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Organisation: Technological University Dublin 1st Year Planning & Environmental Management Course

Message Body:

The growth of the Eastern Half of the country is built on the expansion out of the City centre into counties and towns such as Navan, my home town. Having grown up and seen the town grow over the 10 years, there needs to be a proper framework in place for the town to grow with the proper road network, public transport options and growth of the employment opportunities within the town centre and outer core regions. Without all these ideas/strategies in place, issues of congestion and lack of economic growth could act as a barrier for future homeowners looking to start in the Navan Area.

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RSES FOCUS NAVAN TOWN



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Introduction-

The Town of Navan and the region around it has seen rapid growth in recent years, fuelled by the increasing numbers of homes being developed to support the growing commuter population. The Town's population is rising at a reasonable yet high rate year on year, with new settlements developing to the North, South-East and South West.

Having read the full Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and compared Navan's objectives under the strategy to other dormitory settlements around Dublin, there is a clear lack of information and evidence to show that Navan as a growing town is being taken seriously when it comes to the National Outlook.

As a being from the Navan area and living there all my life, there are clear issues and challenges that the town is facing each and every day, that are only partly dealt with under the RSES.

I have outlined below what I believe are the key and crucial objectives that the Strategy should be putting as top priority which are either developments on existing or new objectives that are facing the town.

If Navan and its surrounding area is overlooked by major investment and infrastructure in crucial areas, the town will begin to slip into a decline in population, leaving many newly or half-built housing units abandoned yet again

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Regional Spatial Economic Strategy Focus

Navan acts as the county town for Meath and has experienced significant population growth as one of the country's fastest growing large towns between 1996 and 2016, where the population has grown rapidly without the equivalent increase in jobs. As such, consolidation and regeneration shall be a key priority and objective for the development of Navan town with a focus on the regeneration of the town centre, in particular on sites such as the former County Council Offices at Railway Street.

REGIONAL POLICY OBJECTIVES: Navan Key town

RPO 4.29: Support delivery of the distributor road at Farganstown to release strategic residential

and employment lands for development.

RPO 4.30: Support the implementation of the Public Realm Plan 'Navan 2030' to make the town a more attractive place to live, shop, visit, and do business.

RPO 4.31: Support development of a regional hospital to serve the north east of the country.

RPO 4.32: Support the extension of the Boyne Greenway to include Navan to promote sustainable

transport choices and as a recreation asset for the town, subject to the outcome of the planning

process and environmental assessments.

RPO 4.23: Key Towns shall act as economic drivers and provide for strategic employment locations to improve their economic base by increasing the ratio of jobs to workers.

KEY ISSUE 1- NORTH OF NAVAN GROWTH AND CONGESTION

The allocation of new Housing in the Clonmagadden Region accounts for around 20-25 percent of any future development in Navan with around 1400-1700 people potentially being housed in just one development known as the "Lands at Clonmagadden", with the first development "Cluain Adain" having started construction in Early 2018. Overall, that entire project could be predicted to be completed in 2021-22 with the overall implications being an additional 900-1200 cars potentially being added on the roads around the North of the Town, with just that development taking place.

Added to this is the Clonmagadden SDZ project with 1100 potential houses when completed, which, if planning is fast tracked in the next 3-6 months, could be completed by earliest mid/early 2021/22. By this time, there would already have been an additional 900-1200 cars extra in the Clonmagadden region with the Clonmagadden North Lands Development and also the smaller projects at Cois Na Raisi and the Future Proudstown Rd Development.

Implications of the entire North of Navan becoming and developing the Plans given under the Towns Development Plan could see around 1800-2000 housing units added to the area, as well as then additionally 2700-3000 extra cars (Based on 1.5+1.7 cars per household).

PROPOSED SOLUTION ISSUE 1-

At present, those using cars from the current housing estates on the North side of the town enter the centre of Navan via the N52 lower relief road at three congested points.

- The Rathaldron Local L3409 Road
- The Navan to Kingscourt R163 Road
- The Navan to Drogheda N52 road

All these roads merge on the Round O Roundabout and also the Abbey Lands Cross Roads at the top of the N52 Relief Road. In addition to the local traffic, industry and commercial traffic that is going through Navan to get to the M3 and R147, are going via these access points coming/going in the direction of Kingscourt, Drogheda and Slane.

Traffic coming from the R152 Navan to Kentstown Road again enters Navan at the centre of the town with no access roads to the N52 or R147 other than coming up Flower Hill. During Peak and Non-Peak times this road can become very congested as the traffic is also landed on the Round O Roundabout. Furthermore, any traffic coming from the M3 via Junction 9 must go along the R147 and continue up the relief road to the two congested junctions and roundabouts if headed in the Kingscourt or Drogheda Direction.

Under the **Clonmagadden SDZ**, a **Local Distributor Road (LDR)** is proposed and is without question, essential for the development of that zoned area when the plans for 1100 houses gets the go ahead. The development of not only this LDR but as well as this, the essential LDR from the Rathaldron Road across to the Kells Road and also an additional LDR from the N52 Slane Road across to the Farganstown area.



These two LDRs allow for the larger commercial traffic to bypass the town centre and ease the congestion on the Access Roads into the town centre. It also facilitates the continued development of the Northern Half of the Town without any hindrance from constant congestion on the main access roads.

This development has seen continued rejections and push backs in terms of a launch period with the Meath County Council stating that the proposal will not be sent to An Bord Pleanala until at least Mid/Late 2019, with the approval expected a year later & with construction work possibly starting in 2021. At this point Any developments set out in previous development plans for the Town and County will be inaccurate and so the process will have taken too long **again.**

The process needs to be fast tracked with construction needing to be started **within the next 6-9 months.** Otherwise the only alternative is to delay Housing Developments in the Northern Half of the Town, which, going by the Government's Policy of Fast-tracking Housing to solve the issue in the country, would never happen.

KEY ISSUE 2- TRANSPORTATION CONNECTIONS/OPTIONS NAVAN

Navan like the majority of Irish Towns has a dominant Car Population and that continues to form the main transport options for both commuters and locals in the town. The Census of 2016 showed there were 2,505 persons in the settlement of Navan who commuted to Dublin city and suburbs which equates to 20.5% of persons at work and living in Navan. Out of these this table shows the split in modes of transport

Car	Bus	Bike/Cycle/Foot	Train	Other
1,942	405	21	31	96
78%	16.2%	0.8%	1.2%	3.8%

Out of this, it shows that almost 8 out of 10 people use their car to commute to work in Dublin City Centre. Let's Compare this to towns of similar population that commutes to Dublin.

EXAMPLE- MAYNOOTH

In 2016 there were 2,701 persons in the settlement of Maynooth who commuted to Dublin city and suburbs which equates to 42.9% of persons at work and living in Maynooth. Out of these this table shows the split in modes of transport

Car	Bus	Bike/Cycle/Foot	Train	Other
1535	257	25	806	65
57%	9.5%	1%	30%	2.5%

EXAMPLE- NAAS

In 2016 there were 2,783 persons in the settlement of Naas who commuted to Dublin city and suburbs which equates to 28.4% of persons at work and living in Naas.

Car	Bus	Bike/Cycle/Foot	Train	Other
2161	206	21	300	89
77.8%	7.4%	0.8%	10.8%	3.2%

The difference between the three towns is that the latter two have a sustainable heavy rail network linking into the city centre of Dublin. Maynooth it is clear utilises more so the train for commuting than Naas but having the option is something.

PROPOSED SOLUTION ISSUE 2-

There has been discussion for many years about the proposed railway link to the Towns of Dunshaughlin and Navan pre, during and post Celtic Tiger Years. The Government's attempt to get it started was the development of the Clonsilla to M3 Parkway Line, which by all accounts, isn't meeting expectations with according to the NTA Heavy Rail Statistics 2017 says that on average 927 people use all three stations on the line combined averaging by the current timetable to just 20 or so users in each direction.

(https://www.nationaltransport.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/National_Heavy_Rail_2018_V8_Web.pdf)

The argument has been made by numerous local TDs and councillors from across the region expressing the desperate need of a railway to connect the core towns of Meath. The response by the Government has been without question inaccurate and underestimating the levels of current and future growth of the Towns outlined to have Stations.

The population of Navan stands at around 35,000 as of 2018 taking in the new developments in Johnstown and the inner town district. This will rise to almost 40,000 by 2021, the next official Census, as further developments beginning or planned in construction could exceed 2,250 since 2016.

The same sort of rapid growth is now to be felt in Dunshaughlin with the announcement in recent weeks of a major development of over 900 units on top of the current major developments to the South and North East/West of the Town. If all these developments were to go ahead, the population of the town would be sure to exceed 10,000-12,000 by 2021.

The population increases are for the majority of cases those of commuters looking for better value for money and so the additional services and modes of transport are essential. The Objective stated in the RSES of a "Reappraisal of the extension of the Dunboyne/M3 Parkway line to Navan during the Mid Term Review of the GDA" should be put a top priority as part of the town ever seeing any future growth in the near future.

The increase in population for both towns of an additional 10-12,000 people over the next 2-3 years, would see potentially, the commuting population between both towns double to over 6,000 people commuting each day. Even if a fraction of these used the Rail Network EG- 1,000 people each day along with the general public it could see 1,500-2,000 people using it each day.

The argument needs to be presented that by waiting until these housing developments are completed will double congestion levels, increase in-efficiency as a region and hinder future home buyers seeing the region as too congested

KEY ISSUE 3- TOWN DEVELOPMENT & GROWTH

The employment opportunities in Navan offer little hope for new homeowners looking to settle down with the towns promoting function continues to be acting as a dormitory settlement. The Town's growth in the centre has seen little or a decrease in employment opportunities versus the increase in population in areas such as Johnstown to the South East of the town.

The Johnstown area has for many years been lacking in both social and basic services for its growing young population with as a result of a lack of services is seeing increases in anti-social behaviour in neighbourhoods which in turn is discouraging locals to actively get out into the area.

The same has to be said for Navan Town Centre with the lack of major employers apart from the main retailers of Tesco, Dunnes and Pennys in the Shopping Centre. But the infrastructure of the town is still lacking and unappealing to the younger generation with a lack of brands and social activities. The recent rebranding and redeveloping of the towns Cinema has been a welcome boost with now a modern and appealing service for young people.

But still there lies many empty and underutilized sites around and in the centre of the town, including the site around the old Meath County Council Offices off Railway St, mentioned as being a site that needs to be developed under the Strategy Proposal. Other areas of the town such as Flowerhill to the North of the Town is in sharp decline of both services and homeowners. There is more abandoned buildings than occupied and are in need of serious regeneration.



PROPOSED SOLUTION ISSUE 3-

The Railway Street area of Navan is just one area in the town that has seen severe neglect from investment over time. The limited retail and service units along the street struggle to stay in business, staring across from a huge abandoned building that could be redeveloped into a major economic hub of the town.

The Possibility of developing the towns much needed Bus Station could open up modern apartment and office space units over a modern bus station that would improve access of the town and allow for people to utilise the bus more if the heavy rail line extension still doesn't take off.

Another core area of the town which is still left abandoned is the Elliot Mills and Rathaldron Rd Area of Land in which although be it on a moderate slope into the town and the Blackwater River running at the bottom, has been designated over time for major economic activities and modern employment opportunities. At the moment it's an eyesore with very little hope of other parts of the townlands being developed.



The towns lack of major employment opportunities has left the town in the position of slowing dying with less people living and less people staying in current accommodation. The issues over congestion and efficient public transportation methods could be reasons for the lack of major investment, as the short distance to Dublin, availability of land and a large working population major benefits for any other town

