



# **Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) for Northern Ireland 2002-12**

## **Monitoring Report 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2007**

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“Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) for Northern Ireland 2002-12  
Monitoring Report 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2007”

The purpose of the RTS is to support the Regional Development Strategy and to make a significant contribution towards achieving the longer-term transportation 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.”*

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## Ministerial Foreword



As Minister for Regional Development, I am pleased to present this Monitoring Report on the implementation of the Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS). This report focuses on progress and key achievements during the period 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2007.

During this period, progress was made on the implementation of the Belfast Metropolitan and Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plans and the Accessible Transport Strategy, and the completion of a Sub-Regional Transport Plan. An economic feasibility study on rapid transit proposals for Belfast is also underway and will be completed later in 2007.

In January 2006, the upgrade of the M1/Westlink started. This three-year project is critical for the future of Belfast and for the economy of the whole of the North. It will provide better access to and through Belfast saving time and cost for all road users, especially the haulage industry which needs swift, reliable journey times to operate efficiently.

Significant progress has also been made improving sections of the A1 on the Eastern Seaboard Corridor.

My Department also provided significant funding for the purchase of 194 new buses, brought into service in 2005/06 and 23 new CAF trains, all in service by September 2005. There has been a 15% increase in Metro passengers since 2005 and rail passengers (excluding cross border journeys) for 2006/07 are up by 34% on 2001/02. It is also pleasing to note a reduction in personal

injury collisions during the period of this report. While there has been steady progress in other areas my Department is now commencing a Review of the RTS to analyse the implementation to date and to ensure that the expected outcomes remain relevant against a number of factors including sustainable development and climate change that are now more prominent from when the RTS was introduced in 2002. This review will help achieve the RTS vision of having a modern, sustainable, safe transportation system for people here.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Conor Murphy".

Conor Murphy MP, MLA

September 2007

## **Introduction**

The Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) is being progressed through three Transport Plans; Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP); Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan (RSTNTP); Sub-Regional Transport Plan (SRTP) and the Accessible Transport Strategy (ATS).

This report monitors progress against the key targets set in the BMTP and RSTNTP. It also provides information on the Sub-Regional Transport Plan, which was published on 11 June 2007 and reports on the implementation of the ATS and other significant RTS transportation-related achievements during the period 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2007.

## **Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP)**

The Department published the BMTP on 13 November 2004. A copy of the full Plan can be obtained on the Internet site [www.drdni.gov.uk](http://www.drdni.gov.uk). The Transport Plan contains a wide range of transportation proposals and has been developed in conjunction with the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan to ensure integration of transport and land use, providing a balanced and sustainable system for the region up to 2015.

There has been good progress on increasing cycling journeys and on reducing Personal Injury Collisions, however average morning peak bus speeds are decreasing and the 2005 Belfast City Cordon Survey recorded an increase in the percentage of people making journeys by private car.

Progress made on the key targets is detailed in Table 1.

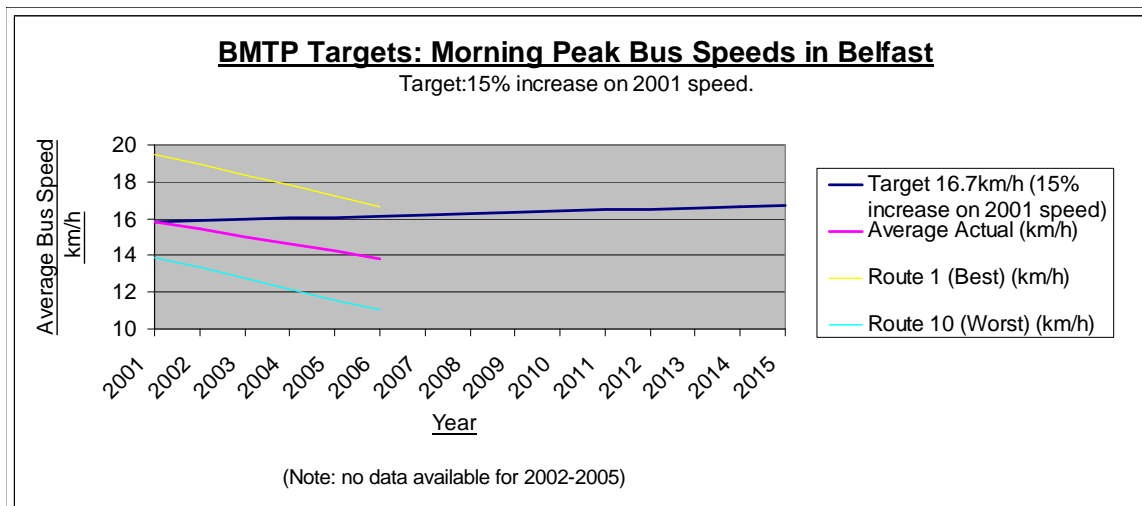
It should be noted that elements of BMTP are being brought forward through the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) process and may be subject to Public Inquiry consideration.

*Table 1: BMTP targets*

<b>BMTP Target (2015)</b>	<b>Progress at 31 March 2007</b>
<p>1. Morning peak traffic speeds on the BMA's strategic road network – no more than 1% slower than in 2001.</p>	<p>Journey time surveys were undertaken of the BMA strategic road network in 2005. Comparison with the 2001 data indicates that there has been an 8% decrease in morning peak traffic speeds. The next journey time survey is scheduled for later in 2007.</p> <p>Improvements to traffic speeds are closely linked to major road improvements and in particular the removal of bottlenecks. Many of the schemes planned will not be delivered until later in the plan period as they have long lead in times associated with statutory processes.</p>
<p>2. Morning peak bus speeds in the BMA's road network on main radial routes – 15% increase in bus speeds compared to 2001.</p>	<p>From May 2001 to June 2006, morning peak bus speeds decreased by 12.8% (details are contained in Figure 1 below). This 12.8% figure relates to the 5 routes for which 2001 journey times were recorded and gives a proxy figure for performance on all the arterial routes.</p>
<p>3. Car mode share of motorised journeys crossing a Belfast City Centre cordon – reduce to 54% by 2015 compared to 60% in 2001.</p>	<p>The last Belfast City Centre Cordon Survey in 2005 showed that 61% of people crossing the cordon did so in private cars. The next Cordon Survey is scheduled for later in 2007.</p>
<p>4. Number of public transport trips made by bus, rail and rapid transit in the BMA – Morning peak % change from 2001: Bus + 28% and Rail +67%</p>	<p>Bus: By February 2007 15% growth in Metro passenger numbers. Rail: 34% increase in total passengers 2006/07 vs 2001/02. Rapid Transit: A comprehensive feasibility study is underway and will be completed later in 2007.</p>
<p>5. Number of walking and cycling trips crossing a Belfast City Centre cordon and the Inner City cordon. Walking +20% for journeys less than 2 miles (by 2012). Cycling +300% from 2000 base.</p>	<p>Walking: The 2005 Belfast City Centre Cordon Survey showed that 10% of person trips entering the City Centre in the morning peak hour were pedestrians. Data collected by Belfast City Centre Management Company since 2004 indicates an increase in pedestrian activity of approximately 3% per annum, suggesting an overall increase of up to 18% since 2001.</p> <p>Cycling: The 2005 Belfast City Centre Cordon Survey showed that 1% of person trips entering the City Centre in the morning peak hour were cyclists. The Northern Ireland Cycling Strategy second report (January 2007) reports an increase of +56% in cycle usage in Belfast, based on their monitoring sites from 2000.</p> <p>The next Cordon Survey is scheduled for later in 2007.</p>
<p>6. Number of personal injury accidents (PIAs) on roads in BMA – contribution to the reduction in the number of PIAs by one-third from 2001 by 2012.</p>	<p>Personal Injury Collisions in BMA area. 01/02-----3169 05/06-----2153</p> <p>This constitutes a 32% reduction from 2001/02.</p>

BMTP Target (2015)	Progress at 31 March 2007
7. Emissions of Nitrogen Oxides from road traffic. 8. Emissions of particulates from road traffic. Targets to be defined as part of Local Air Quality Management Area action plans.	On 1 May 2006 the Belfast District Council published an Air Quality Action Plan that defines the required reductions in ambient nitrogen dioxide and particulate material concentrations in order to achieve national air quality strategy objectives. A significant proportion of the nitrogen oxides pollutants emitted within the air quality management areas are attributable to road transport. The Department continues to progress a wide range of initiatives such as Quality Bus Corridors, Park and Ride, new and improved rail stations, rail service frequency, and highway improvements etc. to encourage increased public transport patronage. A copy of the full Belfast Air Quality Action Plan can be found on the internet at <a href="http://airqualityni.co.uk">airqualityni.co.uk</a> .
9. Access to the public transport system, % of households in the BMA within 10 minutes walk of a bus service – increase relative to 2001.	Currently out of a total of 269,255 residential point addresses, 97.2% are within 800m which is a reasonable approximation to target of 'within 10 minutes walk of a bus service'.

*Figure 1: BMTP Morning Peak Bus Speeds in Belfast*



## **Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2015 (RSTNTP)**

The Department published the RSTNTP on 21 March 2005. A copy of the full plan can be obtained on the Internet site [www.drdni.gov.uk](http://www.drdni.gov.uk). The RSTNTP includes proposals across four modes of transport namely Rail, Walk/Cycle, Bus and Highways.

While there has been progress towards the RTS targets with a reduction in highway accidents and fatalities and an increase in rail passenger numbers, a reduction in average speeds on the Regional Strategic Transport Network is noted. Progress made on the RSTNTP key targets is detailed in Table 2 on page 12.

It should be noted that many of the schemes planned for the RSTN will not be delivered until later in the Plan period as they have long lead in times associated with statutory processes.

*Table 2 – RSTNTP Targets*

RSTNTP Targets (2015)	Progress at 31 March 2007
<p>1. Achieve at least 2% increase over speeds in 2001 [measured during the AM peak (07.00 – 09.00)]</p>	<p>Journey time surveys were undertaken of the RSTN in 2005. Results show that overall average speed on RSTN has decreased by 9% compared to average speed on RSTN in 2003 and overall average speed on Key Transport Corridors (KTCs) has decreased by 12% compared to average speed on KTCs in 2003.</p> <p>The next Journey Time Survey is scheduled for later in 2007.</p> <p>Improvements to traffic speeds are closely linked to major road improvements and in particular the removal of bottlenecks. Many of the schemes planned will not be delivered until later in the plan period as they have long lead in times associated with statutory processes.</p>
<p>2. Construction of Strategic Road improvements. Complete the following major road improvements: 16 Bypasses/Link Roads 78 kilometres of dual carriageway 40 kilometres of widened single carriageway 11 major junction improvements</p>	<p>The figures for completed schemes up to 31 March 2007 are for the</p> <p><b>RSTN –</b> 7 Bypasses/Link Roads 14.7 kilometres of dual carriageway 13.7 kilometres of widened single carriageway 6 major junction improvements and</p> <p><b>BMA –</b> 4.1km dual carriageway. This includes M1 Widening 1.9 km; and A8 dualling the Doagh Road to Coleman’s Corner 2.2 km.</p>
<p>3. Number of trips made by rail. Morning peak % change from 2001.</p> <p>Rail (RTS target) +60% [Total annual figure with the exception of Enterprise services]</p> <p>Rail (within BMA) + 67%</p>	<p>Passenger numbers (excluding Enterprise) 2006/07 7.7m up by 34% on 2001/02 figure (5.8m).</p>
<p>4. Number of highway accidents/fatalities on the RSTN. Contribution to long-term road casualty targets [as defined in the Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy 2002-12</p>	<p>Personal Injury Collisions on the RSTN. 01/02-----1657 05/06----- 1116 This constitutes a 33% reduction from 2001/02.</p> <p>Fatal Personal Injury Collisions on the RSTN 01/02-----54 (resulting in 61 fatalities) 05/06-----43 (resulting in 47 fatalities) This constitutes a 20% reduction from 2001/02</p> <p>(2005/06 is the most up-to-date figures. 2006/7 figures available in September 2007).</p>
<p>5. Emissions of Nitrogen Oxides, Carbon Dioxide and other particles from road traffic. Targets to be defined as per Local Air Quality Management Action Plans (LAQMAs)</p>	<p>All of Northern Ireland’s 26 District Councils have completed the first two rounds of review and assessments of local air quality. 9 Councils have identified areas where air quality objectives may not be met and have declared these areas as Air Quality Management Areas.</p>
<p>6. Accessibility of vehicles. 100% of vehicles operating on the inter-urban network to meet the requirements of the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations</p>	<p>41.4% of Ulsterbus buses and coaches accessibility compliant. [10.1% compliant 2001/02]</p>
<p>7. Average vehicle age of no more than 8 years – in addition no bus older than 18 years or coach older than 12 years</p>	<p>Average Ulsterbus vehicle age 11.8 years. Average Ulsterbus vehicle age 13.5 years in 2001/02.</p> <p>276 buses older than 18 years. 217 buses older than 18 years in 2001/02. 3 coaches older than 12 years. No coaches older than 12 years in 2001/02.</p>

## Sub-Regional Transport Plan (SRTP)

The Department published the SRTP on 11 June 2007; key targets are listed below. A copy of the full Plan can be obtained on the DRD Internet site [www.drdni.gov.uk](http://www.drdni.gov.uk) .

The SRTP deals with the transport needs of the whole of Northern Ireland with the exception of the Belfast Metropolitan Area (BMA) and the rail and trunk road networks, which are covered in earlier Transport Plans.

The SRTP has been informed by Transport Studies prepared, where possible, in association with emerging development plans to integrate transportation and land use. It should be noted that elements of SRTP with land use implications will be brought forward through statutory processes.

### *SRTP targets*

The SRTP targets complement and contribute appropriately to the RTS targets which remain in force, namely:

#### Bus

- Average vehicle age of no more than 8 years;
- 100% of buses accessible;
- New route networks in all towns; and
- Comply with Translink Passenger Charter

## Highway

- Contribute to and, where possible, demonstrate progress towards the achievement of long-term road casualty reduction targets – a one-third reduction (from the average for the period 1996-2000) in the number of people killed or seriously injured each year, and a 50% reduction (from the average for the period 1996-2000) in the number of children killed or seriously injured each year;
- Cycle trips to increase in line with the Northern Ireland Cycling Strategy – to quadruple the number of trips by cycle (on 2000 figures) by the end of 2015;
- Walking trips to increase in line with the action plan for walking for Northern Ireland – to increase the number of short walking journeys (less than one mile) by 20%, and increase the average distance walked per person per year by 10%); and
- New public transport services to serve isolated communities and mobility impaired residents in rural areas across Northern Ireland.

Additional targets for urban and rural areas and for rural settlements and open countryside are summarised in Table 3 on page 15.

*Table 3 – SRTP Additional Targets*

Area	Objective	Measure	Target
Other urban Areas	Bus network accessibility	Proportion of population within 400 metres of an hourly bus service to town centre	More than 90% (established by demographic and timetable analysis)
Rural Settlements	Bus network accessibility	Frequency of weekday bus service to nearest Other Urban Area	Minimum of 1 to 6 return journeys per day (depending on settlement size)

The targets outlined above will be relevant and attainable only if the measures identified in the Transport Plan are implemented. As for all Transport plans, the implementation of individual schemes and measures will be subject to the completion of appropriate economic and environmental appraisals and the normal budgetary processes.

## Accessible Transport Strategy

The Department for Regional Development published an Accessible Transport Strategy (ATS) for Northern Ireland on 5 April 2005. The ATS aims to address the barriers that prevent older people and people with disabilities from using the transport system. Main achievements during the period from 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2007 are listed below:

- Department established a Mobility and Inclusion Unit (MIU) to “champion” the Strategy.
- On 21 November 2005 the Department launched the “Travel Safe Guide”, a guide aimed to help people with learning disabilities travel safely in Northern Ireland.
- In February 2006 the Department supported the launch of the Baywatch Northern Ireland campaign, which highlights parking problems encountered by disabled drivers.
- In July 2006 the Inclusive Mobility Transport Advisory Committee was established as an independent body to advise Government, transport providers and others on issues that affect the mobility of older people and people with disabilities.
- The Door-to-Door transport scheme, for people with disabilities or who cannot avail of convention public transport has in 2006/07 been extended to cover an additional 27 urban areas.
- The ATS Action Plan is currently being reviewed and following consultation, a new Action Plan will be published later in 2007.

The ATS can be found on the web site [www.drdni.gov.uk/ats](http://www.drdni.gov.uk/ats).

## Other RTS Transportation-Related Initiatives

Detailed progress reports on all RTS transportation-related initiatives being taken forward by the Department and other Government Departments can be found on the web site [www.drdni.gov.uk](http://www.drdni.gov.uk) . Significant achievements during the period from 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2007 are noted below.

- **Quality Bus Corridors (QBCs)** – Four QBCs are operating on Saintfield Road, Newtownards Road, Falls Road and City Express and a QBC master plan has been developed to inform the development of future QBCs.
- **Metro** – There has been a 15% growth in Metro passengers since its introduction in 2005. This equates to 50,000 additional passengers or an extra 1,000 full busloads every week.
- **Goldline** – key developments include the commencement of; from Belfast; an hourly service to Dublin, a half hourly service to Newry, an every 15 minutes service to Londonderry at peak times and every half hour off peak, and hourly services to Enniskillen, Armagh and Downpatrick.
- **New Buses** – funding of £21.24m has been provided for Bus Grant to purchase 194 new buses to improve public transport.
- **Northern Ireland Railways** – the introduction of the new C3K trains with the associated service improvements has resulted in passenger numbers growing on the Bangor to Portadown line by 10.7% from 2005/06 to 2006/07. Passenger numbers on the Londonderry line increased by 16.7% over the same period.
- **Bleach Green to Whitehead Track Re-lay** – Work to re-lay this section of the Belfast to Larne line was completed in December 2005

at a cost of £25m. Five elements of the section between Whitehead and Larne were also upgraded. Full services on the Larne line resumed on 13 February 2006.

- **M1/Westlink Scheme** – At a cost of around £104m, this upgrade represents a massive investment in the road network; an investment that is vital to bring about a modern and ‘Better Belfast’. These improvements involve constructing an underpass at Broadway and Grosvenor Road junctions and widening the M1 and Westlink to provide three continuous lanes between Stockman’s Lane and Divis Street.
- **Travelwise NI** – a web based Car Sharing scheme was launched on 4 April 2006. To date the scheme has a membership of 2096 with 19 public and private sites in operation across Northern Ireland. Work with the six Safer Routes to Schools (SRS) Pilot Schools is nearing completion and the scheme is now being taken forward through an SRS Accelerated and SRS Enhanced programme. During 2006/07 39 schools participated in the SRS Accelerated programme and 2 in the Enhanced programme. Workplace Travel Planning is being promoted across the public and private sectors with a site specific advice scheme funded by Travelwise NI to assist organisations develop individual Workplace Travel Plans. To date 20 companies have availed of the site specific advice scheme and Workplace Travel Plans are under development at each location. Details on the ongoing sustainable transport initiatives and events can be found on the Travelwise NI web site [www.travelwiseni.com](http://www.travelwiseni.com).

## Equality Monitoring

The RTS is being delivered through three transport plans and the Accessible Transport Strategy (ATS). An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been published for each plan and for the ATS. All four EQIAs concluded that implementation of the transport plans and the ATS would provide benefits across the equality categories by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The EQIAs can be viewed on the Department's internet site [www.drdni.gov.uk](http://www.drdni.gov.uk).

In the case of the transport plans, the effect of the implementation of the proposals on the nine equality groups will be monitored to identify unforeseen or significantly changed impacts. The transport plans are still at an early stage of their implementation and it is too early to determine the impact on the nine equality groups.

The ATS contains an Action Plan that will be reviewed biennially and a new Action Plan will be published later in 2007. The Department will work in conjunction with the Inclusive Mobility Transport Advisory Committee to determine the equality impacts of the ATS as part of the review process.

## **Financing of DRD RTS Transportation Initiatives**

The RTS identified strategic transportation investment priorities and indicated the levels of investment required over the 10-year period of the strategy.

It is important to note that in relation to the levels of public expenditure funding for the Strategy, the outcome will be determined through the normal Budgetary process which will take account of the needs of other Departments and decisions on priorities. In addition, commitments to proceed with major capital schemes cannot be given until appropriate economic and other appraisals have been considered and any statutory procedures satisfactorily concluded.

A table detailing RTS - costs of initiatives by mode can be found on the website [www.drdni.gov.uk](http://www.drdni.gov.uk) .

## **Regional Transportation Strategy Mid Term Review**

The RTS acknowledged that, if it were to remain appropriate over time, it would be necessary to review how targets were being met. This Report already indicates that progress could be improved in some key areas.

The Department for Regional Development is now carrying out a focused Mid Term Review of the RTS.

The Review will examine:

- the rate of implementation of the RTS and Transport Plan initiatives;
- the effectiveness of those initiatives toward the targets and expected outcomes identified in the RTS and Transport Plans;
- transport budgets secured, including any additional funding made available through the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland; and
- changes to environmental, economic, demographic and political drivers.

Based on the results of this process, the Department, in consultation with other Government Departments, political parties and key stakeholders, will then critically examine the appropriateness of RTS Key Outcomes and any changes in priorities required.

It is anticipated that a Draft RTS Mid Term Review document will be published for public consultation by the end of 2008.

Since the annual monitoring exercise will form part of the RTS Mid Term Review process, an Annual Monitoring Report will not be published in 2007/08.