

CASP

CORK AREA
STRATEGIC PLAN
2001-2020

Plean Straitéiseach
Cheantar Chorcaí



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**Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP)
2001-2020**
Plean Straitéiseach Cheantar Chorcaí

*The Cork Area Strategic Plan was Adopted by
Cork County Council and Cork City Council on 22nd October 2001*



CORK COUNTY COUNCIL
COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHORCAÍ



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Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP)

Prepared for

Cork City Council
Cork County Council

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Acknowledgement

The Cork Area Strategic Plan is the result of an eighteen-month collaborative process of research and consultation involving not only the consultants team, the local authority officers and the elected members of all the local authorities but a whole range of stakeholders from industry, from education, from diverse representative organisations and from the voluntary sector as well as the general public in Cork.

It would be invidious to single out particular individuals or organisations for the part they played in the evolution of this strategy. However it would be remiss if the contribution made by the City Manager Mr Joe Gavin, the County Manager Mr Maurice Moloney, and their staff were not noted. In particular the sterling work of the Steering Committee under the chairmanship of Mr Dan Buggy and secretary Mr Ger O Mahony, in guiding this study was greatly appreciated. Similarly the considered advice provided by the Advisory Group greatly assisted the development of the strategy. Without their assistance the task of completing the study and harnessing the goodwill and energy of the people of Cork would have been a far more onerous task.

Jack Sheehan.
Project Director

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Building On Remarkable Strengths

The Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP) was commissioned jointly by Cork City Council and Cork County Council in 2000 to provide a framework to enable Cork to become a leading European city region - globally competitive, socially inclusive and culturally enriched.

As a university city, home of the NMRC, one of the most advanced Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) Centres in Europe, and with its Institute of Technology – the region has unmatched research capabilities. Cork's unparalleled tradition of producing high quality graduates is one of the main reasons why it is home to 8 of the 10 leading global players in the Pharmachem sector and why it has become an internationally recognised centre of excellence for the ICT sector.

Cork has become a location of choice for modern industry and CASP will promote even stronger ties between inward investors and the educational institutions, to create a future economy which is knowledge-based and research led.

Cork is a designated gateway city under the National Development Plan 2000-2006, and CASP provides the mechanism that will promote Cork as a major national strategic growth centre for the next 20 years.

Because it is also a city of leisure and culture where the arts flourish, Cork has been selected as the European City of Culture in 2005, further emphasising its European significance and distinctive qualities.

The CASP also recognises the need to conserve the unique environmental qualities of the Study Area, including the many attractive towns and villages and the often superb landscape, particularly on the coast.

Spatially, CASP seeks to build on Cork's many assets, integrating land uses and transport, improving public transport and other infrastructure and developing the economic, social and environmental capacity of the area. It sets out to ensure that Cork is attractive to inward investment and will be able to reinforce its reputation as a centre of excellence, learning and innovation. In short, CASP's goal is the creation of a dynamic and progressive European City Region, which is a superb place in which to live and work.

Ag Treisiú na nDea-Thréithe

Bheartaigh Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí agus Comhairle Chontae Chorcaí sa bhliain 2000 Plean Straitéiseach Cheantar Chorcaí (CASP) a choimisiúnú d'fhonn acmhainn Chorcaí a neartú le go bhforbródh sí mar cheann de mhór-réigiúin cathrach na hEorpa – cathair rathúil iomaíoch, cathair mhuinteartha fháilteach, cathair thréitheach ildánach ilchultúrtha.

Mar chathair ollscoile, baile dúchais an NMRC, ceann de na hionaid is mó cáil san Eoraip don Eolas, Cumarsáid, Teicneolaíocht (ICT) agus ar ndóigh an Institiúid Teicneolaíochta san áireamh leis, tá cumas agus acmhainní taighde gan sarú le fáil sa réigiún. Is é traidisiún an léinn agus na céimithe thréitheacha a chuirtear ar fáil i gCorcaigh is mó a mheall ochtar as deichniúr de mhór-chomhlachtaí cógaisíochta an domhain lonnú ann agus is é seo leis a chothaigh dea-chlú agus aitheantas idirnáisiúnta do Chorcaigh mar lár-ionad chun feabhais san earnáil ICT.

Is í Corcaigh togha agus rogha lonnaíochta do thionscail nua-aoiseacha agus daingneoidh CASP an gaol idir an aos léinn agus aos infheistíochta. Rachfaidh sé seo chun sochair na heacnamaíochta nua a bheidh faoi anáil an léinn agus faoi stiúir an taighde.

Ainmníodh Corcaigh mar chathair táirsigh faoin bPlean Forbartha Náisiúnta 2000 – 2006 agus is tríd an CASP a fhorbrófar agus a neartófar Corcaigh mar mhó-ionad náisiúnta fáis straitéiseach sna fiche bliain amach romhainn.

I bhfianaise a cáil mar chathair ildánach áit a bhfuil an léann, cúinsí cultúrtha agus na healaíona go léir faoi bhláth is ea a roghnaíodh Corcaigh mar Chathair Cultúrtha na hEorpa i 2005. Cuireann sé seo treise lena réim agus a céim Eorpach.

Tá aitheantas tugtha sa CASP don ghá atá ann le caomhnú a dheánamh ar thréithe sonracha na timpeallachta sa cheantar go háirithe na bailte agus sráidbhailte mealltacha agus áilleacht na dúiche máguaird go háirithe cois farraige.

Díríonn CASP ar threise a chur le hacmhainní agus dea-thréithe Chorcaí, iomlánú a dhéanamh idir usáid talún agus cúrsaí iompair, feabhas a chur ar chórais iompair phoiblí agus infrastrúchtúr eile agus forbairt a dhéanamh ar acmhainn eacnamaíochta, shóisialta, agus timpeallachta an cheantair. Beidh CASP dírithe freisin ar a chinntiú go meallfar infheistíocht sheachtrach go Corcaigh le go mbeidh Corcaigh in ann cur lena clú agus lena cáil mar lár-ionad chun feabhais, chun léinn agus chun nuaíochta. I mbeagán focal, is é sprioc CASP Réigiún Cathrach Eorpach a chruthú a bheidh fuinniúil agus tosaíoch agus a bheidh ina thogha agus rogha dúiche chun só agus chun saothair.

Summary

Background To The Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP)

£ The Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP) is an initiative jointly sponsored by Cork City Council and Cork County Council in order to provide a vision and strategy for the development of the Cork City-Region up to 2020. It is in response to a Government supported European wide initiative to create a sustainable approach to social and economic development. This is encouraging planning authorities to take a more critical view of settlement patterns, development needs and infrastructure requirements through the preparation of strategic plans.

£ CASP sets out a broad brush strategy which aims to provide guidance as to the general direction and scale of growth so that the Cork City-Region can provide a high quality of life and opportunity for all of its citizens over the next 20 years.

£ CASP seeks to reflect spatial planning guidance that is emerging from initiatives such as the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) and the National Development Plan which encourages Gateway centres such as Cork to develop as the focus of successful and innovative regions. In particular, CASP sets out a framework that will enable the Cork City-Region to:

- Attain critical mass.
- Integrate land uses and transport.
- Make efficient use of investment in infrastructure.
- Provide a high quality environment.
- Improve the competitiveness and attractiveness of the region.

£ CASP does not replace the City and County Development Plans but will play a key role in the planning process by providing a coherent, long term spatial context, within which the more detailed statutory Development Plans can develop.

The Study Area

£ The CASP covers an area determined by a journey time of about 45 minutes from Cork City, an area that has been defined as the Cork City-Region. It includes Cork City, the satellite towns of Midleton, Carrigtwohill, Carrigaline, Ballincollig and Blarney and the Ring Towns and rural hinterlands of Bandon, Macroom, Mallow, Fermoy, Youghal and Kinsale.

Key Issues Addressed

Realising and Managing Economic Growth

£ The success of the economy of Cork is dependent upon attracting and retaining mobile investment and skilled labour. Capital, people and businesses with high growth potential will generally flow to areas endowed with a high quality of life, a skilled workforce and a vibrant social and cultural environment with good social cohesion, excellent physical infrastructure and ease of access. If Cork is to benefit from inward investment, retain existing businesses and realise its full potential it must safeguard, enhance and promote its outstanding assets – notably its people, environment, transport infrastructure, world class industries and educational establishments.

Regenerating the City

£ Cork City is recognised as the engine of growth for the region and its economic, social and cultural regeneration is crucial to the future success of the whole of the City-Region. Regeneration will provide a high quality environment, a good range of housing, leisure, shopping and new office and commercial uses. The city centre and the docklands will play particularly critical roles in revitalising the City and providing the location for many of the new uses, activities, and facilities that will be central to the regeneration process.

Sustainable and Balanced Development

£ Car ownership is high in the study area, and the substantial growth of offices, industrial space, retail and housing in recent years has been largely planned and designed to accommodate motor traffic, thus increasing car dependency. As a result, the suburbs of Cork City and the Ring Towns are therefore more difficult to serve with public transport, and the provision of other infrastructure is also expensive at the low development density generally employed. More sustainable patterns of development therefore need to be provided.

£ Furthermore, development has not been evenly spread, especially around Cork City. The great majority has been to the west and to the south of the City and little modern economic development has yet occurred in the Northside. This area contains a high concentration of social housing, and remains one of the few socially deprived parts of the CASP Area. The challenge for CASP is to redress the existing imbalances and to justify the provision and location of new development and infrastructure investment in a sustainable way.

Achieving Sustainable Development in the Ring Towns and Rural Areas

£ Maintaining rural communities and supporting the rural economy are important objectives of the CASP but must be seen in the light of the fall in employment in agriculture and forestry and the development of commuter housing in the countryside. The challenge will be to avoid the development of the rural areas as suburbs for Metropolitan Cork and aim for employment-led growth of rural towns and the villages.

Creating an Effective and Environmentally Sound Transport System

£ Cork has a high standard of road infrastructure but public transport has had

little capital investment. This has encouraged dispersed development. The large forecast growth in population and the increase in incomes enabling higher rates of car ownership will only exacerbate this trend. Without a sustainable transport plan, it is forecast that traffic will:

- double in 20 years.
- peak hour travel speeds will fall to 5mph on most roads in the urban area.
- travel times to work will become up to five times longer than at present.

£ The provision of new roads is not the answer: it would be environmentally damaging and in many instances impractical.

The CASP Strategy

CASP proposes a more sustainable form of spatial development for the Cork area with the following key features:

£ Improved access to jobs, education, health, culture, leisure and other services for all through the provision of a high quality public transport system.

£ The location of new housing which will be situated as closely as possible to employment opportunities and public transport routes in order to minimize commuting.

£ A move towards higher housing densities, and a wider choice of house sizes reflecting projected population structure. Development would be concentrated rather than dispersed, and coupled with the provision of high quality open space and recreational facilities. This will have a number of beneficial impacts, including lowering the per capita cost of new infrastructure, reducing the use of energy and the associated emissions of pollutants and greenhouse gases, minimization of the loss of agricultural land and slowing the current trend towards the suburbanisation of the countryside.

£ Areas of natural and cultural heritage will be conserved and enhanced.

Summary

Table S1 Key Plan Statistics

	2000	NSS*	2020	Growth (%)
Jobs	155,000	8,000	210,000	55,000(+35%)
Population	345,000	17,000	440,000	95,000(+28%)
Households	110,000	6,000	166,000	56,000(+50%)

* Includes potential additional growth arising from the National Spatial Strategy

Summary

All of these measures should help create and enhance the quality of life and foster an excellent environment for future economic development.

It is estimated that a total of about 62,000 new dwellings will need to be provided in the study area over the next 20 years to meet the shortfall in existing housing provision and new demand (see Figure I). The new dwellings are distributed as follows:

- Cork City 12,000 (19%)
- Metropolitan Cork (excluding the City) 36,500 (59%)
- Ring Towns & Rural Areas 13,500 (22%)

Legend

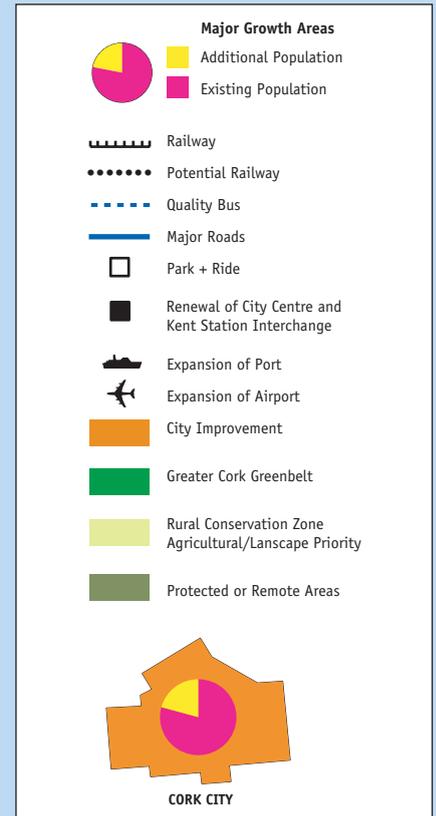


Figure I Cork Area Strategic Plan Diagram



Map and Areas Shown Not To Scale

The Main Features Of The Plan

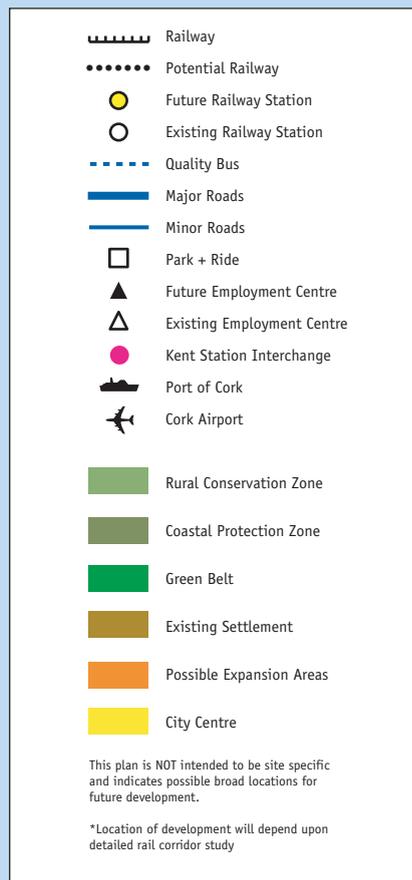
CASP is underpinned by six key concepts, these are:

1. Regeneration of Cork City.

The city's role as the focus for the region will be strengthened and priority will be given to improving educational, health and cultural facilities and fostering the development of new service based industries and commerce. An additional 19,000 new jobs will be created in the city, reversing population decline and leading to the creation of 12,000 additional homes.

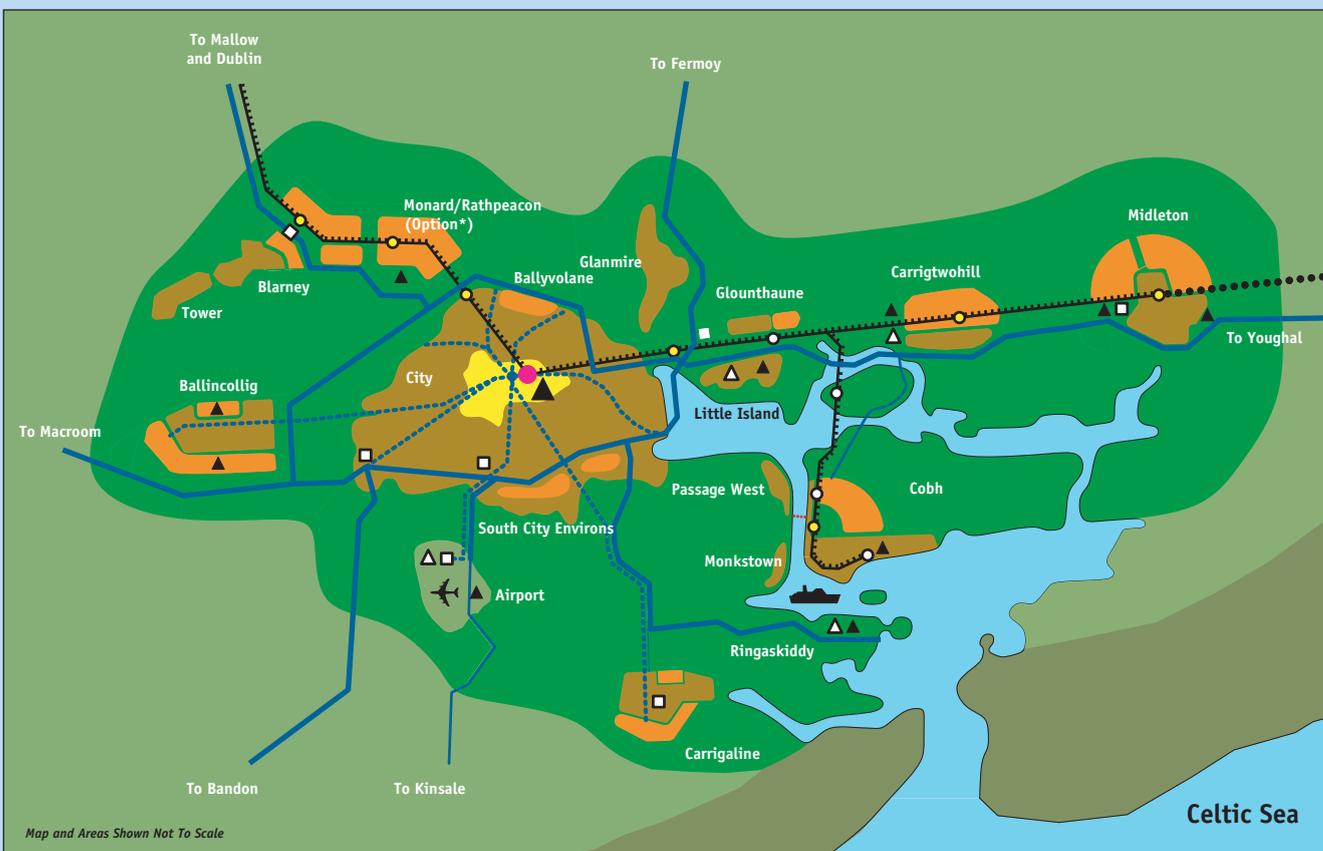
Urban renewal will continue in the City Centre and will be spread to the inner city fringes. However the main opportunity for major development lies in the docklands area, as port activities gradually relocate. The area, which will include Horgans Quay and Kent Station and the south bank of the River Lee will be revitalized as a mixed use area providing employment, housing, shopping and leisure and recreational uses.

Legend



Summary

Figure II Structure Diagram for Metropolitan Cork



Summary

2. Metropolitan Cork

€ Cork City and the settlements of Ballincollig, Blarney, Carrigaline, Douglas, Glanmire, Glounthane, Carrigtwohill, Midleton and Cobh, together with new development areas on the northern edge of the city will be developed as an integrated unit to be known as Metropolitan Cork. Metropolitan Cork will be characterised by a single jobs and property market linked together with a high quality rail and bus system and the social, cultural and educational facilities of a major European City. The identity and character of each town within the Metropolitan area will be protected through the retention of local services and the landscaped setting of each settlement. This will provide open space, woodlands and recreational facilities and wildlife corridors.

€ The Metropolitan Area Structure Plan (See Figure II) envisages that growth will be based upon rounding off development growth on the western and southern edges of the City and developing the potential of the northern and eastern sides of the City by maximising the use of the existing rail corridor as a catalyst for the development of a fully integrated public transport system. The rail development is intrinsically and critically linked to the gradual shift of public and private sector investment towards the northern and eastern routes.

€ An additional 29,000 new jobs will be created in Metropolitan Cork supporting an additional population, so that by 2020 it is expected that the overall population of the Metropolitan and City Areas will be over 300,000 people. This increase will require the development of over 36,000 new dwellings in the Metropolitan Area.

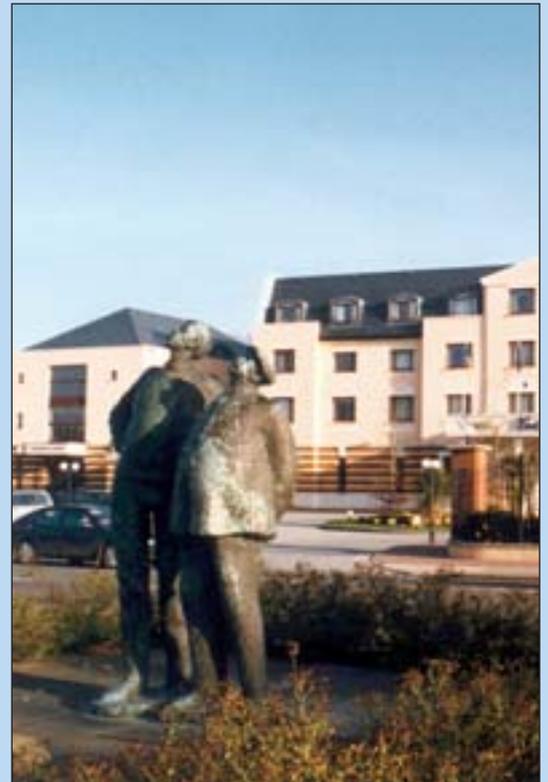
€ There will be a major growth corridor in the northern and eastern part of the Metropolitan area between Blarney, Carrigtwohill, Cobh and Midleton, based upon and linked with the upgrading and re-instatement of the rail lines. The precise location of this development between Blarney and Midleton and its integration with new stations will be the subject of a detailed study which will include an assessment of development at Monard/Rathpeacon. The location of this growth along a key public transport corridor will help achieve greater social inclusion by improving access to public transport, jobs and services, amenities and a wider range of housing.

€ In the west, Ballincollig should continue to grow, based upon its strengths as an employment and commercial centre, its attractive residential environment, and its proximity to the City, CIT, the University and the University Hospital.

€ On the southern edge of the City, increases in housing provision in the early part of the Plan period will be possible by rounding off development in the southern City environs around Douglas. Further south in Carrigaline, development will be constrained by increasingly congested road access, although some expansion to the east and south of the town is planned, linked to the construction of two local relief roads around the town centre.

€ An outline Cost Benefit Analysis has demonstrated the feasibility of the rail proposals and a more detailed study has been commissioned to examine in detail the development of the rail corridor, including the location of new stations in the Blarney/Monard/Rathpeacon/Kilbarry area and at Midleton and Carrigtwohill.

€ Investment in re-opening of rail lines and improvement in train services and facilities is strategically linked to and dependent upon the related residential developments in the northern and eastern sectors as proposed in the Plan.





Summary

3. Reinforcement of the Ring Towns and Rural Areas

£ The strategy for rural areas is to focus development effort upon existing settlements, particularly the Ring Towns, which are best placed to attract new investment and allow new development to be provided in a compact, sustainable form, easily serviced by public transport, utilities and social cultural and commercial facilities. Growth will be employment led, in order that the towns do not become dormitory suburbs of Metropolitan Cork, and housing will be phased in with the creation of new jobs.

£ Mallow's population is expected to grow substantially over the next 20 years, reflecting its good road and rail connections and potential to attract new industry. Fermoy and Youghal will benefit from the provision of new bypasses and good road links and are also likely to grow strongly during the plan period. Population growth should also be strong in Bandon, although Kinsale will experience limited development since it is constrained by environmental and traffic factors. Macroom should be able to achieve sizable growth as a prestige service centre for the Gaeltacht area, particularly once the town is bypassed.

£ Outside the Ring Towns, rural growth will generally be concentrated in existing villages in order to achieve sustainable growth and support existing or improved facilities. Cork County Council will develop a rural housing strategy to address the policy of rural housing.

4. Infrastructure Led Development

£ CASP seeks to ensure that infrastructure, including transport and utility services, are provided in advance or in tandem with housing and other development. Implementation of the strategy is divided into a number of phases to ensure that development and infrastructure is provided in the most economical and efficient way.

£ Investment in transport, water and wastewater infrastructure is forecast to total €2billion by 2020. This infrastructure will be paralleled by investment in other economic sectors both public and private.

5. Creation of an Integrated Transport System

£ The creation of an integrated transport system is central to the whole CASP development strategy and is based upon the completion of essential strategic road links, the development of a suburban rail network (including the restoration of former routes) and a high quality bus network, supported by Park and Ride facilities and improved cycle and pedestrian networks. Major Proposals include:

- Development of a North West Link from the N22(Cork –Killarney road) to the N20 (Cork-Limerick road) and N8 (Cork-Dublin road) and improvements to other routes;
- New suburban rail services between Blarney and Carrigtwohill & Middleton and Cobh via the City Centre, leading to a ten fold increase in rail travel by 2020.
- Redevelopment of Kent station as a key transport interchange between rail, bus, taxi, and linked by pedestrian and cycle routes to the City Centre and Docklands.

Summary

- Green routes, featuring quality bus corridors and improved provision for cyclists and pedestrians. These will focus on the main radial routes from Cork City, notably to Ringaskiddy via Douglas and Carrigaline, the Airport and Kinsale, Bandon, Macroom, Fermoy and Ballincollig to Mahon via the city centre and the Docklands.
- Park and Ride facilities linked to the new rail services and quality bus corridors.
- Expansion of the Airport and improvement of access to European air transport hubs.
- Continued improvement and rationalization of Port facilities.

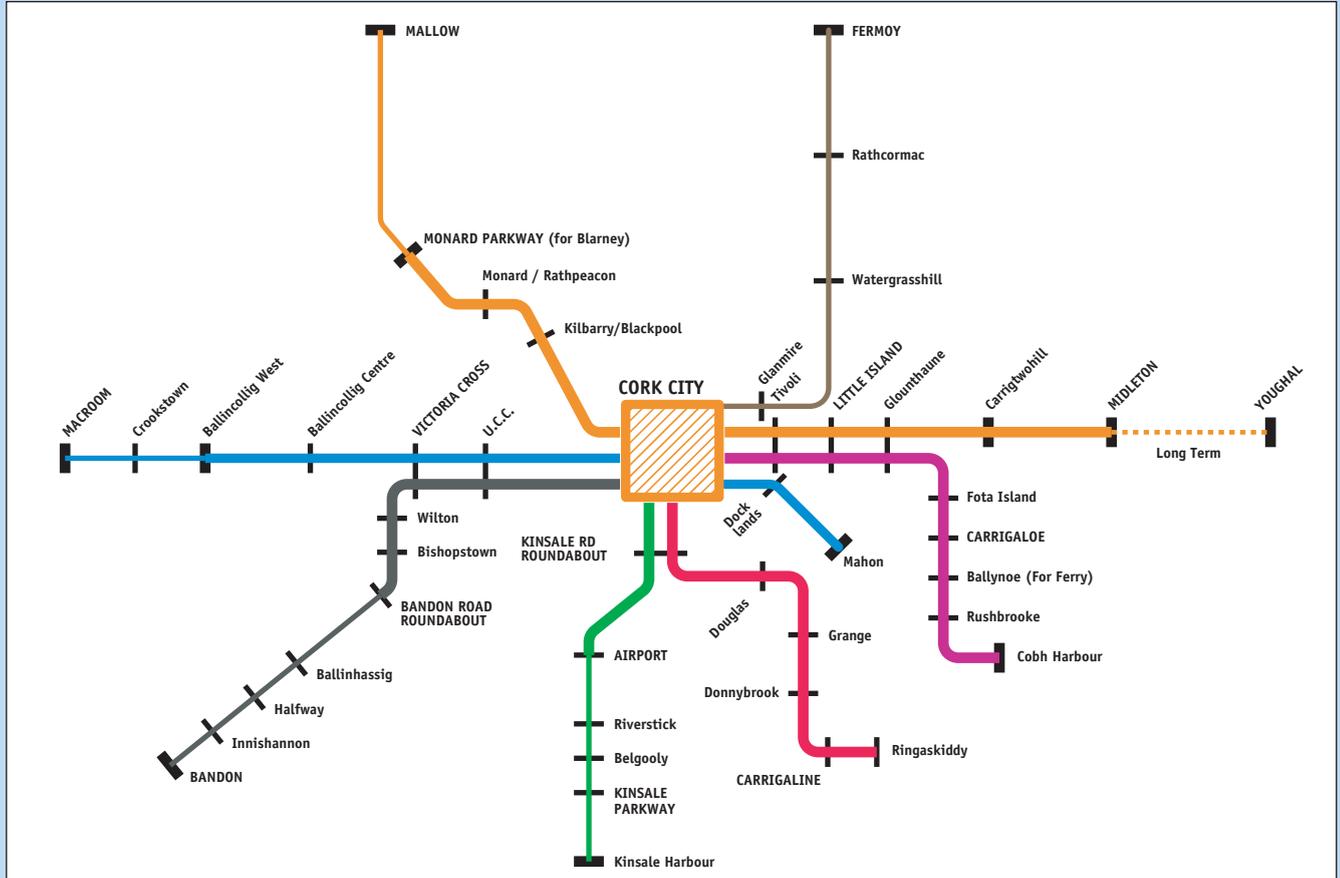
£ The development of a high quality, 'state of the art' public transport system is central to the achievement of an Integrated Transport System for Cork. (see Figure III)

£ The immediate strategic objective of the integrated transport system is to create

conditions that will facilitate a change in public attitudes towards the use of public transport. This is seen as a strategic necessity not only for reasons of environmental sustainability, but also to be able to accommodate the growth in demand for transport that accompanies economic growth and expansion.

£ The public transport strategy will result in 19,000 fewer car journeys being made in the peak hour in 2020 than would otherwise have been the case. There will be a significant shift from car based transport to public transport which will see growth on the rail network increase 17 fold from 439 trips to 7,600 in the morning peak hour in the upgraded system. There will be a modal shift to public transport of up to 30% of all trips going to or coming from the City Centre.

Figure III Schematic Public Transport Map for Cork in the Year 2020



6. Protection and Enhancement of the Environment

The attractive landscape of much of the study area, areas of nature conservation importance, the quality of the streams and rivers, and the archaeological and architectural heritage should all be conserved for future generations. The CASP recognizes that they are vital component of a high quality of life for the population, and as an attraction to visitors and investors. Proposals include:

- The identification and designation of additional areas for nature conservation.
- The development of river catchment management plans.
- The preparation of a coastal zone management plan for the study area.
- A landscape character assessment of the study area.
- The designation of conservation areas.
- The creation of new woodlands of native and broad-leaved species and trees.

Legend

	Middleton Line	Rail
	Cobh Line	Rail
	Ringaskiddy Line	Bus
	Airport Line	Bus
	Bandon Line	Bus
	Central Line	Bus
	Fermoy Line	Bus
* Park & Ride Stations Shown In Capital Letters		
* Thick Lines Denote Frequent Service		
* Thin Lines Denote Less Frequent Service		

Implementing The Plan

Implementation is central to the success of the CASP, and there are a number of critical activities to be undertaken including:

- International marketing of Cork.
- Establishment of the institutional mechanism for implementation, including a dedicated CASP office.
- Funding, including private sector involvement.
- Regular Monitoring, including a comprehensive mid term review.

Having set the broad planning strategy, the detailed planning of the study area will be the task of the City and County Development Plans and Local Action Area plans which will be prepared for the new and expanded development areas.

The successful implementation of CASP will require Cork County and City Councils to work together in partnership, supported by funds from the National Development Plan and the National Spatial Strategy, together with private sector funding, to deliver the infrastructure and development proposals of the Plan on time.

This partnership approach and prompt delivery of infrastructure will enable Cork to compete more effectively as an attractive alternative location for inward investment both nationally and internationally and will ensure that the region develops in an integrated and sustainable way for the benefit of all its citizens.

Summary

1.1 Study Background And Aim

Cork County Council and Cork City Council jointly commissioned the Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP) Study in Spring 2000, calling for a fresh examination of Cork's identity and potential. The aim is to deliver a change in approach to meeting Cork's aspirations, an approach that has a strong emphasis on socio-economic and environmental sustainability and which makes the best possible use of Cork's natural advantages.

The Cork Area Strategic Plan will provide a framework and process for the full integration of land use, transportation, social, economic and environmental elements for the Cork area to 2020. The end product of this process will be a strategic plan with an attendant monitoring procedure sufficiently flexible to adapt to change over time, and in a spatial planning context be independent of the rate of economic growth - that is to say, the Plan will propose to give guidance on the location of growth whenever it might occur.

A glossary of terms used in this report is set out in Appendix A.

1.2 Study Area

The Plan covers Cork City and its immediate area of influence, so the Study Area (see Figure 1.1) radiates out from the City to include the Ring Towns of Kinsale, Bandon, Macroom, Mallow, Fermoy, Youghal, and the satellite towns closer to the City including Cobh, Passage West, Carrigtwohill, Midleton, Blarney, Ballincollig and Carrigaline.

1.3 Key Development Issues Facing Cork

The Cork City-Region faces a number of significant challenges over the next 20 years, as the scale and pace of change quickens. How these challenges are embraced and managed will determine whether the City-Region can be developed in a sustainable manner. The key issues that will need to be faced are:

Realising and Managing Economic Growth

Mobility of foreign investment and people is at an all time high. Competition to attract mobile capital and skilled people has never been fiercer, evidenced by over 1,500 promotion agencies and several thousand local authorities in Europe alone, each promoting their location as a place to invest.

Figure 1.1 The Study Area



Capital and people with solid innovative capacity and high growth potential generally flow to areas endowed with an intangible infrastructure of quality of life, social cohesion, skills and know-how, as well as excellent physical infrastructure and a demonstrable ability to adapt to a changing environment.

Within this market context, the Cork City-Region must strengthen its ability to respond to change, and demonstrate an eagerness for innovation and diversity. The Cork City-Region has outstanding assets - its people, environment, port and harbour, world class industries and education. It has no shortage of developable land on both brownfield and greenfield sites. Yet there is an impression that the full potential of these advantages has not been realised and that Cork is “punching below its weight”. The challenge is for the Cork City-Region to build on its undoubted strengths and move the threshold of its ambition. This will involve commitment to developing projects of a truly international standard within a framework of socio-economic and environmental sustainability. It must then market this ambition in the global marketplace.

Legend



To succeed, this development will need to embrace all parts of the City-Region -including the City, the suburbs and satellite towns that make up Metropolitan Cork, and the Ring Towns and their rural hinterlands.

Regenerating the City

Traditionally, the City has been the economic driver of the Region and a strategic asset for the wider Study Area. Like other historic cities in Europe, Cork’s physical fabric needs sustained and substantial investment to conserve its heritage and rebuild significant areas of under-used or derelict buildings. City regeneration will release a host of shopping and leisure opportunities, and enable Cork City to retain its natural position at the top of the hierarchy of its suburbs and other regional cities. Modern, information technology-compatible business space is urgently needed in the City, as it is losing employment to the suburbs where such space is available. A lively mix of new uses, including high quality city centre housing will be needed to reverse the modest but gradual recent loss of the City’s population.

Cork City has more than enough potential to meet development needs and is working hard to regenerate itself. The award-winning URBAN Pilot Project 1994-98 is an early result of these efforts. A scheme is underway for Patrick Street, the City’s main thoroughfare, which represents the best in current European design. Ample exciting sites exist within the City centre and on its fringes, and their redevelopment needs active encouragement. The City Council is now about to tackle a major, but longer term opportunity - the redevelopment of the City Docks. This project will help to consolidate Cork as a European location for enterprise and significantly contribute to the continued regeneration and commercial life of the City. The development of the Docklands will benefit from the support of the Port of Cork, the County Council, CIE and other local stakeholders.

Balancing Development in Metropolitan Cork

There has been a growing imbalance between the development of the city and its surrounding suburbs and satellite towns. Car ownership is high in the Cork sub-region, and development has been planned and designed to accommodate car transport. The suburbs are therefore more difficult to serve with public transport. Provision of other infrastructure is also expensive at the low development density generally employed. Additionally, the surrounding countryside is disappearing and the Green Belt around the City is being degraded. Extensive development is not limited to the edge of the City. In the year 2000 alone, Cork County Council granted 2,300 applications for isolated, once-off housing in the countryside. This is partly because, as in the rest of Ireland, housing is both scarce and expensive in the Metropolitan Area.

Development in the last 20 years has not been evenly spread around the City edges. The great majority has been to the west and to the south in an arc that includes the third level education institutions, the hospital, the airport, the port at Ringaskiddy and the towns of Ballincollig and Carrigaline. More recently, development is occurring to the east of the City at Little Island, Carrigtwohill and Midleton. Little modern economic development has yet occurred in the Northside of the City, which has never fully recovered from major factory closures some 20 years ago. It contains a high concentration of social housing and pockets of social deprivation in what is otherwise a generally prosperous Study Area. Similarly, parts of the County to the North of the City are relatively under-developed.

In summary, the current pattern of growth of Metropolitan Cork may be unsustainable in terms of the environment and the efficient provision of services. It is also spatially and socially unbalanced. A better approach would be to encourage, to manage and to direct this tremendous growth within an economic and balanced sustainable framework.

Achieving Sustainable Development in the Ring Towns and Rural Areas

Two strong trends are having a profound effect on the viability and character of the rural hinterland. The first is the steady, relentless fall in employment in agriculture and forestry. The second is the development of commuter housing in the countryside. Against these trends, maintaining rural communities and supporting the rural economy are important objectives that must be reconciled with sustainable development objectives in a realistic and practical way. Developing such a strategy is largely the task of the North and West Cork Strategic Plan 2001 - 2020, which must be supported by the strategies included in this Plan.

The Ring Towns are showing varying rates of growth but are generally prospering at present, despite their relative dependence on a declining agricultural hinterland. It follows that they will play a key role in the North and West Cork Strategic Plan as well as in relation to the City. The challenge will be to avoid the development of the Ring Towns as dormitories for Metropolitan Cork brought about by rising house prices and road improvements that will reduce journey times to the City, but instead to aim for employment-led growth of these towns.

Creating an Integrated and Environmentally Sound Transport System

As a result of the Cork Land Use and Transportation Study (LUTS) undertaken over 20 years ago, Cork has a high standard of road infrastructure. Under the National Development Plan, improvements to the radial routes connecting centres of population are

now proposed. Public transport, however, has had little investment. This has resulted in a car-dependent trend fuelled by economic growth, rising car ownership and dispersed development. The large forecast growth in population and the increase in incomes enabling higher rates of car ownership will only make matters worse. Without a sustainable transport plan, traffic will double in 20 years, and peak hour travel speeds will fall to 5mph on most roads in the urban area. Travel times to work will become up to five times longer for some trips than they are at present.

The benefits of recent and planned improvements to the road network will be quickly eroded unless decisive action is taken. Commuter traffic will dominate the road network at the expense of its efficiency for strategic movement. Provision of new roads is not the answer, even if it were possible, in the attractive network of older towns in the Study Area. In particular, the City centre is, even now, degraded by the prevalence of cars, and this is an acknowledged obstacle to the City's regeneration.

Consequently, the development of an integrated transport system should be based on two key principles. First, the need for the location of new jobs and homes to be in balance in order to reduce car use, and second, the need to encourage greater use of public transport by achieving a marked improvement in standards of service and provision. This point is especially relevant for existing settlements that have developed with no particular consideration of public transport.

1.4 Strategy Development In Context

The Cork City-Region is not unique in facing the development issues that have been discussed in the previous section, and the need to plan strategically is widely recognised.

The European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) provides the highest level policy guidance towards the development of a spatial strategy for the Study Area. The ESPD is based upon the balanced pursuit of three equal goals, namely:

- € Economic and social cohesion.
- € Sustainable development.
- € Balanced competitiveness across the European Union.

At a National level, the Economic and Social Research Institute's (ESRI) Medium Term Review 1999-2005 is key. This report noted the above average productivity and incomes of the South West Planning Region and suggested that this was based primarily on the strength of the Cork economy, notably its manufacturing sector. The Review noted

that development potential is not evenly spread throughout the country, and that economic clusters and concentrations are important in generating increasing returns. It was also observed that growth centres, usually those around cities of a certain size, would tend to interact with each other over space and form corridors or elongated growth centres.

Cork, as well as other cities, has many of the characteristics and attributes of successful growth centres, so that encouraging the development of Cork is considered a realistic and desirable goal for national and regional spatial planning. Such a policy would have considerable local benefits and may help to relieve the development pressures on the Dublin conurbation.

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) is currently being prepared by the Department of the Environment and Local Government to provide a detailed framework for longer term spatial development of Ireland over a 20 year horizon. A public consultation paper "Indications for the Way Ahead" was published in 2001.

The NSS is being developed in the context of the unprecedented economic growth and social changes that have taken place in Ireland over recent years. This growth has led to substantial development pressures and chronic traffic congestion, most particularly in Dublin. The Greater Dublin area is forecast to continue to receive the lions share of national growth, thus exacerbating the existing problems of congestion and causing an overall decline in the quality of the environment and life in the capital. In contrast, other areas, notably the remoter rural areas, are experiencing a marked lack of employment opportunities, a problem that is being exacerbated by the continued decline in agriculture.

The NSS seeks to address the issue of uneven development by achieving a more balanced national spatial structure, and in particular relieving the tremendous development pressures upon Dublin. It sets out to develop the economic, social and environmental capability of the remainder of the country outside the Dublin Region to its full potential in order to optimise the performance of the country as a whole. The thrust of the emerging NSS is to identify and integrate the roles of both urban and rural areas, and to develop Ireland in terms of Functional Areas, each area being developed so as to reach critical mass.

Cork is already defined as a Gateway in the National Development Plan and has been designated as the focus for the proposed Southern Functional Area in the emerging NSS. Cork possesses all the attributes that the NSS defines as making an area economically

successful – a large and skilled workforce, a capacity for learning and innovation, international transport connections and an attractive physical, social, and business environment.

The Cork Area Strategic Plan has been completed in advance of the NSS and will consequently inform the national strategy on development opportunities that exist in Cork. It will also demonstrate the practical application of many of the concepts that are emerging from the NSS. Notable amongst these are the creation of critical mass, the integration of land use and transport, the efficient use of existing and planned investments in infrastructure, and the provision of a high quality environment for people and inward investment. The success of Cork will in turn help the NSS to realise its aim of balancing regional development for the benefit of the whole nation.

In the meantime, the National Sustainable Development Strategy for Ireland provides a national context and policy framework for spatial planning in the Study Area.

A number of themes emerge that are of particular relevance to strategic planning, and these are:

- £ Closer co-ordination between land use planning and transport.
- £ Minimisation of traffic growth through improvements in the public transport network.
- £ Promotion of more efficient urban areas through higher development densities.
- £ The prudent use of land in the provision of new housing and reduced demand for infrastructure services.
- £ A general presumption against commuter housing in rural areas.

At regional level, the Southern and Eastern Region Development Strategy 2000-2006 provides a broad spatial and economic development context for the Study Area. The development objectives for the region are to:

- £ Develop the regional urban centres such as Cork, Limerick and Waterford as counter magnets to Dublin.
- £ Tackle social exclusion in both urban and rural deprived areas.
- £ Maintain viable rural economies.
- £ Foster economic growth in the Southern and Eastern Region while contributing to more spatially balanced economic activities.

1.5 Goals And Objectives

The themes set out in policy documents just cited informed the process of developing goals and objectives for the Cork Strategic Area Plan. The goals and objectives adopted for the Strategic Plan are summarised as follows:

- £ The Creation of a balanced and cohesive City Region, which avoids over-concentration and seeks to deliver some parity of benefits across the territory – specifically, as regards access to information, services, infrastructure and life chances.
- £ A sustainable mixture of land uses and building types with efficient transport so that movement growth is facilitated and optimised, use of public transport is maximised and both emissions and energy consumption are reduced. The promotion of walking and the improvement of urban environments.
- £ The reduction of peripherality by creation of multi-modal movement corridors and the enhancement of ‘gateway’ functions.
- £ Environmental balance, avoiding ‘urban sprawl’ where buildings spread uncontrolled out into the countryside and green belts, as well as the conservation of landscape and protection of heritage.
- £ Efficient expenditure of resources, including the efficient management and use of infrastructure and protection of water sources.
- £ Promotion of regional competitiveness, and the strengthening of innovative capability through both education and the application of advanced research in the industrial sector; the creation of economic complexes and clusters in advanced growth sectors (without the loss of robust economic diversity).
- £ A balance between competitiveness and collaboration, with different locations performing complementary economic functions so as to promote overall regional strength.
- £ Social balance and cohesion, social inclusion and equitable delivery of life chances.
- £ Conservation of heritage, landscape and the environment.

The key word balance stands out - spatial balance, environmental balance and social balance. Balance is required between competitiveness and dynamism on the one hand, and complementarity and conservation on the other.

The goals and objectives were developed for the study in consultation with local stakeholders. These are set out in Table 1.1.

1.6 The Strategic Plan And Other Studies

Although this study has employed a fresh approach to planning in the Cork City-Region, the Strategic Plan cannot take place in isolation from other initiatives. This chapter has already demonstrated how the Plan has been directed by higher level policy guidance. In a similar way, existing initiatives and established processes will be guided by the Strategic Plan, but will also provide much of the mechanism for progressing its recommendations and proposals.

In all situations the sequence of events is as follows:

- (a) The Cork Area Strategic Plan identifies strategic policies and locations. This provides the top level policy guidance for – Development Plans, Housing Strategy Studies, and the Cork Strategic Retail Study. It will also guide other studies on, for example, transport, infrastructure and branding and marketing of the City-Region.
- (b) Development and subsequent Local Area Plans (as appropriate) will then determine the more detailed local level policies and action initiatives. Subsequent action will then be initiated by the private sector (planning applications) or joint public/private partnership or by the public sector alone.
- (c) Where there is little or no private sector market interest, then clearly at a corporate level (rather than a planning level) there will be a need for the two authorities to push hard to implement action or that element of the Cork Area Strategic Plan will fall behind.

Throughout the report, reference is made to the more detailed plans required. There is also a separate section on wider organisational issues regarding implementation.

A number of other parallel studies have been completed or are being undertaken in parallel with the CASP, including the North & West Cork Strategic Plan, the Cork Strategic Retail Study, the Waste Management Strategy for Cork Region, 2000-2020, and the Southern Health Board Corporate Plan, 2000-2003. These documents should be consulted in conjunction with CASP with regard to common planning areas or specific topics.

Table 1.1 Key Goals Statement

Goals	Policy Objectives
<p>(1) Economic growth Create a highly competitive quality location so as to facilitate the growth of an innovative and advanced (but balanced and robust) economy.</p>	<p>01. To promote an innovative, advanced, high value-added and high wage economy 02. To retain a robust, well balanced economic structure 03. To create an internationally oriented and highly competitive location and remove obstacles to private-sector investment and activity</p>
<p>(2) Social inclusion Promote social inclusion (especially within Metropolitan Cork) so as to improve access to public transport, education and jobs as far as possible.</p>	<p>04. To create employment in more deprived areas 05. To improve access to facilities and services, including education, health, community services and utilities</p>
<p>(3) Environment Enhance the environmental quality and landscape setting of the Cork City-Region, and minimise impacts on ecologically sensitive areas and on built heritage and cultural landscapes.</p>	<p>06. To minimise impact on ecologically sensitive areas 07. To minimise impact to cultural heritage, character and setting of the City, towns and villages 08. To promote the sustainable use of resources, including waste recycling and effective waste management. 09. To minimise the effects on rural landscape character 010. To ensure ready access to open space and natural landscape</p>
<p>(4) Balanced spatial development Include the City, its satellites, Ring Towns and rural settlements as part of a balanced settlement system with all levels of development in accordance with varying economic potential.</p>	<p>011. To deliver equivalent benefits to the entire area 012. To locate economic activity appropriate to smaller settlements or centres in them 013. To avoid excessive routine commuting 014. To create a dispersed location pattern within Metropolitan Cork</p>
<p>(5) Urban renewal Recognise the City as the heart of the region. Promote a high level of economic activity in the City centre and ensure that the housing stock and urban services retain their attractiveness in general balance with the suburbs. Synthesise urban renewal with conservation of historic form and character.</p>	<p>015. To promote the City Centre as the major area of comparison shopping, services and culture in the region 016. To promote regeneration of run-down urban areas 017. To provide high quality public transport to reinforce the role of the City Centre</p>
<p>(6) Transportation Maximise the use of fully accessible public transport by co-ordinating building form, use and density with high quality bus and train services as well as regulating cars and other traffic. Promote walking by improving the pedestrian environment.</p>	<p>018. To ensure the provision of a well functioning, integrated public transport system, which enhances competitiveness, sustains economic progress and contributes to social cohesion 019. To ensure the provision of a defined standard of the public transport, at reasonable cost to the customer and the taxpayer 020. To ensure the timely and cost effective delivery of the accelerated investment in infrastructure and facilities necessary to ensure improved public transport provision 021. To reduce car dependency</p>
<p>(7) Infrastructure Minimise the cost of providing water, sewerage, electricity, gas and telecommunications services to the population.</p>	<p>022. To maximise the use of existing infrastructure 023. Minimise the cost of new service provision and operation</p>

