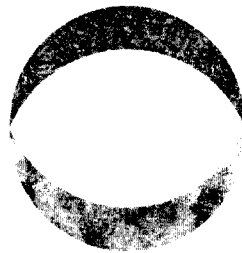


# **Draft Sub-Regional Transport Plan 2015**

## **Consultation response from The Institute of Public Health in Ireland**



THE INSTITUTE OF  
PUBLIC HEALTH IN IRELAND

The Institute of Public Health in Ireland welcomes the opportunity to comment on the consultation paper on the Sub-Regional Transport Plan 2015. The Institute aims to improve health in Ireland, North and South by working to combat health inequalities and influence public policies in favour of health. The Institute applies a holistic model of health which emphasises a wide range of social determinants, including economic, environmental, social and biological factors. The Institute's work is based on the premise that improving health and reducing health inequalities can only be achieved through addressing these broader determinants of health.

The Institute welcomes the consideration of health impacts in the draft plan which were identified as part of the 2001 Health Impact Assessment (HIA) carried out on the Regional Transportation Strategy. The HIA identified health impacts under the following areas:

- Air pollution
- Road traffic injuries
- Physical activity

- Community severance
- Noise
- Access/mobility

The draft sub-regional transport plan does not specify how the health impacts identified in 2001 have been taken into consideration and the Institute would like to highlight that specific elements of the plan may require a review of health impacts prior to implementation.

We would like to reinforce that transport has a major influence on the health of individuals and communities which are highlighted in the Institute's publication *Health Impacts of Transport: a review*<sup>1</sup>. This review demonstrates how the distribution of health impacts does not fall evenly across the population and identifies a number of vulnerable groups, as follows:

- Communities living in urban areas, especially those in inner-city districts.
- Women are less likely to be car dependent, less likely to be injured by traffic, but also more likely to have their needs unmet by public transport.
- Older people are vulnerable to the effects of air and noise pollution due to their underlying health state, and may be more inclined to become socially isolated due to poor access to transport and fears over personal safety, and are at high risk of traffic related injury relative to other age groups.
- Pedestrians and cyclists engaging in health promotion physical activity are vulnerable to road traffic injury, and perceived danger in this regard may be a factor in reducing the number of journeys which people would potentially undertake by this route.

The draft plan has the potential to impact on all of the above groups through the provision of enhanced public transport, walk/cycle measures and safety initiatives. Children have been identified as a vulnerable group throughout the draft plan, however as demonstrated above other population groups also need to be taken into consideration.

We welcome the draft sub-regional transportation plan and the potential positive health impacts on the urban and rural population of Northern Ireland. Due consideration should be given to the potential health impacts upon implementation of

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<sup>1</sup> Institute of Public Health in Ireland, 2005, *Health impacts of transport: a review*.

the plan through screening specific elements of the plan prior to the commencement of any work.

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