector to the economy, transportation also has a much wider impact on competitiveness with the potential to help economic prosperity through improved connectivity, reduced congestion, improved journey time and reliability, and increased accessibility[12],both internal and external. With many businesses now relying on just-in-time delivery methods, the effective and predictable movement of goods is vital to the development of a dynamic, all-island economy.

While the road network is essential for internal freight, commercial air and sea ports handle 95% of external trade.

[11]Northern Ireland Transport Statistics, DRD

[12]Strategy Unit, An Analysis of Urban Transport, Cabinet Office, London, November 2009, and Eddington et al, The Eddington Transport Study, DfT, London, December 2006.7

Access to markets and labour supply, accommodation and transport links are generally the most important factors driving decisions on business location[13] for all business sectors. The UK Cities Monitor 2008 survey[14] indicated that transport was the primary concern when the business community was asked how cities could be improved.[15]

Particular areas identified for improvement included inter-urban transport links, public transport and congestion.

An inadequate transportation infrastructure can increase traffic congestion, reduce productivity, constrain markets and increase costs. This not only affects existing firms but also the general quality of life for everyone living here and the area's attractiveness as an investment and

Economic Factors

It is agreed that transportation is an essential link.

The unintended consequence of the improvement of the transportation network during the current RTS has been the significant increase in private vehicle-kilometres and the resulting increase in greenhouse gas emissions.

The increases in private-vehicle numbers, kilometres travelled and emissions produced do not meet the objective of the strategy. Increases in private vehicle numbers and use reduce the efficiency of the freight and logistics industry which employs almost 45,000 people.

The effective and predictable movement of goods is greatly enhanced by reducing the number and usage of private vehicles. Fewer private vehicles and fewer private vehicle-kilometres travelled offers more free road space for freight and logistics transport.

With 40% of homes not owning a car and up to 50% of no-car households in some urban areas, labour links to business locations have been reduced by the increased use of the transportation network by private vehicles during the period of the current RDS. Buses and freight transport do not cause congestion in Northern Ireland. Congestion is caused by private vehicles. The transportation infrastructure is not inadequate; it is over-used at specific times by private vehicles which are the cause of any lost productivity, constraints on markets and increase of cost. The solution is not to increase the transportation infrastructure but instead to reduce private vehicle numbers and private vehicle-kilometres travelled.

visitor location. The Independent Review of Economic Policy commissioned by DETI concluded that it is vital for the economy to develop its connectivity to international growth hubs.[16]

Increasingly, the main resource of any business, but particularly for high-value businesses, is staff. It is important for the workforce to be able to get to and from their places of work in a reasonable time and at a reasonable cost. Work carried out by Oxford Economics[17] shows that future growth will be focused around Belfast and other major towns and cities. The movement of the population out of Belfast to the suburbs and towns has already led to increased commuting and Oxford Economics suggest that this will continue to grow, with the greatest demand being for commuting to Belfast. While one of the aims of the Regional Development Strategy is to grow the population of Belfast, if past trends were to continue, by 2028 around 20,000 extra people could be commuting into Belfast.

The Megacities Challenges Report[18] found that while economic competitiveness drives successful regions, the quality of the environment, housing and other services are key to attracting and retaining skilled people. In addition, quality of life factors are increasingly important factors in business location decisions[19].

[13]McQuaid et al, The Importance of Transport in Business' Location Decisions, DfT, London, January 2004
[14]The Cities Monitor survey examines issues important to companies in deciding where to locate in the United Kingdom.
[15]Strategy Unit, An Analysis of Urban Transport, Cabinet Office, London, November 2009
[16]Barnett, Richard, Independent Review of Economic Policy, DETI, Belfast, September 2009, pp108
[17]Source: Business Land Need Study, DRD, 2008 (update August 2009) + DETI Labour Force survey 2007
[18]Megacities Challenge Report: A Stakeholders Perspective. Siemens AG, 2007 commissioned by Siemens for the Davos World Economic Forum in 2006.
[19]Salvesen and Renski, The Importance of Quality of Life in the Location Decisions of New Economy Firms, Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, University of North Carolina, January 20038

The Eddington Transport Study[20] concluded that a well-functioning transport system is vital for a successful economy and to people's quality of life. There is a high premium on making the right decisions because transport access affects an individual's decision on where they want to

The way for the economy to develop its connectivity to international growth hubs is to reduce the number and usage of private vehicles. Better transportation infrastructure encourages greater numbers and higher usage of private vehicles.

The existing transportation network can accommodate vastly higher numbers of people living and working in Belfast or commuting to Belfast. The Regional Transportation Strategy Review must provide the necessary incentives for everyone to use public transport for at least some journeys.

It is clear that a well-functioning transport system is vital. The RDS did not provide such a system and the Review, calling for an adaptation of existing programmes continues the bad trend and makes the problems worse. Improving the transportation network encourages people to buy more cars, drive longer distances and make unsustainable choices of where to live and work. Increasing transportation network capacity by reducing the number of private vehicles and usage is better than improving the network – it is less costly, it reduces greenhouse gas emissions and can be done with the stroke of a pen, eliminating all fares on public transport in Northern Ireland, funded from a reduction in planned road improvement expenditure.

live and work and companies' decisions on where they wish to invest or locate.
The tourism sector is recognised as a pillar of our economy. While businesses can choose to locate on or near key transport corridors, tourist sites cannot (RTS Supplement: Supporting Data - Section One). There is therefore potential to support growth in the sector by having a region where it is easy to travel from one place to another. This will also improve the quality of life for those who wish to live and work here.
To make sure that all of our society benefits from economic growth, the Executive has worked to develop the transport infrastructure within the Region. Improved internal connections will increase the attractiveness of all areas to both foreign and domestic investment, helping to overcome the significant socio-economic differentials which exist in the Region.
Ensuring high levels of connectivity to, from and within the Region is a key requirement given the focus on export-orientated economic growth.

Societal Factors
The population density of the region is relatively low in comparison with other rural regions in Europe. Of the 1.7 million people living here, 34.4% live in the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area, including just over 16% in Belfast itself, 5.4% in the Derry/ Londonderry Urban Area and 25.3% in other small, medium and large towns. 21% live in villages and small towns. The remaining 27% live in small villages, hamlets and scattered farms and houses in the countryside.
Population predictions are for high rates of growth in Mid Ulster and the West with the population of central Belfast falling as people move to semi-rural and rural areas.
The transport challenges in rural areas are different from those in urban areas (RTS Supplement: Supporting Data - Section Nine).
The Executive's draft Programme for Government is committed to working towards a safe, peaceful, fair and prosperous society where everyone can enjoy a better quality of life. The Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister has published

Tourism is immensely important and "No Fares Please" public transport would be a most popular attraction.

Ease of travel by tourists from one place to another is greatly enhanced by reducing the number and usage of private vehicles by introducing a "No Fares Please" policy, leaving more space for buses and freight vehicles. Tourists would also travel free on buses and trains, contributing to the special welcome of Northern Ireland.

Internal connections improve when fewer private vehicles are on the roads. A "No Fares Please" policy assists to remove socio-economic differentials in more than one way – by reducing congestion on the existing traffic infrastructure and by making public transport both more economically accessible to user groups in all socio-economic categories and more viable as usage increases.

Diverting the cost of only a small percentage of individual journeys from inefficient private transport to efficient "No Fares Please" public transport would provide a significant additional income for Translink, creating opportunities for investment in more frequent and better tailored services to suit our low population density. This would produce the desired modal shift, encouraging people to find ways of getting to the bus stop or the station, on foot, on a bike, by getting a lift, etc., reducing congestion and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions.

At present the incentive is to get a car as soon as possible and then use it as often as possible. That costs "Northern Ireland plc" as much as £6billion per year – over 97% of all our total transport costs are spent on private motoring. It also costs lives and injuries because of the poorer safety record of private vehicles compared to public transport.
Fairness is currently compromised – some people simply cannot afford either to drive a car or to pay the fares on public transport. Overall prosperity is compromised because as a society we spend too much on private vehicles because we perceive them to be the only suitable choice; all these factors adversely affect our quality of life.

a consultation document, Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration[22].
It acknowledges that a secure community must also be supported by adequate infrastructure.
The availability and accessibility of transport is important in any effort

[20]Eddington Transport Study: Main report: Transport's role in sustaining the UK's productivity and competitiveness, Department for Transport, December 2006.
[21]Statistical Classification and Delineation of Settlements, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, February 2005
[22]Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration, OFMdFM, July 2010

to address exclusion, providing access to educational, employment, social and recreational opportunities.
One household in four here does not own a car[23] and this rises to over half of all households in some urban areas. Given that our transport network has been developed around the car, people living in socially disadvantaged areas can find it difficult to access education, employment and health services[24] if they do not have access to a car or are unable to drive. This is particularly true if public transport provision does not meet the needs of the community. It may be that the service is not accessible, as may be the case for some older people or people with disabilities or, as in rural areas, the services themselves may be limited (RTS Supplement: Supporting Data). Good quality, affordable public transport, together with a safe and secure pedestrian and cycling environment can deliver health and social benefits[25] and are important, therefore, to social inclusion.
Young people rely on public transport for independent travel. Cost and availability are the two most significant factors preventing young people from using public transport, impacting on their ability to engage in social, education and employment opportunities.
In rural areas, limited services have a significant impact on young people's lives, limiting their opportunities to meet up with friends and take part in activities.[26]
We live in a society where the divisions created by conflict still exist in some areas.
The revised Regional Development Strategy promotes development which creates safe places for people to meet and undertake shared

It is agreed that the availability and accessibility of transport are important in any effort to address exclusion.

Not only are the availability and accessibility of transport important in any effort to address exclusion, this transport must be affordable. The RTS Review is calling for reduced emissions of greenhouse gases and increased economic activity with more people commuting to work, particularly in Belfast. The most effective way to reduce emissions while increasing economic activity is to radically encourage more people to "get on the bus" or "get on the train" and "get out of the car" for at least some of their journeys. Making public transport universally affordable with a "No Fares Please" policy has many beneficial effects, not least of which is that it immediately improves opportunities for training, work, social and leisure for people without access to cars.

"No Fares Please" does not immediately solve all the problems of physical accessibility or adequacy of service. Drivers for whom public transport is presently perceived as "too expensive" will begin to consider the bus or train as the best value option, creating the virtuous circle which gradually diverts resources from the private car to public transport. Additional resources allow a higher frequency of service and greater access to more remote places, further increasing the attractiveness of public transport.

activities while ensuring there are no barriers, perceived or physical, to access these places. Because of the layout of our roads infrastructure, parts of some cities have become physically isolated from shared spaces, (areas used equally by all communities). While regarded as necessary in the past, this segregating infrastructure is now often seen as alienating communities. Recent research[27] suggests that transport can play a part in promoting good relations. It can re-connect communities and provide a mobile neutral shared space. Walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure and services need to improve the connections between isolated communities and other areas.

[23]Source: Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
[24]Juliet Solomon, Transport and Social Exclusion, TRaC, University of North London, Hine, J. & Mitchell, F. Transport Disadvantage and Social Exclusion. Exclusionary mechanisms in transport in urban Scotland, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2003 Department for Transport, Social Inclusion: Transport Aspects (UG320), Final Report prepared by Centre for Transport Studies, Imperial College, Mott MacDonald, Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds, March 2006.
[25]Professor Liam Donaldson, 2009 Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer, DoH, London, March 2010
[26]Transport Matters, Young People's Experiences, Attitudes and Ideas for Improving Public Transport, January 2011, Consumer Council
[27]Public Space For A Shared Belfast A Research Report For Belfast City Council, Frank Gaffikin, Malachy McEldowney, Gavan Rafferty, Ken Sterrett, 2008, Belfast City Council

10

Environmental Factors

While economic growth is the Executive's top priority, determined efforts to protect or enhance the environment are also required, not least to comply with European Union Directives. Transportation currently accounts for around a quarter of the man-made greenhouse gas emissions. It is also the only sector which continues to experience significant increases in greenhouse gas emissions. Within road transport, cars are the biggest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions with much of the remaining share from heavy and light goods vehicles (RTS Supplement: Supporting Data). The Stern Review – The Economics of Climate Change[28] indicated that a well-designed transportation strategy can support economic growth and tackle carbon emissions.

Our aim is to provide a transportation network that strikes the right balance, supporting economic growth while still reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other

The layout of our roads infrastructure has caused physical isolation in many places in both towns and cities in Northern Ireland. The Regional Transportation Strategy Review should include the immediate introduction of new guidance for the design of streets (in contrast to roads designed to DMRB standards). It is recommended that the Manual for Streets 2 be adopted in Northern Ireland to ensure that all new and refurbished schemes put multi-use streets at the heart of our cities and towns, leaving trunk roads for the journeys between or around settlements, not in or through them.

These disturbing facts, which are also quoted in the Regional Development Strategy Review, require a radical shift in policy to divert resources away from the creation of additional transport infrastructure (with the unintended consequence of greater encouragement of private car ownership and use) towards more efficient, more economical, less polluting and fairer use of the existing infrastructure.

Indeed to deal with the societal issues of isolation noted above, it may be in certain instances desirable and effective to reduce the extent of road infrastructure, releasing land and creating opportunities to allow cities and towns to recover and to repair their streets and replace buildings demolished for previous overdesigned road schemes.

environmental impacts and meeting the needs of all in our society. To do this, we need to include the environmental and congestion costs of transport, encourage technological innovation, promote behavioural change, and enable the right decisions on investment to be made through a transparent prioritisation process.

While technological innovation will have a role to play it will only be part and not all of the solution. Ultimately, reducing emissions and realising more sustainable transport arrangements will require significant changes in travel behaviour and difficult decisions as to how we prioritise and maximise the use of finite road space. The Strategy will seek to offer transport users practical and attractive choices, encourage technological innovation, and ensure, through prioritisation, that the right decisions are made on investment.

While mitigated by good design, transportation nonetheless affects the environment in a number of ways. Building transportation infrastructure has a direct impact on the landscape and the traffic and infrastructure affect the historic character of an area. Biodiversity, in particular habitats, can also be adversely affected. Our increasing car use has had a significant negative impact on the environment and on our quality of life, particularly in urban areas.

Heavy road traffic can cause poor air quality, unacceptable noise levels, a weakened sense of neighbourhood and local community and the loss of valuable living space as land is used for transport infrastructure. The impact is greater for those living alongside the main roads in urban areas, which are predominantly in lower income areas.[29]

[27]Public Space For A Shared Belfast A Research Report For Belfast City Council, Frank Gaffikin, Malachy McEldowney, Gavan Rafferty, Ken Sterrett, 2008, Belfast City Council

[28]The Stern Review – The Economics of Climate Change, Cambridge University Press, October 2006

[29]Social Exclusion Unit, Transport and Social Exclusion: Making the Connections, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, February 2003

11

Transportation not only affects the environment but is also affected by it. We are already experiencing regular flooding in many areas and increased road and other hard surfaces, such as replacing gardens with driveways,

It is agreed that we need to do these things and it is suggested that the Northern Ireland Executive introduce a "No Fares Please" policy as part of the RTS Review. This would be an elegant solution which would be universally popular and produce results within a four year period to reduce costs and pollution while improving accessibility for people who currently can afford neither public transport nor a car. It would also begin the modal shift required if we are to meet targets and it would be done in a way that encourages us all to leave the car at home – at least some of the time.

Difficult decisions are eased if they are cost-effective decisions, both for individuals and for society. The proposed "No Fares Please" policy is a winner for government and a winner for the people.

Building less new transportation network, encouraging people out of their cars and onto free public transport helps to provide the opportunity to **remove** redundant infrastructure as soon as possible. This is a responsible part of city building.

All the indicators highlighted in the text would be improved by the proposed "No Fares Please" policy. These include improved air quality, reduced noise levels, a stronger sense of neighbourhood and local community and the reclamation of valuable living space as redundant transport infrastructure can be reviewed and the cities and towns repaired.

increases the risk of flooding from surface water. With climate change projections for both higher summer temperatures and more frequent heavy rain[30], we need to ensure our transport system can be designed to cope.[31]

2.3 The current Regional Transportation Strategy[32] Vision: "to have a modern, sustainable, safe transportation system which benefits society, the economy and the environment and which actively contributes to social inclusion and everyone's quality of life" The current Regional Transportation Strategy published in 2002 presented a range of initiatives to improve our transportation infrastructure, promote sustainable travel and encourage the use of modes of travel other than the car. It focused on tackling congestion and improving journey times on key transport corridors by proposing strategic priorities, mostly around increasing road capacity, to accommodate predicted demand. Aimed at securing new transportation infrastructure investment in the period up to 2012, it has to date delivered over £3.2 billion in transport investment.

We subsequently produced 3 Transport Plans[33] to detail multi-modal proposals for transport up to 2015. They provided for and encouraged greater use of public transport, walking and cycling while supporting an appropriate level of movement of cars and goods vehicles. The Transport Plans recognised the importance of transport to reducing social exclusion by providing better access to employment, health and leisure facilities.

We also developed an Accessible Transport Strategy in 2005 which identified the barriers that prevent older people and people with disabilities from making full use of the transport network and the actions to reduce those barriers.

All three Transport Plans and the Accessible Transport Strategy cover the period up to 2015, extending the RTS implementation to that date. Our progress against the principal initiatives in the current RTS is summarised on the following pages. More detail is on our website www.drdni.gov.uk

[30]Source: UK Climate Projections 09, www.defra.gov.uk

[31]Preparing for a Climate Change in Northern Ireland, 2007, Department of Environment

It is predictable, both from experience elsewhere and from common sense, that **reducing congestion by increasing road capacity will encourage increasing use of the private car** with consequent problems in meeting the economic, social and environmental objectives of the vision and the plan.

£3.2billion in transport investment spent in the last ten years would have provided public transport with "No Fares Please" for thirty years.

There is still time to change policy and to start the indicators going in the right direction.

Public transport costs more than the car for many city journeys, even when cars have a single occupant.

Well designed solutions are simple and elegant. Public transport, free at the point of use, is one of these simple elegant solutions. It is a software solution which does not require any additional investment in roads, buses or trains. It could be phased in if necessary to ensure ease of introduction – all journeys to and from Neighbourhood Renewal Areas, for example, could be free of charge. All residents in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas could receive Smartpasses to assess uptake and impact before rolling out free public transport across Northern Ireland.

Another phasing option would be to provide public transport free at the point of use for everyone under 25, thereby establishing public transport habits and maintaining these habits into first employment.

[32]Regional Transportation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2002-2012, DRD, 2002
[33]Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan, covering the main roads and railways www.drdni.gov.uk/rstn_tp-2.pdf
Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan covering, Belfast, Carrickfergus, Castlereagh, Lisburn, Newtownabbey and North Down Council areas www.drdni.gov.uk/index/bmtp.htm
Sub-Regional Transport Plan, covering the rest of the Region www.drdni.gov.uk/index/subregionaltransport.htm

12 Progress in implementing the principal initiatives in the current Regional Transportation Strategy

MEASURE	OUTCOME
Upgrade of the existing rail network and services (with the exception of Antrim-Knockmore);	Track improved between Belfast and Bangor and Larne, and between Ballymena and Coleraine. New station built at Newry and other stations upgraded.
Provision of new, modern trains and increased rail capacity;	43 new trains in passenger service by 2012, replacing all old trains and increasing capacity.
Quality Bus Corridors on all main Belfast commuter routes;	QBCs launched on Saintfield Road, Newtownards Road, Falls Road, Shore Road and Antrim Road; QBCs planned for 9 other main routes by 2015.
Provision of new, modern accessible buses;	Average bus age is less than 8 years. Over 80% of Ulsterbuses are now accessible and 100% of Metro buses. New bus stations built at Lisburn and Coleraine and a combined bus and rail station at Bangor.
Commencement of a rapid transit network in Belfast;	Work started on the development of preliminary design for a pilot rapid transit network.
Local improvements in towns to assist pedestrians and cyclists and to provide new services throughout the day;	New public transport services being introduced, improvements to assist walking and cycling, identified through the SRTP, carried out as funding allows.
Introduction of innovative demand responsive transport in rural areas;	Rural Community Transport Partnerships, funded by the Department, provide demand responsive services, Dial-a-Lift, in rurally isolated areas.
Elimination of 75% of the road maintenance backlog;	Resource pressures have meant that the maintenance backlog has continued to rise.
Measures to improve safety;	Through a combination of local highway infrastructure and other road safety measures, the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads has fallen by over 37% from 1830 in 2001 to 1150 in 2009 (RTS Supplement: Supporting Data)

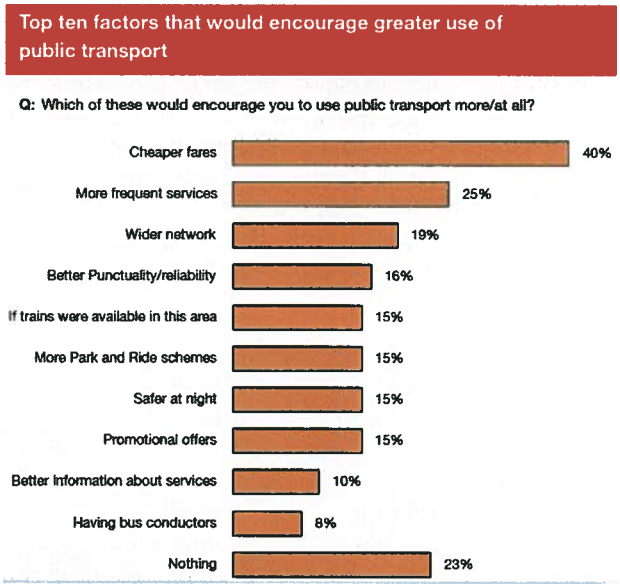
MEASURE	OUTCOME		
Strategic highway (road) improvements	The RTS proposed a number of Strategic Road Improvements.		
	Type of SRI	Proposed	Constructed
	Bypass/link Roads	16 (number)	10
	Dual Carriageway	78 km	24.2 km
	Widen Single Carriageway	40 km	22.9 km
	Junction Improvements	11 (number)	10

The entire existing rail network has been retained[34] with track improvements on the lines between Belfast and Bangor, Belfast and Larne and Ballymena and Coleraine. Twenty three new trains are now in service andanother 20 are on order. This means that all trains will have been replaced and capacity increased, apart from Enterprise services, meeting the RTS target. A new station has been built at Newry and Central Station has been refurbished, while other stations and halts across the network have been upgraded.

Case Study: Bangor, Translink Interchange
The Translink Interchange in Bangor was designed as a state-of-the-art, userfriendly transport centre that would enable smooth transitions between bus, rail and the private car. The result is striking, conveying a dynamic and forward looking image in keeping with the new millennium. The building was planned to integrate with its urban environment, yet at the same time to make a modern and confident statement. It provides a feeling of comfort and quality, which enhances both the image of public transport as well as the surrounding area. Source: Making Cities Work (2003), G Hazel, R Parry, John Wiley & Sons

Greater use of public transport, a desirable objective, should be enabled if the RTS responds to the survey message provided by the Northern Ireland Consumer Council (as per diagram below). Fares were by far the biggest concern.

Source:



www.consumercouncil.org.uk/publications/?id=407

This has resulted in more comfortable and reliable services and has led to a significant positive effect on passenger numbers, with a 61% increase in journeys between 2001/02 and 2009/10 across the network. The RTS aimed for a 60% increase (RTS Supplement: Supporting Data).

From 2004/05 to 2009/10, funding was provided towards the purchase of over 800 new buses and the upgrade of bus stations, workshops and garages. This included the construction of a new bus station at Lisburn. The new buses now provide a more modern, comfortable and reliable service. The funding proposed by the Executive's Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland[35] exceeded RTS proposed funding for road schemes. This additional funding for

These figures are encouraging but do not hide the fact that private vehicle numbers and carbon emissions in Northern Ireland are still rising while there are international commitments that they should be falling instead.

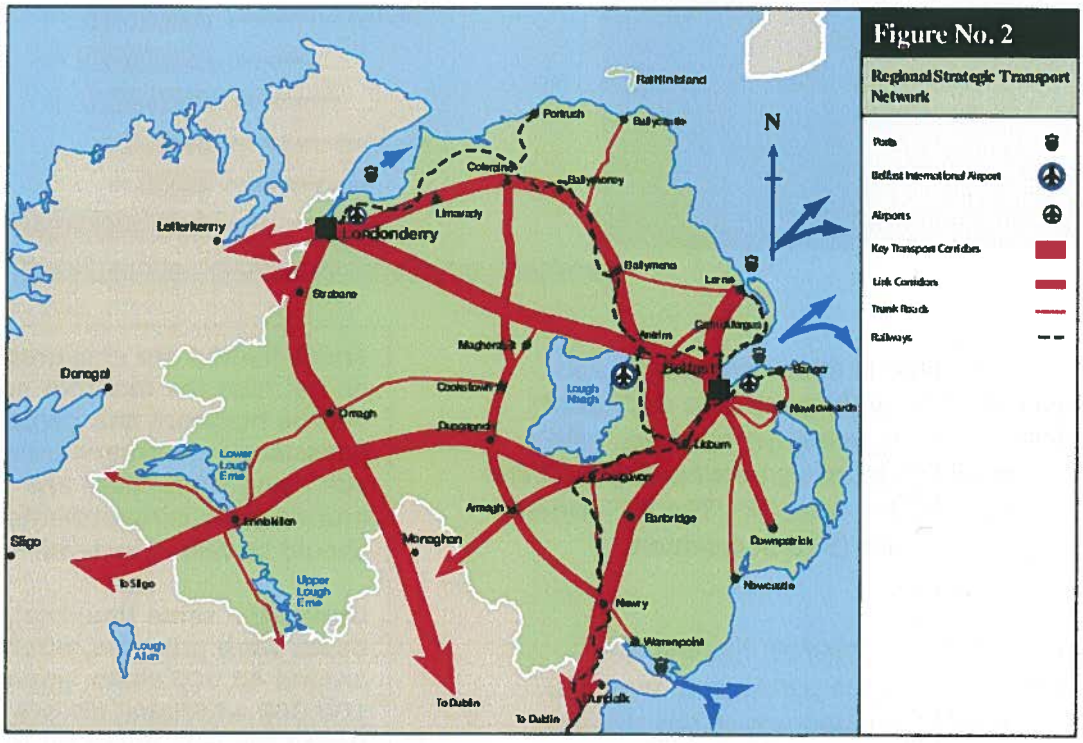
During the same time that 800 new buses were provided, offering around 40,000 seats, approximately 100,000 additional private vehicles joined the new buses on Northern Ireland's roads.

transport, heavily focused on strategic road improvements to the Regional Strategic Transport Network, has allowed roads schemes to progress more rapidly than planned and some planned 2+1 improvements (where an additional lane is provided in one direction) in the Strategic Road Improvement Programme[36] have been upgraded to full dualling schemes which had not been envisaged in the original Strategy. The schemes, once completed, will improve safety, address congestion and are likely to reduce journey times on the affected routes (RTS Supplement: Supporting Data).

[34]The Knockmore Railway line has been "mothballed" – while no longer in service, the line is maintained sufficiently to allow it to be used for the occasional diversion of passenger services, for engineering runs and for training purposes.

[35]Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2008-2018, Strategic Investment Board Limited, www.sibni.gov.uk

[36]Strategic Road Improvement Programme, DRD Roads Service, www.roadsni.gov.uk



Roads Structural Maintenance, however, has not received sufficient funding and as a result the structural maintenance backlog has continued to increase. This has resulted in further deterioration of the network and increased expenditure on reactive repairs and on compensation claims to owners of damaged vehicles. There has also been an impact on

measures to improve walking and cycling which are included in the structural maintenance programme.

While the Sub-Regional Transport Plan suggested increased public transport services in towns and cities outside Belfast, funding constraints have either prevented their implementation or meant that services which were initially introduced have subsequently had to be withdrawn. Ulsterbus passenger numbers decreased by 6.5% between 2001/02 to 2009/10. Metro (formerly Citybus) services in Belfast, where there is a greater population density, increased by 30.2% in the same period (RTS Supplement: Supporting Data). The Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan proposed the introduction of Quality Bus Corridors on 14 main Belfast commuter routes. To date, 5 are in place. Nine others are planned for implementation by 2015 but are dependent on the availability of funding.

While both public transport and roads have received funding above pre-Regional Transportation Strategy levels, the Executive, through the Investment Strategy, focused on providing capital funding for Strategic Road improvements. This change in priorities accelerated the development of the roads infrastructure and skewed the implementation of the RTS away from that which was originally envisaged.

The timescale for completion of the capital schemes envisaged in the existing 2002 Strategy and subsequently enhanced in the Investment Strategy is now dependent on the availability of funds. We believe that we should continue with these important transportation measures. The changed economic circumstances, however, mean that future funding levels for transport are likely to be significantly lower than in recent years and decisions about how best to invest those funds which are available will become increasingly difficult.

2.4 Trends in transport

In reflecting on the extent to which the current RTS has been implemented it is also important to consider a number of transport trends over the past decade or so;

There is no point in providing additional public transport services if people choose to buy and use private cars instead. People continue to choose private cars because they offer the best combination of convenience, comfort and cost, particularly perceived cost at the point of use. Once the private car has been purchased, insured and taxed, the only perceived costs at the point of use are for fuel and parking. This means that public transport fares are often perceived as more expensive than the private car, particularly for family travel. On convenience and comfort, the private car wins handsomely, particularly on smooth new roads for commuting.

Government can influence the biggest reason why people choose not to use public transport – perceived cost at the point of use. On a "No Fares Please" bus or train, some convenience and some comfort are perceived as worthy sacrifices.

It is recommended that a study is commissioned to investigate consumer choice on a variety of route types if fares were to be removed. The Ministerial Advisory Group is willing to advise on details. Such a study, using a recognised methodology, would enable DRD Minister to bring to the Executive a proposal which is backed up by scientific method to provide the necessary radical intervention to change habits from increasing economic, social and environmental costs to reduced overall costs in all three categories and the opportunity, within the lifetime of this Executive, to achieve the sea change necessary in Northern Ireland's transportation.

Such a change would indeed be strategic.

These also indicated the progress made by the RTS in a number of areas.

- There was a 119% increase in goods lifted and transported by vehicles weighing over 3.5 tonnes[37] between 2001 - 2007 reflecting increasing export sales by manufacturing companies[38]. Although this has fallen back because of the recession, the tonnage of goods lifted in 2009 was still 64% higher that the 2001 figure;

- Although it has now fallen with the economic downturn, 23.5 million tonnes of freight moved through the sea ports in 2008 compared to 21.2 million tonnes in 2001. 36,300 tonnes of freight also passed through the airports in 2008 compared to 33,100 tonnes in 2001;

- The number of Light Goods Vehicles increased by 54% between 2001 and 2009;

- Vehicle Kilometres of Travel increased to 20,002 million in 2007 from 17,212 million in 2001, an increase of over 2.5% per annum – forecasts at the time of the 2002 RTS had predicted an increase of less than 2% per annum;

- Car ownership continues to grow, with more than 860,000 registered car owners at 31st December 2009 confirming that the car remains the dominant mode of transport;

- Morning peak traffic speeds in Belfast increased by 10% from 2001 – 2009 on the 11 surveyed corridors, 21% on the Strategic Corridors in the city;

- Across the wider network, although traffic speeds on the Key Transport Corridors increased in 2009, they had been falling from 2003 to 2007. The 2009 increase may be a result of the economic downturn;

- From 2001-2009, average bus speeds in Belfast fell by 11%, although there was

Journey times for these freight movements would have been reduced had there been fewer private cars on the roads, with people using public transport instead. CO_2 emissions caused by the freight journeys would also have been reduced

This indicator must be reversed if carbon emissions are to be arrested and reduced instead of increased.

Faster traffic on Belfast roads and streets at peak time is an indication of greater danger to pedestrians and other road and street users.

a slight improvement in 2009 from the 2008 figure;

- There has been some increase in the number of people walking in Belfast but the trend across the region is downward[39];

- Figures for cycling show an increase by 2008 of 56.7%[40] compared to 2000. The 2002 RTS however, had aimed for a 100% increase in cycling by 2005 and 400% by 2015;

[37]Northern Ireland Transport Statistics 2008/09
[38]Northern Ireland Sales and Exports Survey 2007/2008, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
[39]Travel Survey for Northern Ireland, Department for regional Development, www.drdni.gov.uk
[40]Cycling Usage Report 2008, DRD Roads Service, www.roadsni.gov.uk

- Around 1 in 5 of the population has a disability, approximately 360,000 people[41]. People with a disability may face particular barriers when using the transport network; and

- By 2030 the population will be over 2 million, an increase of almost 15% from 2006. Currently 14% of the population are aged 65+, this is forecast to increase to almost 22% over the next 2 decades, with 7% aged over 80.

Detailed data on some of the trends is available in RTS Supplement: Supporting Data.

Technological trends also have major implications for transportation strategy. There has been rapid growth in mobile phone ownership and technology so that web based information systems are no longer the most effective way to deliver timely information to the travelling public. The possibility of sending real-time personalised travel information directly to travel users is now a reality. This would allow users to make informed choices about how and when they travel and offers the real potential to significantly increase the use of public transport.

Rural roads often have no footways or footpaths. With vehicle speed limits of 60mph on most rural roads, walking without footpaths or footways is perceived as a very dangerous activity.

Personalised applications (apps) for mobile phones would be good if the information were timely and accurate in terms of local requirements.

[41]2001 census figure for those stating a limiting long-term illness, which covers any long-term illness, health problem or disability which limits daily activities or work.

2.5 Challenges for transport to 2025

The changing policy context, particularly in relation to climate change and finance; the fact that the 2002 RTS has not been fully implemented as originally envisaged and the evidence from trends in transport, have led to the need for a refocusing and rebalancing of our transportation strategy. Valued at over £30 billion, our transportation network is one of the Region's most valuable capital assets. We need to maximise the productivity of that asset, particularly the use of finite amount of road space and that means maximising the throughput of people and goods using that space. Building new roads will not reduce the total volume of traffic and while increasing road capacity can temporarily reduce congestion, it ultimately leads to increased traffic as more people choose to travel or make new trips to take advantage of the new road space and improved connectivity.[42]

The capacity of the existing road space, however, can be increased dramatically by moving people in a different way. For example, a public transport vehicle with 50 passengers does not require much more road space than a car with a 1 occupant.

By developing a more balanced transportation system based on moving people and goods in an efficient way rather than focusing on moving vehicles, we can maximise the productivity of our finite road space and improve mobility for people and goods, supporting the economy, accessibility to services and the environment.

We want to support the growth of a high-value economy while preserving the environment for the future and maximising the benefits for the individual. We have to address the significant increase in emissions and congestion and have a sustainable transportation system that accommodates future demand without impacting further on the environment.

This is agreed; indeed, building new roads may increase the volume of traffic. This re-emphasises the need for radical action to raise the desirability of public transport when compared to the private vehicle. This issue is also at the heart of the debate concerning the continuing loss of population from towns and cities identified in the Regional Development Strategy Review which showed the growth areas to be the smaller settlements and single houses in the countryside – a dispersionary effect caused by planning policy, particularly PPS21.

This is agreed and this Strategy Review should do more than identify the evident – it should describe the means to change the habits of a lifetime. This means an initial policy of "No Fares Please" on all public transport and steady improvements to frequency, convenience and comfort. An overall reduction of carbon emissions and money spent on private transport and road developments would help to re-balance the equation in favour of public transport usage.

We cannot expect transport users to change to a perceived inferior choice simply because it is best for the region or environment. The challenge is to meet the needs of transport users – providing choices that are attractive and achievable and incentivising change. We need to offer alternatives that are valued, practical and relevant for people, such as:

- better integration of transport services;
- better public transport;
- more car sharing and active travel;
- greater accessibility for both business and communities; and
- for new roads infrastructure at pinch-points on the network.

[42]Induced traffic, or induced demand, was accepted by the Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment in their study of 1994 and is now included in Department for Transport transport scheme assessment guidance, http://www.dft.gov.uk/webtag/20

Reliable real-time transport information is key to allowing users, whether business or individuals, to make informed choices. Smartphone technology, using publicly available data, can now provide that information and there are opportunities here not just for transport but also for software developers and information providers.

In the consumer survey **www.consumercouncil.org.uk/publications/?id=407** by far the biggest reason for not travelling on public transport was the cost. Eliminating this reason should be studied as suggested above and it is predicted that this will tip the balance away from unsustainable private vehicle journeys to sustainable public transport use.

This would be good as part of an overall improvement proposition, but would be much more effective if public transport were subject to a "No Fares Please" policy.

Case Study: Helsinki, Finland

Helsinki has a well developed system to inform public transport users of their options with a simple tariff across the region which splits the area into 3 zones.

There is an easy-to-use journey planner available on the internet. They also have a journey planner for cyclists which provides varied information on national cycling routes, rest stops, as well as information regarding traffic lights and steep hills along the route.

The provision of real-time information is a further strong aspect of Helsinki's transport system. There are visual displays at bus and tram stops as well as onboard visual and audible information. They are developing this further: "Every bus and tram in Helsinki and the surrounding cities of Vaanta and Espoo are being fitted with Linux servers and GPS units. Every bus and tram in the conurbation will not only become a wireless hotspot serving broadband internet throughout the vehicle - for free - but every bus and tram is visible on a Google map that uses the same real-time passenger information. The Google map, moreover, is open, meaning that if someone wants to come and improve it or create an extra application, they are free to do so. Not only that, every bus and tram stop in Helsinki is being fitted with a small 'near field information' tag that allows anyone with a Nokia camera phone to take a snap of the tag and launch a Java application bespoke to that stop. This means that you don't have to have to take off your mittens or tap in tricky Finnish place names such as herttoniemenranta when it's -22C and you're faced with sleet's bitter sting."(Source: The Guardian, Feb 2008)

Case Study: Hasselt, Belgium

Hasselt Celebrates 10 Years of Free Public Transport

HASSELT, Belgium, June 29 /PRNewswire/ -- It will have been exactly 10 years ago on 1 July 2007 that Hasselt, Belgium got worldwide media attention for a very ambitious project: free public transport. From the very first day up until today, it remains a success story.

Before

The new city council of 1995 realised that public transport was a major problem. There were only eight city buses and two lines in Hasselt before 1 July 1997, which covered about 500,000 km a year and only transported 360,000 passengers in 1996. After the renovation of the ring road around the city, turning it into a pedestrian-friendly and tree-clad 'Groene Boulevard', the city council presented an ambitious project to transport company De Lijn. With the words 'Hasselt zal nooit meer hetzelfde zijn' ('Hasselt will never be the same'), the former mayor and later minister Steve Stevaert launched free buses on 1 July 1997.

After

The project was an instant success. Until 30 June 1997, there was an average of 1,000 bus passengers a day in Hasselt. Today, the average is 12,600 passengers a day. There are now 46 city buses on nine lines, including a boulevard shuttle and a city centre shuttle. Two nightlines run at night. Altogether, these city buses cover 2,258,638 km in a year. All this benefits mobility in Hasselt. However, there is also a social benefit. Visits to hospitals have increased significantly. Free public transport is here to stay in Hasselt.

Celebration

On Saturday, 30 June around 2 pm, the 35 millionth bus passenger will get off at the Grote Markt bus stop. They will be hailed by Flemish, provincial and municipal government.

More info at www.hasselt.de and www.delijn.be

Smart cards, which require only close proximity to communicate with the card reader, are becoming increasingly common place. A single Smart card could be programmed with the user's public transport entitlement, their bank details, driver's licence, loyalty schemes and club memberships to name just a few. Smart cards can even be used without removal from a wallet. This offers the opportunity for an integrated ticketing system that is linked to wider benefits and added value for the user.
Transport investment, if it is to contribute to a more competitive, connected region, must be supported by initiatives to promote more sustainable and efficient travel behaviour. We need to start using public transport, or car sharing, for longer journeys and walking or cycling for shorter trips.

We also need to join up the various transport services to match people's needs and expectations. This means we view our future transport network as one seamless mobility system where ticketing and information are planned and developed as one integrated system. As people's lives and businesses become ever more complex this will not only be needed, but expected. So we will have to provide a smart, integrated ticketing, advice and information system, based on smart technology that addresses the needs of users. In addition, this needs to be complemented by improved services across all transport modes.
If investment in public transport and infrastructure such as Park and Ride is increased, users will be encouraged to take the bus, train or Rapid Transit for the main part of their journey and reduce the volume of traffic on the network.
Similarly, the development of more pedestrian friendly environments and facilities for cyclists will make active travel more attractive options for others. As people choose to switch in significant enough numbers, congestion can be managed and business, the economy, and the environment, will benefit.
To encourage a modal shift to public transport, to active travel, and to car sharing, and to realise the real health and social benefits this can bring, we need to reconsider how we

The cost of all this technology could be eliminated by following the example of Hasselt, Belgium (See Case Study above). Making public transport free at the point of use across Northern Ireland is the only option that is affordable and would have immediate positive effect on the carbon reduction targets which at present are being hopelessly missed.

It is fully agreed that "We need to start using public transport, or car sharing, for longer journeys and walking or cycling for shorter trips." The way to encourage use of public transport is by making it free at the point of use.

Affordability and sustainability are one in this instance. Society looks to government to lead us out of situations which are unsustainable and to spend less in doing so. For every 3% we as a society can reduce our annual spending on private vehicles, we can improve public transport by a full 100% of today's public transport turnover. We could double the frequency of existing bus and train services or greatly extend the network in rural areas, for example. We need government action to break the downward spiral towards the private car by removing the single biggest obstacle preventing people from using public transport – the cost.

Much of this can be achieved by a rigorous inspection and enforcement of the Highway Code which calls on drivers to respect pedestrians and cyclists. Avoid expensive over-engineering on our roads and streets to segregate pedestrians and cyclists from vehicles and each other. Instead, adopt modern methods to encourage slower junction speeds and enhanced respect for other users.

prioritise the finite space on our roads. At a time when there are significant financial constraints on public expenditure, we have to use the existing transportation systems in a smarter way.

We also have to consider how the goods and products used or produced by business are moved. We need to ensure that freight transport remains competitive in a sustainable manner and that the movement of goods is undertaken in an efficient, safer and compliant way. This is essential if businesses are to be competitive in a global market place and transport is not to become a barrier to export, and is less damaging to the environment.

Case Study: Freight distribution – Bristol
Freight consolidation aims to minimize the impact of freight deliveries. Successful consolidation schemes can help to reduce a region's congestion, improve a region's air quality and allow for more frequent deliveries. These factors help to create a balance between the aesthetics of the city with mercantile necessities.
An example of a trial consolidation scheme is in Bristol. Following an initial investigation into freight distribution patterns in the Broadmead area of Bristol, 20 retailers were identified as being appropriate for a 6-month freight consolidation trial. The trial saw a 51% reduction in delivery vehicle movement for the retailers involved and because of this success the scheme has now been extended to 51 retailers

There are no easy answers and a lasting solution will have implications for those of us who choose to use the car, personally or in business, when real and more sustainable alternatives exist. All of this is set against a

Using the existing transportation systems in a smarter way is good. The means to do this are described above – these are to

- reduce the number of private car journeys by making public transport free at the point of use and to
- rigorously enforce the existing Highway Code for drivers to give way to people walking and cycling. Compare the success of the enforced use of seat belts, greater alcohol awareness and the tobacco smoking ban in public places.

Removal of even 10% of overall private car journeys would dramatically improve the movement of freight. Such a removal, in the face of the current situation (which is a 25% increase over the life of the Regional Development Strategy) would improve the programme for Northern Ireland's economic recovery and facilitate the movement of goods.

Action to encourage freight movements outside peak city and town centre use times would be welcome and can come from the freight and commercial/retail sectors without delay. No government policy or permission is needed.

A government lead is required. Public transport free at the point of use would set us off in a different (and sustainable) direction.

background of severe financial constraints in public expenditure.

Detailed data on travel attitudes and patterns is available in RTS Supplement:
Supporting Data.

Severe financial constraints in public expenditure need not have negative implications; a small diversion of funds within the Department for Regional Development from road improvements into a policy of "No Fares Please" would assist not only those who are willing to travel by public transport but also the movement of freight and goods and even the remaining car drivers whose levels of congestion would be much lower as people find ways to leave their cars at home for certain journeys.

The Challenges
The future presents a number of strategic challenges on different fronts:

- to support our economy by having an efficient, integrated and innovative transport network that facilitates and encourages economic growth and supports business;

The efficient, integrated and innovative transport network could first be innovative by being free at the point of use – that is innovation in software which can be quickly and cheaply changed, not expensive hardware.
As income diverts gradually from the 97% we currently spend on private vehicles towards the 3% of the spend we allocate to public transport, the system improves and adapts to new users.
This is agreed and the simplest way to make better use is to reduce the number of people travelling in private vehicles.

- to maintain the transport infrastructure in a way that better attracts and allows people and goods to move safely and have reliable journey times;

- to make better use of the transportation network to get the best value from it that we can;

- to reduce the environmental impact of transport not only to tackle climate change but also to protect the environment and improve the quality of life;

The environmental impact would be reduced by the gradual shift from private vehicles (convenient, comfortable and still affordable) to public transport whose main attraction would be that it would be cost free at the point of use.

- to improve accessibility in both rural and urban areas that will allow people better opportunities to access facilities, services and employment;

Having more people on public transport (thanks to a "No Fares Please" policy, would allow additional resources to be devoted to good transport and good places in which to arrive.

- to support communities by having transport which connects people and places and fosters better community cohesion; and

- to improve safety that will reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads and encourage the use of more sustainable forms of transport including public transport and cycling and walking.

2.6 Conclusion
Simply continuing to implement the 2002 Regional Transportation Strategy will not be sufficient to address the challenges identified above in a sustainable way. Chapter 3 sets out the specific objectives that DRD believes we must work towards over the next decade.

Questions for this Chapter
Q. What do you believe are the major challenges to delivering an improved and more sustainable transportation infrastructure here?
Q. What are the challenges for society?
Q. Are they challenges for you as an individual?
Q. How should DRD respond to these challenges?
Q. Do you agree that particular interests such as freight, active travel and the needs of older and disabled people should be mainstreamed in the Strategy rather than being considered separately?

Some people do not have the bus fare to even travel to training or employment. No wonder Consumer Council Surveys show that cost is the biggest disincentive to travelling by public transport. If it is to begin to work towards meeting obligatory targets for carbon emissions, government must act. Sooner, rather than later, we could become a leader in Europe by the suggested software change.

The old strategy has not worked and it is time for change.

The MAG proposal is to eliminate all fares on public transport (Bus and Trains) in Northern Ireland funded from a reduction in planned road improvement expenditure. This should be subjected to the provision of evidence of the expected beneficial social and environmental outcomes.

3 Where do we want to get to?

3.1 A sustainable transport future

We want to have transportation systems and infrastructure fit for the 21st century. It should be a system that meets the needs of people and business. The network must, therefore, provide an effective network of key connections within and beyond the region that will allow people and business to access the services and activities they want and to support our economy in an integrated, equitable, and environmentally sensitive manner. Public transport and active travel options should be safer, convenient and reliable alternatives to the car making them the first choice for people, not the last resort.

Case Study: Bremen Germany – Mobility Hubs

Bremen, in northwest Germany, has a population of around half a million people. It has a well-developed transport network, which focuses on sustainable transport. Bremen provides an outstanding example of the implementation of a mobility hub, which brings together all of the available modes of transport in a single location, giving the user a seamlessly integrated experience that combines car sharing, taxi, cycling and public transport. The effective management of this system is enabled by the successful coordination between the service providers.

An umbrella association brings together 35 transit operators in the 4800 km2 region including local/ regional rail, buses and trams. This means one ticket, one tariff and one information system for all transport modes, and one integrated smart card for transit, car-sharing, and banking needs. Mobility hubs play a key role in the integration of this system by being strategically located throughout the city with links to trams, buses, car share, cycling networks, and taxis. Each hub is equipped with an electronic journey planning/ticket kiosk which provides real-time information. The success of this strategy of creating useful intersection points between various modes is evidenced by the city' s impressive 60 per cent sustainable transportation modal split made up of 17 per cent public transport, 20 per cent walking, and 23 per cent cycling.

Cost at the point of use is the biggest disincentive and therefore the starting point for change.

Efficient networks of key corridors will only work if many more people decide to use public transport as their first choice for at least some journeys.

"Safe, convenient and reliable" only applies if public transport is used. The way to start getting it more extensively used is to make it the choice that is free at the point of use.

The Greater Manchester Campaign for Free Public Transport states:

"Offering free public transport is the only way to get most Britons out of their cars. As many as 72% of people said they would not give up their motor until they could use public transport without charge, a survey by market information company TNS UK found."

The Bremen, Germany, Case Study implies significant costly physical investment in hardware (a new hub). The proposed software change to "No Fares Please" does not rule out future hubs and greater efficiencies once the initial movement away from cars and towards buses and trains has successfully shifted several percentage points of the 97% (£6billion) spent annually on private transport towards the 3% (£200 million) currently spent annually on the entire turnover of public transport in Northern Ireland.

The new direction for transportation needs to have at its core, the drive for sustainability in the travel choices we make. It needs to revolve around moving people and goods rather than vehicles, allowing customer focussed mobility management.

With sustainable transport better supporting communities and business we can have a more cohesive society that will benefit all and allow improved access to facilities and services with a consequent improved quality of life.

Transport users should be able to make better and informed choices in how they travel and see value in a seamless interchange between services, an effective supporting infrastructure and a greater awareness of the environmental consequences of their choices. We need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transport to help attain local, national and European targets.

Achieving this does not mean a radical change in direction from everything that has gone before. Rather, our focus must be to build on and re-orientate the existing transport strategy and reprioritise how we use the existing infrastructure to meet the strategic challenges identified.

3.2 High Level Transport Aims

Addressing the challenges from the previous section, we are proposing three High Level Aims.

A. Support the Growth of the Economy

Growing the economy is the Executive's key priority. Our transportation networks must be designed to support this.

This is laudable theory but it does not supply any practical suggestions as to how it all might happen.

Agreed! How we best use the existing infrastructure is to change the software, making public transport free and not building more road improvement projects.

The transportation networks are already designed to support this and have benefited from £3.2 billion of investment in the last ten years. The current strategy must be about better use of what we have built (by eliminating fares) rather than by building more or improved infrastructure. Even the relatively modest expenditure of £3.5 million projected for "Belfast on the Move" would be unnecessary if people just used buses and trains more instead of their cars. Government must **stop tackling the symptoms** by building new roads and re-configuring existing streets and traffic controls to relieve congestion caused by people are choosing to drive their private cars. Government must instead **confront the cause** of the disease by encouraging people to use buses and trains more often.

B. Enhance the Quality of Life For All
It is important that we help achieve the Executive's goal for our society, deliver modern high quality and efficient public services and promote tolerance, inclusion, health and wellbeing.

C. Reduce the Environmental Impact of Transport
While supporting economic growth, this should not be at the expense of the environment. While there is a potential tension between these High Level Aims, this consultation exercise will help us find the appropriate balance between them.

The High Level Aims are driven by the Executive's priorities of growing the economy while supporting society and protecting the environment and link directly to the aims of the new Regional Development Strategy – the Executive's overarching spatial development strategy.

Against each High Level Aim we have proposed a number of Strategic Objectives. The following table illustrates how the Strategic Objectives for transport can be read across to the Executive Priority which they support.

Improving the physical transportation networks encourages people to drive their private cars. Improving the software through the elimination of fares will instead encourage people to use public transport more often, enhancing the standard of this public service by the use of it and therefore devoting a relatively greater part of society's overall transport cost to buses and trains and away from private cars.

This environmental impact reduction will never happen because more resources are spent on road improvements. It will only happen when resources are diverted to the elimination of fares.

Relationship Between Executive Priorities and Regional Transportation Strategy Objectives

Executive Priorities	Regional Development Strategy	Regional Transportation Strategy		
	Aims	Vision	High Level Aim	Strategic Objectives
Grow the economy and invest for the future	Support strong, sustainable growth for the benefit of all parts of the Region	"to have a modern, sustainable, safe transportation system which benefits society, the economy and the environment and which actively contributes to social inclusion and everyone's quality of life."	Support the Growth of the Economy	Improve connectivity within the region
Create opportunities and tackling disadvantage	Strengthen Belfast as the regional economic driver and Derry as the capital of the North West			Use road space and railways more efficiently
	Improve connectivity to enhance the movement of people, goods, energy and information between places			Better maintain transport infrastructure
	Strengthen links between north and south, east and west, with Europe and the rest of the world			Improve access in our towns and cities
				Improve access in rural areas
				Improve connections to key tourism sites
Deliver high quality public services	Support our towns, villages and rural communities to maximise their potential		Enhance the Quality of Life For All	Improve safety
Build a united community	Promote development which improves the health and well-being of communities			Improve social inclusion
				Develop transport programmes focussed on the user
Protect our people and the environment	Protect and enhance the environment for its own sake		Reduce the Environmental Impact of Transport	Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transport
	Take actions to reduce our carbon footprint and facilitate adaption to climate change			Protect biodiversity
				Reduce noise and air pollution

3.3 Strategic Objectives

The previous table also shows the proposed 12 Strategic Objectives for transportation which we believe will help us achieve the overall goal of sustainable transportation networks linked to the three High Level Aims.

A. Support the Growth of the Economy

1: Improve connectivity within the region

The strategic objectives are fine. They can all be met without physical interventions in the existing transportation network. A substantial reduction in private car use, encouraged by the elimination of fares on public transport will help to achieve every one of the twelve strategic objectives as follows:

A. The economy will be able to grow if people who presently cannot presently afford any transport could in future afford to get to training and employment opportunities because fares will have been eliminated.

1. Connectivity is already good – we have almost 24% more road km per sq km of land area than UK average. Greater use of public transport, free at the point of use, would mean fewer private vehicles on the roads and greater connectivity because of reduced congestion.

2: Use road space and railways more efficiently	2. Public transport uses road space more efficiently and railways will be more efficient as more people use them free at the point of use.
3: Better maintain transport infrastructure	3. Less money spent overall on transport by our society will allow greater annual expenditure on road, track and public vehicle maintenance.
4: Improve access in our towns and cities	4. Reducing the number of people travelling by private car by eliminating public transport fares will hugely improve access in towns and cities.
5: Improve access in rural areas	5. People are much more likely to organise themselves to get to the free bus or train. They already find means to get to the relatively expensive bus or train and will increase their efforts when fares are eliminated.
6: Improve connections to key tourism site	6. When a higher percentage of total societal spend on transport is diverted to public transport, by encouraging more users through eliminating bus and train fares, resources will become available to provide public transport to the key tourism sites. Meanwhile, there are opportunities to provide additional multi-use pathway routes for walking and cycling to tourism sites.
B. Enhance the Quality of Life For All	B. Eliminating fares on public transport will improve the quality of life for all. Even those who choose to remain in their cars will find journey times shorter and consume less fuel because there will be fewer private cars on the roads and less congestion.
7: Improve safety	7. Removing fares on public transport would reduce the number of km travelled by private vehicles and the number of trips. Public transport is acknowledged to be safer than private vehicles.
8: Improve social inclusion	8. Eliminating fares on public transport would improve social inclusion, especially of the most deprived people in Northern Ireland. The Greater Manchester Campaign for Free Public Transport states: "For people on low pay or benefits, especially those with children, bus and train fares eat up a high proportion of income. For many people this constitutes a denial of the right to travel." This also applies in Northern Ireland.

9: Develop transport programmes focussed on the user	9. Transport programmes focussed on the user must give all users equal opportunity to benefit from public transport. Eliminating fares would achieve this objective handsomely, allowing real choice.
C. Reduce the Environmental Impact of Transport	C. Eliminating fares from public transport would greatly increase its use, reducing travel by private vehicles which would reduce the environmental impact of transport.
10: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Transport	10. Private vehicles are the biggest source of greenhouse gas emissions from transport. Eliminating fares from public transport would reduce the use of private vehicles and thereby reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transport.
11: Protect biodiversity	11. Protecting biodiversity is best done with more efficient use of the existing transportation network, achieved by eliminating fares from public transport and thereby encouraging people to make fewer car journeys. This in turn reduces the demand for new road schemes and significant road improvements, thereby protecting biodiversity.
12: Reduce noise and air pollution	12. Increased use of public transport and consequential reduction in private vehicle use will reduce noise and air pollution.
Strategic Objective 1: Improve connectivity within the region Connections to the rest of the island, Britain and beyond are important for business and tourism. To remain competitive and to ensure that the economy grows we need reliable and efficient connections within the Region. People also need to be able to get to and from their places of work. Businesses need to be able to receive goods reliably, with better connections to the air and sea ports, the	

Gateways to the region, in order to move the goods they produce. We will continue to work closely with our neighbours to ensure that our infrastructures join together to create an effective all-island network.
To achieve this, we need to complete the work identified in the current Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan and Strategic Road Improvement Programme, while we develop new programmes of work for the main roads and railways. In doing this we will contribute to the development of the new Economic Strategy for the region and its emphasis on rebalancing the economy towards export led economic growth.

Strategic Objective 2: Use road space and railways more efficiently
There is finite capacity on the network. On roads, our choice is whether to continually try to meet increasing demand by building new roads or to manage demand for road space and find innovative ways of getting the best use we can from our infrastructure.
While we have purchased new trains that will increase the number of passengers, the increase is limited by the capacity of the rail infrastructure.
We will give priority on our networks to the movement of people and goods rather than the movement of vehicles. This will result in increased priority for buses, improving public transport which will produce a better balanced network and a better, more reliable service for all users.
The number of journeys an individual makes in a year is fairly constant at around 900.
If we succeed in encouraging individuals to use public transport or car share for longer journeys and to walk or cycle for shorter journeys, then we reduce the number of journeys made by car. This will reduce the demand on the network and allow it to work more efficiently.

Strategic Objective 3: Better maintain transport infrastructure
We want a reliable transportation network that allows people and freight to move safely and to have reliable journey times. To do this, we need to regularly maintain roads and railways. To make public transport an attractive option, we need to make sure that the vehicles, stops

Paragraph 2.6, Conclusion states: "Simply continuing to implement the 2002 Regional Transportation Strategy will not be sufficient to address the challenges identified above in a sustainable way." Connectivity is already high. Rather than spending money building more infrastructure, we need to pause the road development programme and invest in the elimination of fares to achieve the objectives.

The way to improve our performance is not to attempt to displace private vehicles by increasing priority for buses. That will shift people away from bus lanes in the time dimension rather than the place dimension – they will just drive their cars earlier or later to avoid congested times. People will continue to use their cars but will travel earlier or later to avoid congestion rather than change to public transport. Surveys in GB have shown that 72% of drivers would not consider moving from their cars unless public transport were free at the point of use.

Regular maintenance of roads and railways is imperative. Requirement for road maintenance would be reduced if the number of private vehicle journeys is reduced. Freeing up staff who presently collect tickets and count money would provide additional resource for cleaning and maintaining vehicles and stops and for planting and watering the flowers at the stations.....

and stations are safe, clean, well maintained and well lit. While large sums have been allocated for capital road projects, less has been allocated for roads maintenance (RTS Supplement: Supporting Data). The frequency of maintenance of the road network in particular is well below where it should be.

We will need to find a better balance between further developing the roads network and maintaining the existing network.

Strategic Objective 4: Improve access in our towns and cities
Good transport links are important to the economy and to society. We want to ensure that people have the opportunity to access education, training and employment as well as key services such as health, cultural, shopping, sporting and leisure activities.
These facilities and services are usually located in, or around, towns and cities.
Recognising that not everyone has access to a car, a more inclusive society will require high quality and affordable public transport with appropriate infrastructure or walking and cycling routes which enable people to access these key services.

Strategic Objective 5: Improve access in rural areas;
As public transport provision is limited in rural areas, the car is the main mode of travel from

Case Study: Multibus, Heinsburg – Germany
Multibus is a flexible demand-responsive bus scheme serving municipalities within the district of Heinsberg, a region with a largely dispersed population. The idea is to combine a door-to-door service for passengers and a transportation service of goods (parcels and small packets) in order to develop a public transport service orientated to users' needs in times of little demand. For passengers the service primarily provides a connection to main public transport routes. The service is integrated into the regional public transport system and users pay the normal fares. Approx. 2,900 persons use the MultiBus service each month. Inclusion of the delivery service helped to achieve additional revenues and to support marketing. The service costs €440 000 per year, a saving of €41,500 per year when compared with the traditional bus service.

The better balance is achieved by eliminating fares on public transport, reducing the need for road network development and enhancing the demand for improved maintenance.

Affordable public transport is the key, as noted. Eliminating all fares reduces the time buses need to stop to collect fares and issue tickets, improving efficiency at a stroke.

This also reduces pressure on bus drivers as noted by the Greater Manchester Campaign for Free Public Transport, "Collecting ticket money is one of the biggest sources of stress on drivers. Removing this burden would allow better working conditions for drivers and a far more efficient service for the public."

Multibus Heinsburg is nothing new. This happened for decades in Northern Ireland and it would be surprising if it is not happening now. It is a good example of a small piece of software allowing us to use existing infrastructure better, rather than creating new infrastructure. The elimination of fares on public transport is another simple example where a reallocation of expenditure removes the source of the problem. Rather than spending more money on trying to fix the problem, it is much better to invest money to reduce the problem to manageable proportions – this is good engineering practice.

services and facilities located in or around our towns and cities. The roads linking all rural areas to these services and facilities must be reliable, our public and community transport must also be timely and reliable. Taxis, walking and cycling can play an important role for those living where there is no or limited public transport.

Roads are "reliable" by their nature, as long as they are well maintained. Buses sometimes do not run "because the driver did not show up for work." That is not acceptable and must not happen again. The providers of public transport must design and implement back-up systems that do not fail.

Strategic Objective 6: Improve connections to key tourism sites

We live in an area with a significant cultural and historical heritage and proper access to key tourism sites is increasingly important for the economy. Unlike other businesses, tourist attractions cannot choose where they are located. We need to ensure that the roads successfully connect visitors to tourist attractions, and that the connecting public transport system is frequent, reliable and represents value for money.

All tourist facilities are already connected by road. Some are not well connected by safe walking routes. This deficit needs attention and it should be part of the regional transportation strategy that all applications for development in the countryside should include the provision of a multi-use way alongside the road to allow safe passage for people walking, cycling or riding. The elimination of fares on public transport would encourage more users, allowing for an increase in investment and therefore frequency and popularity of service while increasing the capacity of the existing roads to carry people and goods, not vehicles, one of the key parts of the transportation strategy.

Strategic Objective 7: Improve safety
We want to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads, for car users, pedestrians and cyclists.
We also want to improve the attractiveness of public transport by making it safer.
Feelings of safety can be improvement by well designed, well lit infrastructure which discourages crime and anti-social behaviour.

Getting people out of private cars and onto public transport (which is statistically much safer) is the most effective way to reduce fatalities and serious injuries on our roads. Public transport becomes safer as more people use it – almost-empty buses, like almost-empty places – become threatening, particularly after dark.

Strategic Objective 8: Improve social inclusion
Transport can bring communities together or the infrastructure can keep them apart or cut them off from services. We want to design the transportation networks to bring communities together and ensure equitable access to key

Improve social inclusion by eliminating bus and train fares. Repair existing infrastructure by introducing current GB standard design guidance for streets in urban areas, known as "Manual for Streets 2".

services and facilities, particularly by sustainable modes.

Strategic Objective 9: Develop transport programmes focussed on the user

We do not want to design infrastructure or services that suit policy makers, planners or engineers, rather we want to focus on the user, understand their needs and demonstrate the value and benefits to them that can also benefit the community through the travel choices people and businesses make. We also aim to provide transportation services that meet the needs of people, businesses and the community as a whole.

Abandon new city infrastructure such as the Bankmore Link, Belfast. Stop attempting to reduce traffic congestion by building more faster roads through cities but instead reduce congestion by eliminating fares on buses and trains to change people's habits. Open up existing city streets to two way traffic and stop creating "protected routes" through the city that stop traffic dispersing naturally through the streets. There is particular concern that a single incident (accident or security alert) on a protected route causes traffic to build up, not be able to "escape" and create chaos. The fact that this may happen only six times a year is not the criterion. If your car or bus broke down six times a year you would think it is time for a new one. Movement throughout the city breaking down six times a year is not acceptable.

Unfortunately the actions and suggestions of the previous RTS and indeed much of the remainder of this review, together with the Department's response statements to Belfast on the Move, still pay most regard to the views of road engineers who are designing schemes with words like "fundamental" being used to describe a new road scheme (Bankmore Link, which is not even a strategic route) to be designed to trunk road standards through Belfast. When challenged to consider the opportunity of reducing traffic by means such as the elimination of fares, officials say, "Not our job". Attitudes need to change and Roads Service staff need to be briefed accordingly, right now.

Strategic Objective 10: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transport

Currently road traffic is the fastest growing source of greenhouse gas emissions and accounts for 26% of our emissions. To allow the Executive to meet carbon reduction targets, greenhouse gas emissions from transport will have to be reduced.

According to the Regional Development Strategy Review, road traffic is not merely the **fastest** growing, it is the **only** growing source of greenhouse gas emissions in all sectors of activity in Northern Ireland. To say this will have to be reduced without giving any methodology is not a strategy. The first step must be to encourage more people to drive fewer journeys by private car. The best way to achieve this is to encourage public transport use now by the elimination of fares.

Strategic Objective 11: Protect biodiversity
The Assembly has passed "The Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill (Northern Ireland)" which includes a duty to conserve biodiversity. This will require all Government Departments and their agencies to produce measures to halt the loss of biodiversity.

The best means to protect and conserve biodiversity is to divert resources away from road development into better use of existing roads through the elimination of fares on public transport.

Strategic Objective 12: Reduce noise and air pollution
Noise and air pollution from transport can have a significant impact on the quality of life and health of communities, especially in urban areas. We will seek to reduce noise and air pollution wherever possible.

To "seek to reduce noise and air pollution wherever possible" is not a strategy. The means to achieve reduction is to eliminate fares on public transport and thereby encourage a reduction in private vehicle journeys and distances travelled in private cars.

3.4 Conclusion
We believe that these 12 Strategic Objectives will help us achieve balanced and sustainable transportation networks.
We cannot tackle the challenges alone, however, and it will be essential to engage, and collaborate, with our partners in transport as we seek to deliver the outcomes.

It is agreed that the Department needs to engage and collaborate with partners. That message has not yet reached the roads engineering officials in the Department who are still designing road schemes for the single function of moving vehicles and tell us they have not been instructed to engage or collaborate with other design professionals such as urban designers, architects and landscape architects who are able to assist.

The next chapter sets out how we aim to do this.
Questions for This Chapter
Q. Do you agree/disagree that growing the economy in a sustainable
way should be at the core of our strategy and if so why/why not?
Q. What do you see as advantages or disadvantages in this approach?

Q. Do you agree with the strategic objectives proposed?
Q. Please rank the strategic objectives as you see them? (Please use
the table on the next page)
Q. Are there other strategic objectives that you believe should be
included? If so please add them to the table and rank them.34
Please rank each objective in priority order, with 1 being the highest and 12 the lowest. Please avoid giving any two objectives the same ranking.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE RANK
Improve connectivity within the region
More efficiently use road space and railways
Better maintain transport infrastructure
Improve access in our towns and cities
Improve access in rural areas
Improve connections to key tourism sites
Improve safety
Improve social inclusion
Develop transport programmes focussed on the user
Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transport
Protect our biodiversity
Reduce noise and air pollution

4 How will we get there?

4.1 The current strategy – Transport Plans

The current suite of Transport Plans was developed from local transport studies. These studies were based on data from a range of sources and included surveys in the towns or cities to capture an independent view of the transport conditions. While the transportation needs varied between towns and cities and rural areas, they found a number of common problems, including:

- variability in the standard of provision for pedestrians and cyclists;
- availability of local public transport;
- accessibility for people with disabilities or others with reduced mobility;
- local traffic congestion in the peak periods; and
- concerns over road safety.

It is important that the land use and transport systems work together.

The revised Regional Development Strategy promotes development within existing towns and cities

Case study: Kent, UK
Pfizer built a new headquarters in Sandwich, Kent (UK). In order to reduce the level of congestion that was being developed at the site, they developed their Green Transport Plan which promoted car-sharing, public transport use, walking and cycling. The company has also provided a shuttle bus to the site. Since implementing the plan there has been an 11.8 % reduction in single occupancy car use and average daily passenger journeys on their bus service have increased by 14% to nearly 900 every day. The company successfully cut the need for about 400 parking spaces. Financially, Pfizer can potentially save £1.2 million in capital costs (excluding land) and £500 per parking space per year in car park running costs.

which help to reduce the need to travel. We worked with the Department of the Environment Planning Service to align transportation with land-use planning, following the guidance provided by Planning Policy Statement 13. Linking transportation with land use allows for a more considered incremental approach, providing for phased development, small scale infrastructure improvements and modal shift to non-car modes as part of a comprehensive plan.

PPS21 encourages almost 25,000 farmers to believe that they can have a new dwelling on each farm every ten years, creating opportunities for dispersal of a large non-farming population to the countryside and increasing the likelihood of commutes to cities, towns, out of town and regional shopping centres for work, education, recreation and shopping. PPS21 was adopted by DoE, within DRD's Regional Development Strategy, and negates any opportunity there may have been to link transportation with land use. There is no indication that dwellings on farms approved under PPS21 require any relationship to public transport. These new single dwellings in the countryside are likely to increase car ownership rather than reduce it. Thus there is no sign of any modal shift to non-car modes and no sign of any comprehensive plan. If there is a comprehensive plan, that achieves this purported modal shift, please put it on display and publish it on the websites of both departments.

Planning Policy Statement 13 "Transportation and Land Use" was prepared to guide the preparation of development and transport plans. We will work with those preparing Development Plans to ensure that the transport programmes are complementary.

The Investment Strategy indicated high levels of funding for roads schemes which require high levels of capital, but less for public transport and other measures which require revenue rather than capital investment. This has skewed the implementation of our existing Transport Plans.

The Budget 2010 outcome has significantly reduced the availability of funding for all capital projects and other schemes, including transport. As transportation schemes are funded through the normal budgetary processes, this means that some projects included in the 2015 Plans may have to be delayed until funding becomes available. We may also have to review the priorities in the Plans to maximise the efficient use of limited capital funds.

4.2 Transportation interventions
Following this consultation, we will finalise an agreed set of Strategic Objectives and then work with stakeholders to develop an overall Transportation Prioritisation Framework, matching interventions to Strategic Objectives. We have, however, developed an initial list of potential strategic interventions to support the Strategic Objectives we are proposing in this document. All of these would contribute to at least one of the 12 Strategic Objectives outlined in Chapter 3.
Our initial list is:

- Selective Road Improvements to address Bottlenecks;

This is also meaningless with PPS21 encouraging the dispersal of settlement away from existing centres of population and into the heart of the countryside, where any mode of transport other than the private car is not easily sustained.

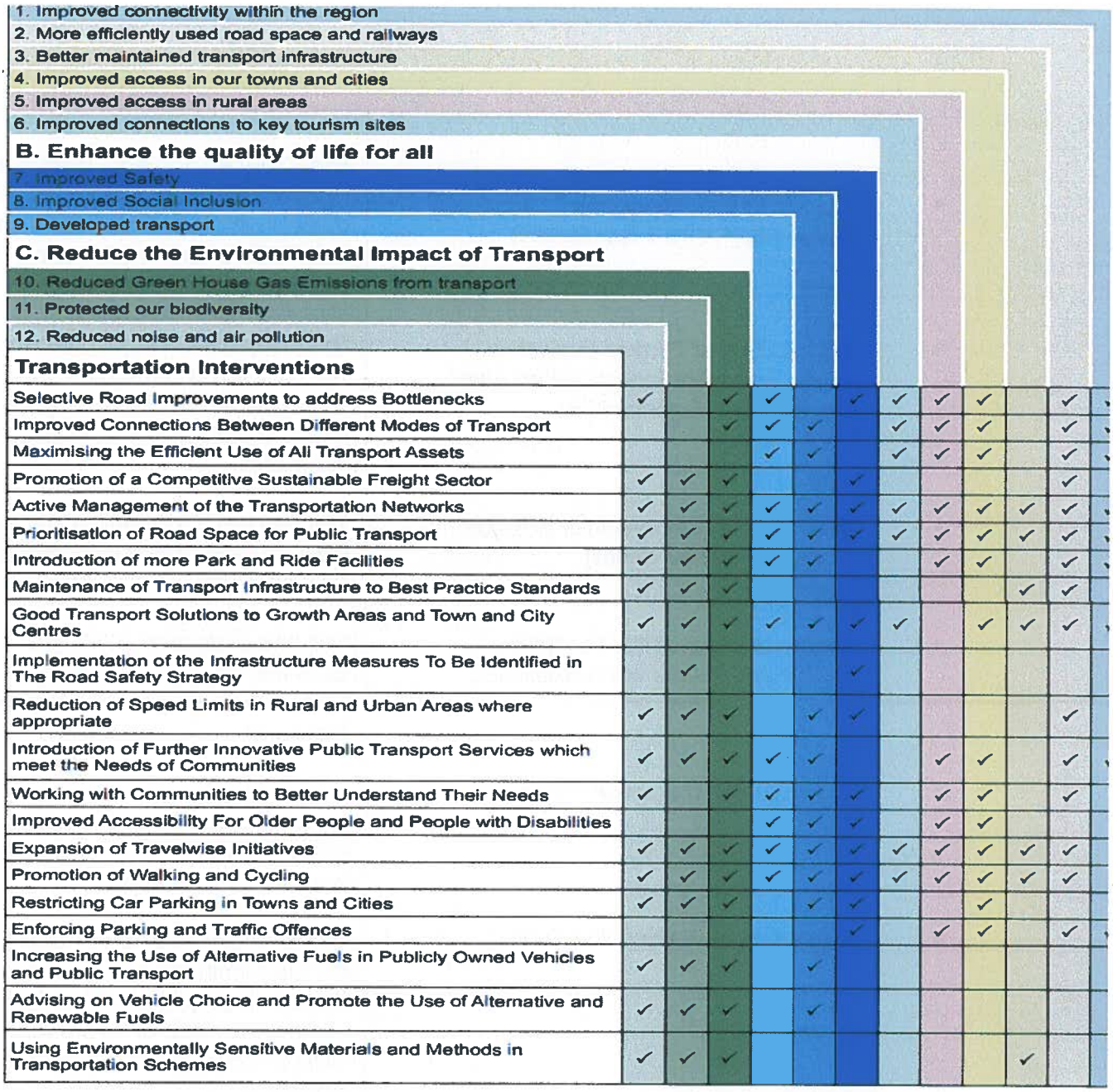
This is unfortunate and must be drawn to the attention of the Executive and the Assembly in considering the review of the Regional Transportation Strategy which is not a worthwhile strategy if there is no means to implement it.

Bottlenecks occur primarily because of the number of private vehicles. Treat the cause rather then the symptom, reducing private car journeys by a new policy of elimination of public transport fares, creating new habits and increasing public transport use. This will obviously not put cars off the road but experience in Belgium shows that it does greatly increase the number of journeys made on public transport. "Selective road improvements" move the bottlenecks around – they do not remove them.

• Improved Connections Between Different Modes of Transport;	This is agreed as good software. It is more likely to happen if additional resources from our total transport cost are shifted gradually from private vehicles that currently cost us over 97% of our societal transport costs.
• Maximising the Efficient Use of All Transport Assets;	Putting in new road developments, particularly in the towns and cities, does not maximise efficient use of all transport assets – it continues the myth that we can road-build our way out of congestion. Road building does not maximise efficient use. Increasing the popularity of public transport by eliminating fares is the solution to maximising the efficient use of all transport assets.
• Promotion of a Competitive Sustainable Freight Sector;	The freight sector becomes more competitive and sustainable when it organises itself to avoid the worst congestion and government helps, not by drawing more bus lanes on the roads, but by eliminating fares from public transport and thereby reducing the primary cause of congestion, the number of people driving private vehicles.
• Active Management of the Transportation Networks;	The need for this reduces in proportion to the reduction of the number of vehicles competing for the same road space at any one time. Competition for road space is reduced by the elimination of fares on public transport.
• Prioritisation of Road Space for Public Transport;	The overall demand needs to be reduced. That is best achieved not by "prioritisation" and drawing bus lanes on roads, but in a more fundamental way by eliminating fares on public transport so that it can compete with the private car.

• Introduction of more Park and Ride Facilities;	Park and Ride (P&R) shifts patterns of car use but may increase car dependency. The National Heart Forum, in partnership with Living Streets and The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment has stated "…. *part of the effect of P&R is to increase car dependence and reduce active travel in the suburban or exurban areas it serves.*" Building Health: Creating and Enhancing Places for Healthy, Active Lives: Blueprint for Action 2007 ISBN: 978 1 874279 14 4
• Maintenance of Transport Infrastructure to Best Practice Standards;	Maintenance is important and is supported. Reduction in number of private car journeys through the elimination of fares on public transport could reduce the number of traffic signals required, particularly in town and city centres, thereby reducing traffic signal maintenance costs. Any general reduction in car journeys, such as is proposed by the elimination of fares on public transport, will reduce wear and tear and hence general maintenance requirements.
• Good Transport Solutions to Growth Areas and Town and City Centres;	There can be no argument against "good transport solutions" ……. but what are they? Once again the universal removal of fares on public transport would encourage people to think twice before they decided to not use it – to replace at least some journeys by private car.
• Implementation of the Infrastructure Measures To Be Identified In The Road Safety Strategy;	The implementation of measures in Manual for Streets 2 would be based on current best practice which includes research showing that road safety has increased on the basis of use of the new guidance both in UK and in other parts of Europe.

• Reduction of Speed Limits In Rural And Urban Areas where appropriate;	This is fully endorsed – both in terms of actual limits and in terms of detailed design which reduces the perceived safe limit for drivers, creating a self-enforcing limit.
• Introduction of Further Innovative Public Transport Services which meet the Needs Of Communities;	This is aspirational and general. Start with a "No Fares Please" policy across all public transport, then grow this into better local services as demand increases.
• Working with Communities to Better Understand Their Needs;	Yes please! Continuing involvement is best for both the public and the department.
• Improved Accessibility For Older People and People with Disabilities;	Yes, this is ideal and will grow naturally as fewer people choose private cars if fares are eliminated from public transport.
• Expansion of Travelwise Initiatives;	These become less necessary if the elimination of fares on public transport makes private cars less attractive for at least some journeys.
• Promotion of Walking and Cycling;	This is laudable and will also be assisted by the elimination of fares on public transport as people would be more inclined to walk or cycle to the bus stop or train station for their free transport.
• Restricting Car Parking in Towns and Cities;	This would be nonsensical unless it were also applied to shopping centres and regional shopping centres. Immediate restriction on long stay government commuter parking is achievable and could be applied at the same time as fares are eliminated on public transport.
• Enforcing Parking and Traffic Offences;	This is easy and unpopular – just do it!
• Increasing the Use of Alternative Fuels in Publicly Owned Vehicles and PublicTransport;	Alternative and renewable fuels are not necessarily an answer – they consume energy which might otherwise more usefully be used in food production or commercial activities respectively.



Transportation Interventions	1. Improved connectivity within the region	2. More efficiently used road space and railways	3. Better maintained transport infrastructure	4. Improved access in our towns and cities	5. Improved access in rural areas	6. Improved connections to key tourism sites	B. Enhance the quality of life for all	7. Improved Safety	8. Improved Social Inclusion	9. Developed transport	C. Reduce the Environmental Impact of Transport	10. Reduced Green House Gas Emissions from transport	11. Protected our biodiversity	12. Reduced noise and air pollution
Selective Road Improvements to address Bottlenecks	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			
Improved Connections Between Different Modes of Transport			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓			
Maximising the Efficient Use of All Transport Assets				✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓			
Promotion of a Competitive Sustainable Freight Sector	✓	✓	✓			✓					✓			
Active Management of the Transportation Networks	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Prioritisation of Road Space for Public Transport	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Introduction of more Park and Ride Facilities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓			
Maintenance of Transport Infrastructure to Best Practice Standards	✓	✓	✓							✓	✓			
Good Transport Solutions to Growth Areas and Town and City Centres	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			
Implementation of the Infrastructure Measures To Be Identified in The Road Safety Strategy		✓				✓								
Reduction of Speed Limits in Rural and Urban Areas where appropriate	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓					✓			
Introduction of Further Innovative Public Transport Services which meet the Needs of Communities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓			
Working with Communities to Better Understand Their Needs	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓			
Improved Accessibility For Older People and People with Disabilities				✓	✓	✓		✓	✓					
Expansion of Travelwise Initiatives	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Promotion of Walking and Cycling	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Restricting Car Parking in Towns and Cities	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓					
Enforcing Parking and Traffic Offences						✓		✓	✓		✓			
Increasing the Use of Alternative Fuels in Publicly Owned Vehicles and Public Transport	✓	✓	✓		✓									
Advising on Vehicle Choice and Promote the Use of Alternative and Renewable Fuels	✓	✓	✓		✓									
Using Environmentally Sensitive Materials and Methods in Transportation Schemes	✓	✓	✓							✓				

- Advising on Vehicle Choice and Promote the Use Of Alternative and Renewable Fuels; and

- Using Environmentally Sensitive Materials and Methods in Transportation Schemes

Does the Department have expertise on vehicle choice? As noted above, alternative and renewable fuels are not necessarily an answer – they consume energy which might otherwise more usefully be used in food production or commercial activities respectively.

This is good, but does not negate the need to reduce capital schemes in favour of eliminating fares on public transport.

The complex relationship between the transportation Interventions and Strategic Objectives is illustrated by the table overleaf.

Strategic Objectives and Transportation Interventions

A. Support the Growth of the Economy

1. Improved connectivity within the region
2. More efficiently used road space and railways
3. Better maintained transport infrastructure
4. Improved access in our towns and cities
5. Improved access in rural areas
6. Improved connections to key tourism sites

B. Enhance the quality of life for all

7. Improved Safety
8. Improved Social Inclusion
9. Developed transport

C. Reduce the Environmental Impact of Transport

10. Reduced Green House Gas Emissions from transport
11. Protected our biodiversity
12. Reduced noise and air pollution

Transportation Interventions

Selective Road Improvements to address Bottlenecks

The best solution to a transportation problem may be a road scheme; for example, new bypasses, ring roads or bridges that could take heavy goods traffic out of town centres and create space for public transport or active travel. We will consider all options to find balanced solutions for bottlenecks in the network and will identify where new road schemes are required.

Improved Connections Between Different Modes of Transport

This means making it easy to make journeys using more than one form of transport. For example, drive to a park and ride site, take a bus or train to a main town, then change to a local service to the final destination. It will be facilitated by integrated ticketing, real time information systems and active management of our networks. Integrated ticketing would allow one ticket to be used for an entire journey, irrespective of how many different services are involved. This could be further expanded to include personal mobility packages which integrate car parking,

The best solution to a transportation problem may not be a road scheme at all. It would be much more sensible for the Northern Ireland economy to scientifically reduce the number of private car journeys while increasing public transport trips. Removing the single biggest issue that people have with public transport – the cost – is the biggest incentive to changing habits.

All the means described are complex and expensive. Ticketing with all its associated complexities is simply removed with the elimination of fares. Park and Ride is assumed to be a good thing but research noted above indicates that it may actually increase car dependency and have adverse health consequences when compared with improvements in public transport.

car club membership and other services and benefits on one smartcard or smartphone.

Maximising the Efficient Use of All Transport Assets
This means better integration of different transport provision that already exists to improve the service to the community; including public, community, health and education transport.

Promotion of a Competitive Sustainable Freight Sector
In an export orientated economy an efficient, modern freight sector is key to enhancing our reputation among customers and minimising the additional costs of transport to our businesses. Through the All Island Freight Forum, we will work with businesses and freight operators to ensure our economy benefits from a competitive, efficient and sustainable freight sector.

Active Management of the Transportation Networks
We can improve the performance of our existing network by using intelligent traffic systems to provide up to date traffic information, signal alternative routes, and adjust the speed limits on main routes to reduce congestion. Active management also includes introducing dedicated lanes for public transport, high occupancy vehicles or freight including hard shoulder running, to give priority to moving people and goods rather than vehicles.

Prioritisation of Road Space for Public Transport
This means Introducing more public transport priority measures; including bus only lanes, bus priority at junctions, bus gates, end-to-end bus lanes on Quality Bus Corridors and priority for Rapid Transit. It includes giving road space to public transport which can carry large numbers of people efficiently instead of cars which may have only one occupant. This will improve the reliability for road network users, especially essential car users, and improve the efficiency of the road network.

This becomes possible when public transport becomes the norm for more journeys. It is not possible as long as we continue to spend 97% of our overall transport resources on private cars.

Efficiency in freight transport increases as private car use decreases. This is fundamental and is achieved by a sea change in habits, making public transport more attractive and more socially inclusive by removing fares completely.

All this complex and expensive technology goes quickly out of date, meaning more maintenance cost and replacement cost. These costly technological fixes are unnecessary if we focus our attention on changing people's habits away from the congestion causing private car and towards public transport, achievable by eliminating fares.

These physical and management fixes are unnecessary if we focus our attention on changing people's habits away from the private cars that cause the congestion. Public transport will still be less convenient and less comfortable – its main means to compete initially must be on cost – eliminating fares gets us shifted for some journeys and creates the modal shift that allows us to reduce overall spending while still allocating more resources to improving public transport.

Introduction of more Park and Ride Facilities This means providing safe and secure car parking, linked to bus, train, or Rapid Transit services that allows users to complete their journeys into towns and cities by public transport. It also includes car parks on Key Transport Corridors offering dedicated services thereby managing congestion in urban areas.	This has been covered above with the research report discussed previously.
Maintenance of Transport Infrastructure to Best Practice Standards We need to maintain our roads and our public transport infrastructure. When we are doing this, we will give more priority to public transport and to roads that are used by large numbers of people or volumes of freight. When maintaining infrastructure, we will ensure that it is adapted to the likely impacts of climate change.	This has been covered above.
Good Transport Solutions to Growth Areas and Town and City Centres Towns and cities and other growth areas such as our ports are the economic drivers of our region. They require particular solutions that address congestion and ensure the free movement of people and goods.	Reduce congestion by reducing car journeys. Reduce car journeys by eliminating public transport fares. Reduced cars means better multi-use streets. Use Manual for Streets 2 as new design guidance in town and city centres.
Implementation of the Infrastructure Measures To Be Identified In The Road Safety Strategy A new Road Safety Strategy For Northern Ireland 2010-2020 is being prepared by the Department of the Environment. It adopts a 'safe systems' approach to road safety which considers roads, vehicles and road users together and seeks to ensure that each of these three elements takes account of the limitations or potential weaknesses in the other two. We will continue to work closely with the Department of the Environment to improve safety.	Increase road safety by encouraging a modal shift towards statistically safer public transport. Encourage this by eliminating public transport fares.

Reduction of Speed Limits In Rural And Urban Areas where appropriate
Speed limits are an important part of achieving appropriate speeds on the road and are adopted for safety, environmental and accessibility reasons. At the moment, national speed limits here are the same as those in England, Scotland and Wales. We will consider introducing local speed limits where the national limits are not appropriate.

Introduction of Further Innovative Public Transport Services
which meet the Needs Of Communities
These will include Door-to-Door services, Demand Responsive services, Rapid Transit and services tailored to the needs of older people and people with disabilities.

Working with Communities to Better Understand Their Needs
Through, for example, the community planning process and neighbourhood renewal partnerships, we will work to make sure that transport meets the needs of the communities it is meant to serve. This will include exploring how public transport can be used as a shared space.

Reduce speed limits in all town and city centres to 20mph, creating road and junction conditions that only feel safe to drivers when they are travelling at 20mph or below. Remove most traffic signals and introduce instead a system of priority at road junctions based on pedestrian and cycle priority as per the Highway Code.

These are being **reduced** as they are seen as expensive because not many people need them because most people choose to use their private cars. Create the modal shift for many road users by eliminating public transport fares and thereby increase the overall proportion of transportation spend on public transport from its lowly 3% of the total. This then enables resources to be put in to public transport improvements.

This is agreed provided it is within the framework that popularises public transport for all. Comfort and convenience will improve on public transport if fares are eliminated, people shift for some journeys, resources follow the people naturally and the current trend towards more private cars begins to turn around. Public transport is only a shared space if more people get on to it, initially sacrificing some comfort and convenience for a fare-free ride. Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership areas should become the pilot project for the elimination of public transport fares. If a pilot project is considered necessary, give free smartcards for use by everyone with an address in a NR area.

Improved Accessibility For Older People and People with Disabilities
Older people and people with disabilities face additional barriers when using the transport network. We will continue to work to reduce those barriers and maximise the accessibility of our transport networks.

This is a worthy aim that only becomes realisable with resources moving from the 97% cost of the private car to the 3% cost of public transport. Eliminating fares starts the saving in the private car and gradually brings resources into the public transport sector as resources follow passengers.

Expansion of Travelwise Initiatives
Travelwise promotes 'Active Travel' and sustainable travel modes through Smarter Choice programmes including; Travelwise Schools programme and Workplace and School Travel Planning which aim to reduce the impact of work-generated or school run travel on the environment and the wider community and at the same time bring benefits to users.

The smartest way to encourage people's initial change is to eliminate fares on public transport.

Promotion of Walking and Cycling
This means removing the barriers to walking and cycling and increasing the opportunities for active travel to ensure walking and cycling are viable alternatives to the car and allow ready access to public transport. That may require expanding the cycling and pedestrian network. An alternative approach may be to focus on reprioritising our existing road space by, for example, improving the design of junctions in towns, changing signal phasing to favour pedestrians and reducing traffic speeds.

Include in RTS the requirement for all countryside developments to provide a multi-use way along the full road frontage of each property where development is to occur, with reinstatement of hedges behind the way. This would dramatically improve access for rural walking and cycling which are extremely dangerous at present, with regular reporting of horrific high speed accidents, often involving younger or older people.

Restricting Car Parking in Towns and Cities
This means reducing the availability of long-stay car parking in urban areas: for example, Residents Parking Areas could prevent commuters from parking in residential areas and a workplace parking levy, piloted in the public sector, could reduce the number of people choosing to travel to work by car. We have an over-supply of longstay car parking in many of our towns and cities (RTS Supplement: Supporting Data).

This negates the opportunity to revitalise town and city centres which is promoted in the Regional Development Strategy, and creates the opposite effect encouraging less sustainable drives to shopping centres. It is far better to eliminate fares on public transport, thereby making town and city centres more inviting since they are generally better served by public transport than shopping centres.

Case study: Addressing policy: 'Restrict car parking in towns and cities.'
Parking cash out schemes:
Controlling parking – either by restricting the number of spaces available, or by charging users to park – has long been acknowledged as one of the more effective elements in any strategy to reduce car use. But it is often this very effectiveness that also often makes such punitive measures extremely unpopular, and therefore difficult to introduce. A more acceptable measure is the idea of paying to persuade drivers not to use their cars for certain trips. One application of this principle– the parking cash out – is becoming increasingly common in the UK. In California, this has become a mainstream policy measure.
Parking cash out: Vodafone, Newbury, UK
Introduced in 2000, the scheme allows any member of staff to opt out of having a parking space and be paid an extra £85 in his/her monthly pay packet. This was introduced at the old headquarters due to insufficient parking spaces at the site and will continue at the company's new site due to limits placed on parking provision as a condition of planning permission. So far, the incentive has attracted around 1500 (a third) of the 4500 staff based in the town, and has largely been seen as a very positive way of addressing the transport problems at the site.
Parking cash out: The California experience
The use of parking cash out schemes took off in California with the 1992 parking cash out law, which aimed to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution from the road transport sector. Essentially, this required employers who subsidised parking to give commuters the option of receiving the cash value of that subsidy instead. Specifically, the law applied only to parking spaces rented from a third party and not spaces they provided themselves. Therefore, if an employee elected to take the cash, the money previously devoted to leasing the parking spaces would instead form the commuter's cash allowance.
Source: Parking cash out, TEC (2002). M. Enoch
Enforcing Parking and Traffic Offences

Like most of the proposals in this Regional Transportation Strategy Review, this is much too complicated. Firstly remove all fares from public transport, which will encourage a lot more people to come to work on the train or bus. Secondly, with a modal shift having been started, use the additional resources coming from private car use to public transport use to improve public transport's convenience and comfort. This will free up additional resources not needed on highly technical and expensive solutions such as additional large roads, traffic controls and fancy meddling between employers and staff. Don't tackle the symptoms, tackle the cause. Don't penalise the essential car user (or part time essential car user) which in turn penalises the economy.

The enforcement of parking restrictions, including yellow lines, urban clearways, public transport lanes, limited waiting parking places, blue badge parking and pay and display bays, will help: traffic to flow more freely; buses and Rapid Transit vehicles keep to their timetable; vans and lorries make deliveries; pedestrians to feel safer crossing the road; and keeping parking places reserved for Blue Badge holders available for those who need to use them.

But we are not endeavouring to help traffic to flow more freely.....we are endeavouring to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, encourage walking and cycling, promote public transport. By making traffic flow more freely we are encouraging use of the private car. Instead, by eliminating fares from public transport we are commencing the process of reducing private car use and encouraging the use of public transport for some or all journeys.

Increasing the Use of Alternative Fuels in Publicly Owned Vehicles and Public Transport

This has been covered above.

Alternative fuel technology and electric vehicles can reduce transport emissions. The public sector owns a large fleet of vehicles; including cars, mini-buses, vans and lorries. When buying new vehicles we will look for opportunities to increase the use of alternative / renewable fuels, including hybrid and plug-in electric vehicles which may ultimately lead to cost savings. We will encourage public transport operators to do the same.

Advising on Vehicle Choice and Promoting the Use Of Alternative and Renewable Fuels

This has been covered above.

We will encourage people to buy smaller-engined, more fuel efficient vehicles and vehicles which do not rely on fossil fuels. As people switch to these vehicles, greenhouse gas emissions will fall.

Using Environmentally Sensitive Materials and Methods in Transportation Schemes

This has been covered above.

This will include the use of materials appropriate to their surroundings, as well as porous surfaces, re-cycled aggregates, and using native species when planting or reinstating trees or bushes.

Questions for This Chapter
Q. Do you agree with the interventions listed?
Q. Have you any other interventions to suggest or any alternative wording that you would prefer?

5 Making choices

5.1 A new approach to implementation – a Transportation Policy Prioritisation Framework

Traditional transport planning is problem-based. It starts with the identification of transport problems and then develops infrastructure solutions to solve those problems.

The solutions are then subjected to individual transport appraisals that check things like the costs and benefits of the solution. This approach, however, does not prioritise the solution against agreed Strategic Objectives. This is vital to ensure the delivery of Strategic Objectives and the efficient use of limited resources.

Our new approach recognises this and will be objective-led, with a broad view on which programmes contribute to specific policy objectives. The aim is to link strategic transport programmes to the Executive's objectives for the region, based on evidence. These Strategic programmes will comprise elements designed to achieve a complete transport chain. A Park and Ride programme, for example, would include constructing the site, a dedicated public transport service from it, a Quality Bus Corridor or other priority measures on the road and any other associated infrastructure required. This would ensure a more "joined up" result for users, helping to maximise benefits and value and avoid any piecemeal approach with individual and disjointed projects.

A significant amount of recent work has been carried out around the transport needs of communities and businesses that may preclude the need for new Transport Plans. These include Active Travel and Freight Plans, Roads Service and public transport providers' corporate and business plans and local Masterplans. There are also the existing Transport Plans and the Accessible Transport Strategy Action Plan which will continue to completion and the local transport studies previously undertaken which may still be relevant.

It appears clear that the example in Hasselt, Belgium, should be considered for Northern Ireland. It has achieved a huge change in habits and improved public transport beyond recognition. It has been described above and should be our early and over-arching policy decision, subject to a feasibility study on potential outcomes. The elimination of fares on all public transport in Northern Ireland would create a similar shift in attitude far more convincingly than the proposals to look closely at all these ideas and prioritise them. Take a single great idea and make it ours. Reduce hassle all round and revitalise public transport – part of the software of the region.

Case Study: Vienna, the importance of strong governance in the success of integrated transport strategies

Vienna has always enjoyed political consensus on the importance of a balanced, integrated and user friendly city and mobility system. In Vienna in the 1960s and 1970s political leadership resisted the received wisdom of completely re-orientating the transport infrastructure towards the private car, by taking a political decision to retain the tram network and indeed plan for the expansion of the Metro system. Within Vienna an integrated transport master planning process which covered all modes, parking policy, pedestrians, cycling and safety, was set in place at an early stage. An Integrated Traffic Management Team was an essential part of the process. This team included independent experts, academics and officers. The team was charged with a number of key policy evaluation studies (e.g. a study of the impact of long term parking provision in the City) which helped the City determine an integrated and holistic plan for the urban area

Our new approach will use a Policy Prioritisation Framework to identify the priority strategic programmes and projects that most closely align with the Executive's and Department's strategic direction, bearing in mind affordability and value for money. We will then implement the best programmes and projects first, subject to the availability of funding, that is those programmes and projects that best deliver the agreed Strategic Objectives and which promote equality with political and public acceptability. We are aware of the need to consider improvements to the existing transport networks before developing any new infrastructure.

The Policy Prioritisation Framework will set strategic programmes within existing and emerging strategic economic, environmental and social contexts so that transport schemes planned for the future can focus on supporting the Executive's aims and objectives.

Strategic programmes will be scored to assess their "policy fit". This will link the Strategic Guidance in the Regional Development Strategy to the Strategic Objectives in the Regional Transportation Strategy. The Policy

This proposal is flawed. It encourages unmeasurable subjectivity and unfortunately it is just another way of prioritising tired old programmes of road building that have not worked in achieving the overall objectives of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and reducing the use of the private car on at least some journeys.

It is time to stop doing these things, time to reassess the overall picture by an early change in the software – the elimination of fares from all public transport in Northern Ireland. We are uniquely placed to do this because DRD is so intimately involved with regional planning strategy, regional transportation strategy, control of all roads, strategic and local and control of almost all public transport. We should be a shining example in Europe but we are instead one of the worst in Europe.

Prioritisation Framework will be supported with guidance on "scoring" to ensure a fair and consistent approach. It will not replace detailed project appraisals, these will come later at the project delivery stage, but will act as a first step in the process. Programmes will still require formal assessment using an appropriate transport assessment methodology to ensure that they offer value for money.
Policy Prioritisation is not a numerical or mathematical process, rather it relies on the experience and knowledge of the stakeholders and on their joint consent. Scoring will be based on a system of ticks and crosses rather than numerical scoring. Colour coding can be used effectively to show the strategic interventions that deliver the highest impact with respect to the Strategic Objectives and their policies.
Developing and using a Policy Prioritisation Framework will require extensive work alongside our key stakeholders and involve ranking our Strategic Objectives in order of importance as part of the process.

5.2 Policy prioritisation in practice
While a Policy Prioritisation Framework will be a new approach to transportation planning here, it has been used successfully in other countries. Below is an example of a Policy Prioritisation Framework developed in South-East Queensland, Australia.
This example shows how a Strategic Objective is refined first to specific objectives and then to criteria which can be scored. Agreed scoring guidance is used to assess specific interventions to find those which best achieve the strategic objectives.
For example, one Strategic objective was Tackling Urban Congestion - fix congestion hotspots. This had 3 specific objectives:

- Promote an increased mode shift to public transport, walking and cycling;
- Optimise rail and road alignments for quick and efficient travel; and
- Actively manage travel demand.

Against each of these Specific Objectives scoring criteria were agreed.
This is illustrated below:

This is just more of the same old RDS in some new clothes and should not be considered unless it gets to the roots of the problem by changing the basics of transportation software such as the elimination of public transport fares. It must move away from the creation of continuing and wildly expensive hardware solutions. Not counting land cost, the improvements to just one junction in Belfast would pay for the elimination of all public transport fares across Northern Ireland for a full year – just one junction. As stated previously, the £3.2 billion infrastructure investment over the past ten years would have eliminated fares on public transport for thirty years.....

STRATEGIC	SPECIFIC	SCORING CRITERIA
Tackling Urban Congestion - fix congestion hotspots	Promote an increased mode shift to public transport, walking and cycling.	Provide or stimulate the demand for high quality, sustainable frequent public transport infrastructure and services to key centres, and ensure services run on time
		Provide or stimulate the demand for well designed pedestrian and cycling routes and end-of-trip facilities for pedestrians and cyclists at key locations
	Optimise rail and road alignments for quick and efficient travel	Promote marketing programs to influence travel behaviour and increase awareness and understanding in the community of public and active transport options
	Actively manage travel demand	Maximise the person-carrying capacity of congested roadways through road space reallocation

Scoring Guidance was then developed and agreed for each of the scoring criteria. This is shown in the following table overleaf:

Scoring guidance for Specific Objective: Tackling Urban Congestion

	Specific Transport Or Connectivity Contributions/Impacts	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓	0	x	xx	x x x
PROS07	Maximise the person-carrying capacity of congested roadways through road space reallocation	Significant quantity of road space reallocated to public transport (eg full introduction of dedicated public transport lanes) and person carrying capacity is greatly improved	Road space reallocated to high occupancy vehicles (eg HOV priority lanes), person carrying capacity is improved	Road space reallocation partially to high occupancy vehciles, person carrying capacity is improved slightly	No change	Lack of or poor road space reallocation causing person carrying capacity to be slightly reduced	Person carrying capacity is moderately reduced	Person carrying capacity is severely limited
PROS10	Promote marketing programs to influence travel behaviour	Major support to modal shift initiatives that rely upon information and marketing to influence travel behaviour	Moderate support to modal shift initiaves that rely upon information and marketing to influence travel behaviour	Some support for modal shift initiatives that rely upon information and marketing to influence travel behaviour	No Change	Slight decrease in information and marketing that influences travel behaviour	Moderate decrease in information and marketing that influences travel behaviour	Major decrease in information and marketing that influences travel behaviour
NAT09	Provide or stimulate the demand for well designed pedestrian and cycling routes and end-of-trip facilities for pedestrians and cyclists at key locations	Major new high quality cycle or walking networks with best practice end of trip facilities	Marked improvement to existing cycle or walking networks with good end of trip facilities	Minor improvements to cycle or walking networks with some end of trip facilities. Or scheme that stimulates the demand for well designed pedestrian and cycling routes.	No effect on walking or cycling networks or end of trip facilities.	Minor reduction to walking or cycle capacity.	Moderate reduction to walking or cycle capacity.	Major reduction to walking or cycle capacity.
SUS01	Provide or stimulate the demand for high quality, sustainable frequent public transport infrastructure and services to key centres, and ensure services run on time	Major new high quality bus service, cycle or walking network. New priority measures for public transport to improve on time running of services. New station or rail service.	Marked improvement to existing bus service, cycle or walking network. Improved rail services.	Minor improvements to bus service, cycle or walking network. Or scheme that stimulates the demand for high quality, sustainable frequent public transport infrastrucutre and services.	No effect on public transport, walking or cycling.	Minor reduction to bus service, walking or cycle capacity.	Moderate reduction to bus service, walking or cycle capacity. Minor reduction to rail services.	Major reduction to bus service, walking or cycle capacity. Loss of rail service, station closure.

Motorway
Coast Connect
Specifi c Transport or Connectivity
Contributions / Impacts
Comment Score Comment Score Comment
Score Comment Score
Scoring Criteria

Maximise the person-carrying capacity of congested roadways PROS07

		Intervention								
		Scoring Criteria	Inner City Rail		Northern Veloway		North-South Motorway		Coast Connect	
		Specific Transport or Connectivity Contributions / Impacts	Score	Comment	Score	Comment	Score	Comment	Score	Comment
Scoring Criteria	PROS07	Maximise the person-carrying capacity of congested roadways through road space reallocation	0		0		XX	This is a new road scheme. Carrying capacity reduced by road widening	✓✓	Road space reallocation is quite significant with the addition of bus lanes as well as lanes that are designed for cars with high occupancy
	PROS10	Promote marketing programs to influence travel behaviour	0	No information on marketing	0	No information on marketing		No information on marketing	✓	Marketing and information provision of proposed service
	NAT09	Provide or stimulate the demand for well designed pedestrian and cycling routes and end-of-trip facilities for pedestrians and cyclists at key locations	✓		✓✓✓	This is a major new bikeway	0		✓✓✓	New high quality cycle and walk networks will be incorporated into the scheme
	SUS01	Provide or stimulate the demand for high quality, sustainable frequent public transport infrastructure and services to key centres, and ensure services run on time	✓✓✓		✓✓		✓	Will improve journey times for public transport if surface road space is allocated to public transport	✓✓✓	

through road space reallocation

From the table, we can see that for these 4 interventions Coast Connect scores best against the 4 sample criteria, while the North-South Motorway scores worst.

By using a similar process, as we develop programmes over the coming years we will be able to assess their impact against our agreed Strategic Objectives and so determine their policy fit. We will also need to assess their value for money using appropriate transport assessment tools. This is done within a secondary framework which can include things like equality, value for money, deliverability, acceptability and capital cost. Future budgets are likely to be constrained and while some programmes may offer good value for money and contribute to the Strategic Objectives, they may simply be unaffordable. The Policy Prioritisation Framework will allow us to make more informed choices based not just on Value for Money, but on a wider strategic fit as well. It is an inclusive, transparent process that seeks to build consent rather than consensus. In other words, an agreed prioritisation that stakeholders agree is the best way to achieve the Strategic Objectives.

What is really unaffordable in Northern Ireland is the £6billion we spend every year on private vehicles because they score better on the wish list of every individual who can afford a car. Private cars are better for comfort, convenience and cost. Public transport can begin to compete on cost if fares are eliminated. As more people begin to use public transport it can improve its comfort and convenience with resources diverted from the excessive road development budget and the horrendous cost of our private cars every year.

We will look for all possible sources of funding when considering the affordability of possible programmes, including revenue generating options. These may include the introduction of on-street car parking charges in all towns and cities, increased offstreet charges and car parking fines, road user charging and developer contributions to the transportation related costs of new development.

Questions for This Chapter
Q. Do you agree with our proposals for a prioritisation framework?
Q. Have you any other prioritisation mechanism to suggest?5253
6 What will we do next?

The refocused direction for transportation has at its core the need to support the growth of our economy. At the same time, we are aware that our transportation network must be sustainable, economic growth has to be balanced against the needs of society and the protection of the environment.

The current Transport Plans cover the period to 2015. This Strategy will be used to make decisions about what we do after 2015. This will align our transport planning process with the Budgetary and Comprehensive Spending Review cycles.
Achieving the right balance for transport means making choices about what is most important for the long term future of this Region.
Through this consultation we will find out what you believe the most important Strategic Objectives for transport should be and how we should proceed to achieve these objectives.
Since the Executive's main focus is on developing our economy, the emerging Economic Strategy will be particularly important, but transport also has an important role in supporting health, education, leisure activities, social inclusion, rural and urban communities and the environment. We will work with the relevant Departments to maximise the alignment between the new Regional Transportation Strategy and their work.
Once we have determined the Strategic Objectives, we will work with key stakeholders to develop an agreed Policy Prioritisation

Putting charges on all on-street parking creates a further reason for people to abandon visiting town and city centres and move instead to free parking at shopping centres. This is completely against the Regional Development Strategy's objectives of encouraging a renaissance in town and city centres. Much better to remove fares from public transport which generally serves town and city centres well, thus encouraging families to come into the centres of our towns and cities and helping to create the vitality which is sought in some parts of policy and denied in others.

2015 would be a great time to be ready for the elimination of all public transport fares. It would be a fully achievable objective for the current Executive. It would tie in precisely with the new Councils and give them a great boost, particularly in their new responsibilities for neighbourhood renewal, regeneration of town and city centres and local planning, removing some need for parking and improving local environments. It would be a universally popular and affordable means to help to bring civilisation back to this region, making us one of the best in Europe instead of one of the worst polluters.

Framework and scoring guidance. In doing this, it will be important to ensure that transport integrates with other existing and emerging Executive strategies and policies, particularly the new Regional Development Strategy which is currently being finalised as the Executive's spatial strategy through to 2025.

We will then prepare a long list of possible transport interventions. This will be a substantive exercise and has already started.

We will undertake an initial sift, removing interventions which are obviously unaffordable and seek to combine others to develop Strategic Programmes of Interventions where possible.

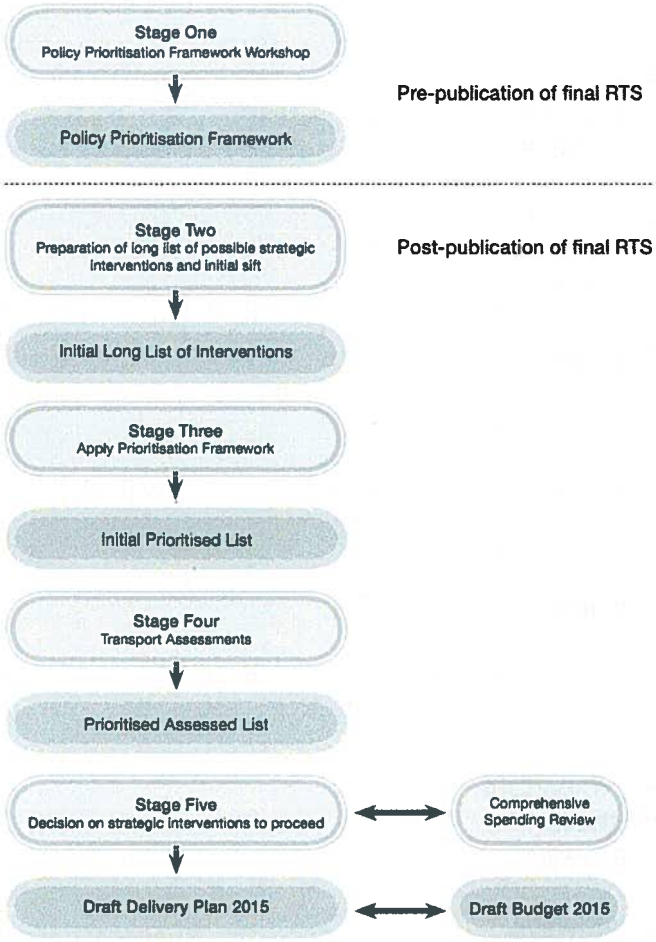
The next stage would be to apply the Prioritisation Framework to our list of possible interventions and arrive at an Initial Prioritised List.

The Initial Prioritised List would be subjected to Transport Assessment where we would take into account value for money, equality and environmental considerations and political/public acceptability. This would result in a Prioritised Assessed List which, along with the Comprehensive Spending Review, would allow informed decisions to be taken on the transport interventions to include in a draft Delivery Plan, linked to the draft Budget. The draft Delivery plan would be published for public consultation.

This is illustrated by the flow chart overleaf.

This is a hugely complicated methodology when there is a simple solution to our problems and one that can be fully implemented by 2015, ready for the new decade.

Remember the acronym KISS – Keep It Simple.



We will examine our internal structures to ensure that we successfully implement the revised Strategy in an integrated manner across all functions of the Department: policy, finance, public transport and roads.

Glossary
ATS Accessible Transport Strategy

BMA Belfast Metropolitan Area, this includes the city of Belfast
and the adjoining urban parts of the Council areas of Carrickfergus, Castlereagh, Lisburn , Newtownabbey and North Down

BMTP Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan

Bus Gates This is a short section of road which allows buses and
other designated vehicles to by-pass congestion

DEFRA Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Demand Responsive Transport
A transport system which provides services, according to pre-booked demands only. A dial-a-ride scheme providing door-to-door transport following a telephone
booking is a common example. This contrasts with a fixed system on which services run at predefined times and to a predefined route (i.e. as specified in a timetable)
DETI Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

DfT Department for Transport

DOH Department of Health

DRD Department for Regional Development

EU European Union

Key Transport Corridors (KTCs)
Acting as the upper tier of regionally important routes (road and rail), the KTCs are those strategic long distance routes which connect a number of towns and
provide links to the major regional gateways, including linkages to the transport corridors within the Belfast Metropolitan Area.

OFMDFM Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister

Park and Ride Facilities
These are car parks with connections to public transport that allow commuters and other people wishing to travel into city centres to leave their vehicles and transfer to a bus, rail system (rapid transit, light rail or commuter rail), or carpool for the rest of their trip. The vehicle is stored in the car park during the day and retrieved when the owner returns. Park and rides are generally located in the suburbs of metropolitan areas or on the outer edges of large cities.

Programme for Government
A programme incorporating the Executive's agreed budget linked to policies and programmes which, under the Agreement, is subject to approval by the Assembly,

after scrutiny in Assembly Committees, on a crosscommunity basis

Quality Bus Corridors
A bus route with high quality infrastructure, (stops with information, shelters with seats) and vehicles (new low floor bus designs) and appropriate priority over general traffic.

Rapid Transit A general term for a new type of quality public transport service offering improved speed, comfort and access features over conventional public transport services. In order to achieve the speed improvement, the service will operate (for at least part) on an exclusive route, unaffected by highway congestion.

RCTP
Rural Community Transport Partnerships

RDS
Regional Development Strategy

Regional Strategic Transport Network
This is made up of the rail system, five Key Transport Corridors, four link corridors, and the Belfast Metropolitan Area transport corridors, along with the remainder of the trunk road network.

RTS Regional Transportation Strategy

Rural As determined by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Inter-Departmental Urban – Rural Definition Group, Rural encompasses Settlements with a population of 4,500 or less. On the basis of this definition, approximately 65% of the 1.7 million inhabitants of The North live in urban areas and 35% in rural areas.

SIBNI Strategic Investment Board Northern Ireland

SMART card Self Monitoring Analysis and Reporting Technology

SRTP Sub-Regional Transport Plan Annex 1 – Assessment

Equality Impact

Under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, we are required to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

In addition, without prejudice to its obligations above, we are also required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious beliefs, political opinion or racial group.

We carried out a full Equality Impact Assessment which showed positive impacts for all groups with no negative impacts identified. A copy of the Equality Impact Assessment is available on our website www.drdni.gov.uk.

Other Assessments

We have carried out other assessments on the Strategy using the Integrated Impact Assessment Toolkit developed by OFMDFM. A copy of the Integrated Impact Assessment, which includes a statement on Rural Proofing, is available on our website, www.drdni.gov.uk.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

The European Directive 2001/42/EC requires a 'Strategic Environmental Assessment' (SEA) of certain plans and programmes. The objective of the Directive is 'to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development' (Article 1). These aims are consistent with the Executive's policies on the environment and sustainable development.

The Directive has been transposed into Northern Ireland Legislation through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Northern Ireland) Regulations i2004 (Statutory Instrument 2004 No.280).
The Directive defines "environmental assessment" as a procedure comprising:

- preparing an Environmental Report on the likely significant effects of the draft plan or programme;
- carrying out consultation on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying Environmental Report;
- taking into account the Environmental Report and the results of consultation in decision making; and
- providing information when the plan or programme is adopted and showing how the results of the environmental assessment have been taken into account.

We have carried out a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Strategy.
A copy of the Environmental Report is available on our website, www.drdni.gov.uk.
Habitats Directive
One of the main initiatives of the Habitats Directive is the creation of a European network of "Natura 2000" wildlife sites made up of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) under the related EC Birds Directive.
These sites aim to maintain or restore the extent and quality of rare habitat types and to ensure that rare species can survive and maintain their populations and natural range on a long-term basis. There is a need to ensure that the implications of present activities and future proposals are properly assessed in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Regulations.
We have carried out an initial scoping of the likely impacts of the Strategy on Natura 2000 sites. Following this initial scoping, we have carried out a Habitats Regulations Assessment.
A copy of the Habitats Regulations Assessment is available on our website, www.drdni.gov.uk.
iiiii