

The Impacts and Implications of Irish National Economic Crisis Recovery Policy on Municipal Planning Policy

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Report submitted to the School of Urban and Regional Planning in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Urban and Regional Planning (M.PL.)

Acknowledgements

The author of this report would like to acknowledge a number of people for their support in the crafting of this document.

First and foremost, to my report supervisor Professor John Andrew. Without his willingness to entertain such an unorthodox report topic I would not have been able to write about an issue that I find so fascinating and important to the future of planning professionals around the world. Thank you.

To my office buddies, thank you for keeping me company many a long night at SURP. Sharing in your pain made me feel as though I was not alone.

I would also like to sign off with a quote for the consideration of all whom read this: "The most elementary and valuable statement in science, the beginning of wisdom is, I do not know." – Data

I wrote this report because, indeed:
I did not know.

Executive Summary

In the last five years, the global economy has seen a radical upheaval in socio-economic norms and realities. National and international markets have been subject to busts and recovery-booms that have not been seen since the great depression in the first half of the 20th century. As such, national governments have been forced to implement economic policies meant to stimulate recovery and ensure long-term social stability. Indeed, planning is intrinsically linked to this shift in thinking, both in policy and practice. Planning professionals must build cities and societies within the fiscal and social reality that is dealt to them, and as the last five years has shown, these realities can and have changed drastically. While not all nations around the world have been impacted by the economic crisis that began in 2007 equally, those nations that have felt the strongest economic blow are seeing policy changes at the national level that are impacting the ways cities grow and develop. Ireland is one of these nations, where the economic impacts of a collapsed capital market and resulting housing decline have caused uncertainty and decline across all fiscal and social spectrums. The City of Dublin is most sensitive to this collapse in Ireland as it is the economic and cultural centre of the nation. As such, it serves as an excellent case study through which to analyse the impacts of the recent economic crisis, both on how planning at the municipal level has been forced to adapt to new fiscal realities, and how national-level recovery policy has impacted municipal planning policy. As such, the overriding research question for this report is: How has municipal planning policy and practice in Dublin Ireland responded to, or been impacted by, national-level social, economic and spatial recovery policy which has emerged as a result of the 2007-2012 financial crisis?

Research Method

This report utilizes a logic model to ascertain how national economic recovery has affected planning policy within Dublin. Three national policy documents and two municipal documents were reviewed and analysed to understand both the foundational thinking of each, and the implications that the national policies had on the municipal documents. The documents under study in this report are as follows:

National Level Documents:

1. Implementing the National Spatial Strategy: 2010 Update and Outlook
2. Building Ireland's Smart Economy 2008
3. Ireland's National Housing Policy Statement 2011

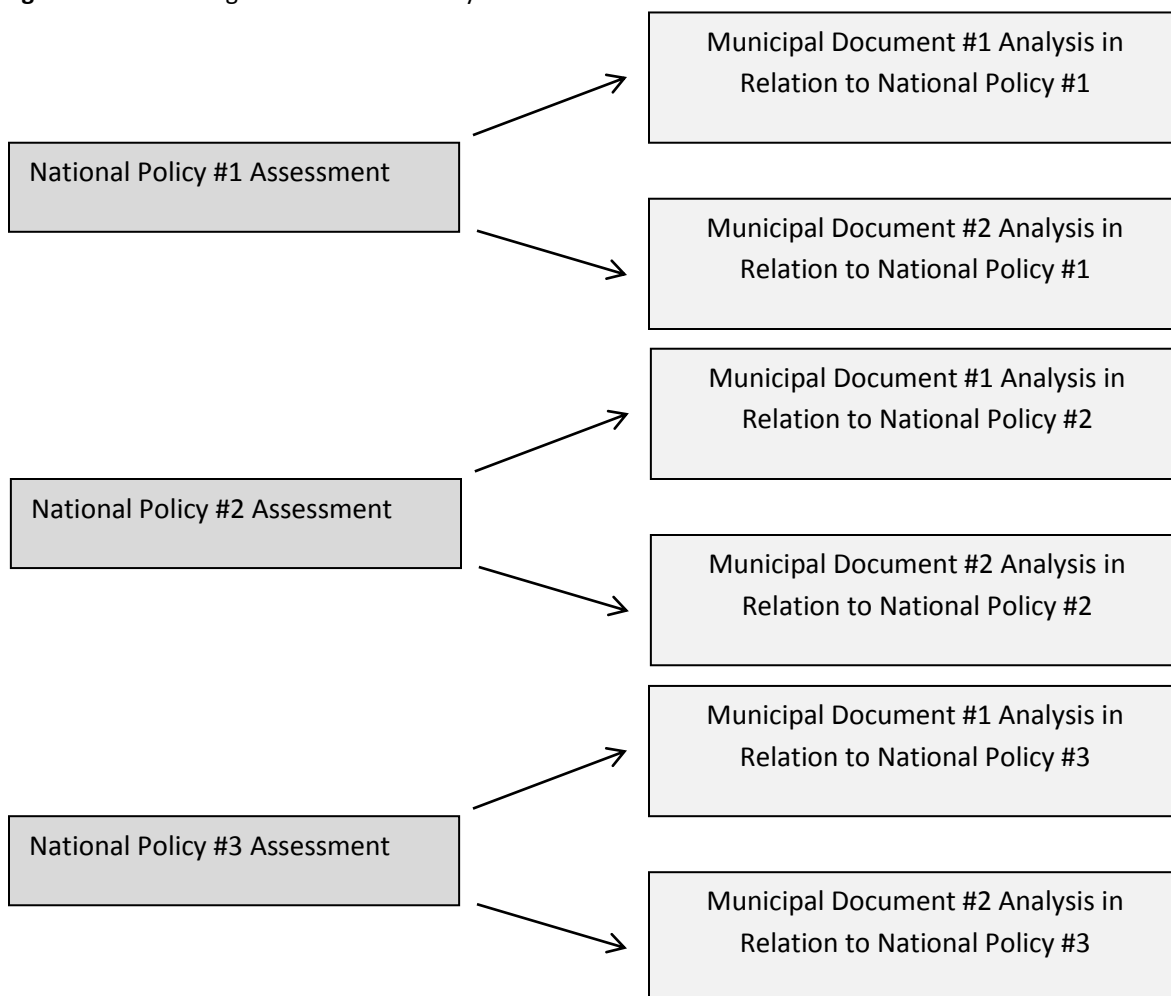
Municipal (Dublin) Level Documents:

1. Dublin City Development Plan (DCDP) 2011-2017
2. Dublin City Development Board Action Plan 2009-2012

Analysis

An assessment and analysis of the documents under study in this report was then performed which sought to uncover the implications of the national policy documents on municipal planning policies. The logic-analysis format between these different tiers of government policy allowed for a thorough understanding of the connections and interactions between these documents, and set the stage for the conclusions found at the end of this report. The structure of this analysis is shown through the below figure:

Figure 1: Methodological Structure of Analysis



Conclusions and Implications for Planners

The conclusions that were found as a result of the assessment and analysis of these documents were structured in three parts: implications for planning economies, changes in development and infrastructure priorities, and new relationships between different levels of government in setting out policies related to socio-economic and physical planning.

Planning Economies

The conclusions found through the analysis of these documents, in the realm of planning economies, fall under two major paradigm shifts. First is the shift to planning for economies of scale, and the second is the diversification of national and local market economies through construction and incentive program shifts (implemented through planning regulations).

Planning for economies of scale was shown to involve a renewed focus on the utilization of existing infrastructure within Dublin, and thus, a corresponding need to target development where such infrastructure already exists. This is the result of the newly understood need to rein in costs associated with servicing new developments which, prior to the recession, were unhindered. This exemplifies the new fiscal reality within which planners must operate in Ireland (and specifically Dublin), and also denotes a new geographic scale which planners must consider when creating comprehensive plans. This means that planners must now confine the scale at which they allow development, both horizontally and vertically, in order to ensure the best utilization of existing resources is realized, as per the development priorities and goals that are newly present in national policy documents. Second, regarding diversification of local market economies, planning policy is shown to now focus on incentivizing the construction of various tenure types (i.e. the development of both commercial and residential uses), which differs from the past dependency on housing construction to fuel the national economy. Planning regulations and development incentives play a key role in this shift, especially in Dublin, where the development of clusters of 'creative economy' commercial development is given increased attention within post-recession planning policies.

Development and Infrastructure Priorities

Development and infrastructure priorities are shown to have definitively changed since the onset of the economic crisis in Ireland. Indeed, documents such as the National Housing Policy Statement explicitly state that the past propensity to develop community infrastructure such as schools *after* housing has been built has resulted in a net deficiency of such infrastructure throughout the country. As such, national policies now require the phasing of development, and a parallel plan for providing schools and other social infrastructure in concert with each phase. Also, social housing has now risen to being a key development priority across policy spectrums in Ireland. Whereas in the past mono-tenure development (i.e. single-detached dwellings) was set in policy as the top goal for development policy throughout the country (due to perceived social and economic benefits in home ownership for families and thus, society in general), this presumption has been challenged by the economic crisis. As such, policies analysed in this report seek to change development priorities to ensure a more diversified housing stock. Dublin indeed puts these new national planning priorities into practice through such provisions as their increasing of lands zoned for affordable housing, and in their new policies regarding the need for mixed-tenure communities.

Planning Governance Relations

The analyses of these documents undoubtedly confirm the presence of stronger relationships between national economic policy and municipal planning documents. This relationship forms the basis of a new form of comprehensive planning at a *national* scale, and undo's the past regimen of singular, municipal-centric planning that was predominant prior to the economic crisis. This is shown both in the new requirements for municipal planning policy to conform to national policy documents, and in the overall intent of national policies, which seek to end the locally-oriented market-centric thinking of the past. Indeed, this duty to conform to national priorities parallels the type of top-down planning hierarchy that one sees across Canada (for example, in the overall authority of the Provincial Policy Statement in Ontario).

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1.0 | INTRODUCTION

Planning has, until now, been almost exclusively an exercise in growth management (whether that be spatial or economic growth). However, the economic crisis of 2008 forced planners to change their outlook and focus when planning for the future of their cities. In the past, national macro-economic policy had little *direct* impact on municipal planning. Indeed, the 2008 recession, and its resulting need for national recovery strategies may have changed the interaction between national and municipal tiers of government policy. Numerous demographic and economic indicators point to the stark shift in the development environment in Ireland. Such Irish indicators include net migration falling from a high of +70,000 in 2006, to a net outflow of -30,000 in 2011.¹ Also, building permit activity fell nearly 27.6% at the onset of the crisis in 2007.² These new demographic realities have meant planning policies, at the national and local levels, have been forced to evolve to respond to these changes.

As such, an analysis of the degree to which the introduction of, or change in national policy (which is enacted as a result of reaction to the crisis/recession) impacts or influences municipal planning policy/practice is warranted. Indeed, it would be useful for municipal planners to understand the degree to which national policy may impact planning if recession or crisis were to occur in their own jurisdiction. This reports analysis of the (national) Irish and (municipal) Dublin governmental policy connection is a result of the contemporary struggle that can be seen in Ireland, where national policy is being enacted to counteract the impacts of the housing and financial crisis in that country. Thus, this planning jurisdiction serves as an excellent proxy through which to study how national recessionary policy could impact municipal planning policy and practice.

¹ Central Statistics Office of Ireland. (Jan 16, 2012) Net Migration Patterns. *As presented by: Philip Lane of The Irish Economy*. Accessed: Oct 28, 2012.

URL: <http://www.irisheconomy.ie/index.php/2012/01/16/net-migration-patterns/>

² European Commission Eurostat. (2011). Construction Permits Annual Rates of Change 2005-2011. Accessed: Oct 28, 2012. URL:

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php?title=File:Construction_permits_annual_rates_of_change_2005-2011.png&filetimestamp=20120710111111

1.1 Research Question

This report's research question is: How has municipal planning policy and practice in Dublin Ireland responded to, or been impacted by, national-level social, economic and spatial policy which has emerged as a result of the 2008 financial crisis? There will be two sub-questions to this, which will help to structure the analysis of this question:

1. Has the onset of national recovery policy resulted in a change in relations between national and municipal policy makers in Ireland and specifically, the city of Dublin?
2. Have economic recovery tools within national policy (i.e. development incentives, streamlining or easing of regulations, changes in Dublin's municipality/economic-market interaction, etc), influenced or dictated policy for municipal planners? And if so, how?

1.2 Scope of Work

This study will focus on the impacts and implications of Irish National post-recession policy on municipal planning policy in Dublin, Ireland. It will both provide an assessment of these national policies as they relate to planning issues, and will analyze how these policies impact and influence numerous municipal policy documents in Dublin. This analysis will be limited to policy produced during the post-crisis period (i.e. after August of 2008). However, this report is not meant to conduct a comparative analysis of pre-and-post recession policy. Rather, it is a study of the direct application of national recovery-related policy on municipal policy in post-recessionary times. The City of Dublin has been chosen as the only municipality under study in Ireland due to the greater availability of data from the city, and by using the logic that any macro-economic crisis will impact the primary city within a nation the greatest. Therefore, any national recovery policy would also have the greatest impact on the primary city in question (which, in Ireland's case, is Dublin). Thus, any national-municipal cause and effect policy connections would be most determinable in Dublin.

2.0 | Methodology

The method employed in this report is one adapted from K. McNicol (2007) for studying the impacts of provincial policies on municipal-level planning issues, and is entirely qualitative in nature. The reason for choosing a qualitative approach was determined due to Yin's (2009) assertion that qualitative case studies are ideal for situations where you are analyzing a “how” or “why” type question which is explanatory in nature. Indeed, Yin asserts that such questions deal with “operational links needing to be traced over time”³, which is the case for my analysis of how national-level financial crisis response policy influenced subsequent municipal planning in Dublin.

The methodological approach used in this report involved 4 major steps:

1. Background and Case Study Preparation
2. Documentation Review
3. Assessment and Analysis of Documents
4. The categorization and summary of major areas where policy implications of national policy at the Municipal level have been identified.

2.1 Background and Case Study Preparation

The background and case study preparation stage of this method was conducted in two parts. First, a review of past strategies and case studies for how planners have dealt with periods of economic recession in various localities around the globe was conducted. This included a macro-level theoretical discussion of two major schools of thought in the study of planning during recessions, which are:

1. Strengthening planning powers as a means of socio-economic activism during recessions, and;
2. Weakening planning during recessions to allow for markets to self-correct

Within each of these subareas, examples of past planning reaction to economic decline were discussed. This review provided an understanding of how different the current economic difficulties in Dublin, Ireland are from past economic challenges that planners have faced.

³ Yin, Robert. (2009). Case Study Research: Design and Methods. 4th Ed. Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, California. p9.

Second, a case study preparation was conducted which provides a thorough background to the financial crisis of 2008. This was conducted in three key topic areas;

1. A brief review of the global macro-economic processes which precipitated the global financial crisis, and how these global factors influenced the collapse of the Irish economy
2. A micro-economic review of the impacts the national crisis in Ireland had on Dublin specifically, in terms of housing/development economies, employment, etc
3. A brief review of key economic indicators since 2008 for both Ireland and Dublin, in order to understand the direction that the area under study is heading in.

Understanding these three key variables was critical in understanding how other jurisdictions outside of Ireland can plan for and preempt the onset of a financial crisis (in planning terms), which was discussed at the end of this report. A holistic understanding of the changes to the economic landscape of Dublin and Ireland generally allowed for a comparison of past planning reactions to economic decline (as was reviewed in section 3.1 of the background and case study preparation chapter) to the situation facing planners in Dublin.

2.2 Documentation Review

Subsequently, a review of economic and spatial planning policy documents at both the national and municipal level was conducted for Ireland and Dublin. Each of these documents were chosen because they were published after the onset of the financial crisis, and were found (through an initial review of each document by this reports author) to have material reference to changes in planning policy that was explicitly linked to the financial crisis. The review of these documents independently helped to draw out important passages, sections, or statements made in each document that are directly related to post-recessionary policy (i.e. reviewing the documents individually will ensure a fundamental understanding of the language and reasoning used in each document for the policy changes found in each). This review has two categories,

with each category including two or three key documents that have had a fundamental impact on planning policy/practice in Dublin:

Category 1 - National-Level Policy Documents:

The review of these documents has focused on finding references to development, regulatory, or planning incentives or initiatives, or constraints which are a product of the post-recessionary recovery strategy in Ireland. The documents reviewed include:

1. Building Ireland's Smart Economy 2008
2. Implementing the National Spatial Strategy: 2010 Update & Outlook
3. National Housing Policy Statement 2011

Category 2 – Municipal-Level Policy Documents:

The review of these documents has focused on finding references to planning and development policy changes that were necessary given the 'difficulties', 'challenges', or 'changes' related to the economic crisis. The documents reviewed include:

1. Dublin City Development Plan (DCDP) 2011-2017
2. Dublin City Development Board Action Plan 2009-2012

2.3 Assessment and Analysis of Policy Documents

The analytical stage of this methodology is derived from Santo (2003). This method's analytical stage relies on asking set questions of the dependent (municipal) and independent (national) level policy documents. Thus, for each of the national policies, an assessment of the policy itself was conducted, followed immediately by an analysis of the national policies impact on each of the dependent policies (the municipal documents). This type of independent-dependent analysis is a form of 'Logic Analysis', where repeated cause-effect relationships (or influence-impact relationships) are sought between multiple independent-dependent events or sources of information.⁴ Thus, the structure of this analysis was as follows:

1a) An assessment of: *Building Ireland's Smart Economy 2008*

⁴ Yin, Robert. (2009). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. 4th Ed. Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, California. p149.

1b) An analysis of how *Building Ireland's Smart Economy 2008* influenced the:

- a) Dublin City Development Plan (DCDP) 2011-2017
- b) Dublin City Development Board Action Plan 2009-2012

2a) An assessment of: *National Spatial Strategy (NSS) Document; and NSS Update and Outlook 2010*

2b) An analysis of how the *National Spatial Strategy (NSS) Document; and NSS Update and Outlook 2010* influenced the:

- a) Dublin City Development Plan (DCDP) 2011-2017
- b) Dublin City Development Board Action Plan 2009-2012

3a) An assessment of: *National Housing Policy Statement 2011*

3b) An analysis of how the *National Housing Policy Statement 2011* influenced the:

- a) Dublin City Development Plan (DCDP) 2011-2017
- b) Dublin City Development Board Action Plan 2009-2012

As is shown above, this logic analysis is comprised of a separate assessment and analysis for each national policy under study. For each national document assessment, the following set of questions (derived and modified from Santo, 2003) were asked:

National-level Policy Assessment

1. What is the primary focus of the policy?
2. Is the policy prescriptive or advisory in nature? (i.e. does it dictate mandatory action or only provide non-mandatory recommendations?)
3. What barriers, tools for increased planning regulation, or shifts in planning direction are encouraged or introduced by the policy?
4. Does the policy remove any regulatory or provide incentives regarding development costs or the approval/planning process?
5. Does the policy increase or decrease national government involvement in municipal planning processes or policy, or maintain the status quo?

Answering each of these assessment questions positioned this report to conduct a well-defined analysis of the impact each national policy has had on each Dublin municipal document. In essence, the above assessment set the stage for the logic analysis study on the relationships

between the national policies under study and their impacts on the subsequent municipal-level planning documents.

The analysis of the two City of Dublin planning documents, in relation to each national policy, was conducted using a set of questions which parallel the questions shown above. As such, causality or distinct influences between the national and municipal documents were uncovered, which was crucial in answering this reports ultimate question of “how has national recessionary-period policy in Ireland impacted municipal planning in the City of Dublin?” As such, the questions used to analyze the municipal documents under study (again derived and modified from Santo, 2003), are:

Municipal Document Analysis Criteria

1. Was the focus area of the national-level policy addressed or a subject of this document?
2. Does the document incorporate the actions or recommendations found in the policy?
3. Does the document provide for any increase in regulatory frameworks, if present in the national policy?
4. Does the document dictate the deregulation of, or incentives for, development or planning approvals, if present in the national policy?

2.4 Limitations

The crisis that hit Ireland (and the world generally) in 2008 was a unique event in the history of the modern world. Until now, research on policy response to urban economic decline has focused on cities experiencing gradual economic decline over a period of a decade or more, such as Detroit, Michigan (i.e. McCarthy, 1997). However, the speed and intensity of the 2008 financial collapse in countries such as Ireland, Iceland, and the US has not been seen since the days of the great depression in the 1930s; a period which largely preceded modern urban planning practice. As such, this is the one of the first times in modern history where the impacts of national response policy to such extreme and sudden economic crisis can be studied in relation to planning practice in a western nation, which means comparisons to past policy and planning response to other economic crisis is difficult if not impossible. As such, this research must be treated as isolated to the unique conditions and difficulties seen in Ireland and Dublin,

and cannot be transferred or applied to other environments or areas that are facing urban decline. This study's findings could however be used as a benchmark from which planners and policy makers could contemplate the planning implications of a sudden economic crisis within their jurisdiction (if similar economic and governance conditions are found between their nation and Ireland). As such, this reports conclusion includes a brief discussion of how Ireland could be used as a wake-up call for planners and policy makers in other nations, to aid them in understanding the ramifications of unhindered development during times of economic boom.

Also, the economic situation that Ireland and Dublin is facing at the time of this research is still evolving. The ramifications for planning and development, as well as the housing and employment markets across Ireland and Dublin are as yet still not fully understood, and as such this report confines its conclusions to the 'snapshot' policy reality found from 2008-2012. It is very likely that as the situation improves or worsens on the ground in Ireland that the policies reviewed in this report will be altered, either incrementally or drastically. As such, this research must be understood to provide a broad understanding of immediate national policy changes, and resulting planning response to the financial crisis that has hit Ireland. Further to this consideration is the limitation in determining direct causality between the national and municipal policy documents. While in some cases there is explicit documentation in a municipal document that certain policies or actions/goals were the result of national policy directives, other key policy changes cannot be definitively explained as being the result of a national policy. As such, some interpretation and 'logical assessment' must occur to determine whether a policy is determinably parallel to, or a result of a national policy action.

3.0 | Background and Case Study Preparation

The impact of national economic or demographic decline on a city, while a topic of much debate and discussion in the media and in political-economic circles, is as yet not a widely discussed topic in planning literature. This lack of discussion has been highlighted by such authors as Pallagst (2010), who states that the discussion of city shrinkage is still an incoherent, unexplored area of planning⁵. Indeed, she believes that while the impacts of contraction in some North American cities (such as the rustbelt phenomena seen in the North-eastern US) has been well documented, the greater variety of urban shrinkage that is emerging as a result of greater world globalization and interconnectedness is as yet undefined⁶. From this, it is clear that past ideas of how to deal with decline (such as “shaving off the edges” of declining rustbelt cities) are no longer universally applicable, and a change in planning culture to include such things as historic preservation and the inclusion of international comparative aspects of planning and city rebuilding is necessary⁷. While not specifically addressing cities shrinking on a solely economic/fiscal level (such as is seen now in our post-recession reality), this evolving form of economic insecurity at national and international scales highlights the need to focus on and find solutions for urban decline in a more flexible, less American-centric way.

3.1 Theories for Planning Response to Economic Decline

While a thorough review of planning methods for dealing with urban decline is not within the scope of this report, a brief review is nonetheless important in order to understand how planners could change their interaction with the housing market in today’s post-recessionary world. Two major areas of thought have emerged on this topic, the first being the assertion that planning regulations should be strengthened during times of economic difficulties/decline as a tool of socio-economic activism, while the second focuses on the belief that planning powers should be weakened during times of economic decline to allow for the market driven self-correction of urban economic and physical markets.

⁵ Pallagst, Karina. (2010). The Planning Research Agenda: Shrinking Cities – A Challenge for Planning Cultures. *Town Planning Review*, 81 (5). p.iv.

⁶ Pallagst, Karina. (2010). The Planning Research Agenda: Shrinking Cities – A Challenge for Planning Cultures. *Town Planning Review*, 81 (5). p4.

⁷ Pallagst, Karina. (2010). p4-5.

3.1.1 Strengthening Planning Powers as a Means of Socio-Economic Activism during Decline:

Lees (2009) believes that planning will move away from past market-driven influences and will become more activist in nature. Indeed, she conducts her analysis by studying whether the recession and housing crash of 2008 will result in the end of gentrification that many analysts have predicted would occur in past recessionary times (such as 1981-82 and 1991-92), and argues that the deleveraging and hyper-commodification of housing that was seen prior to the housing bust in multiple markets around the world will now be replaced by a market explained more by eco-political externalities.⁸ She believes that this is a time when government policy, especially at the national level, can take a larger role in central-city housing policy through such things as more control for lower-income families over their housing, or the development of more “contextually (locally and nationally) appropriate specific urban strategies.”⁹ Indeed, Lees (2009) concludes that the current recession is an “opportune moment that we must exploit”.¹⁰

The case of post-crisis Netherlands closely follows this belief that times of crisis are times for planned economies and national planning-related programs to assert themselves in previously market-driven economies. Priemus (2010) stated that numerous national programs in the Netherlands had a significant impact on municipal planning policies via the national government’s stipulation that funding for construction incentives in troubled areas of the country was conditional on municipalities ‘contributing’ via the alteration of local land policy.¹¹ Indeed, such stipulations are a clear movement of the national government into the realm of municipal planning via macro-economic policy.

Lees and Priemus speak directly to the policy change opportunity that a recession and market crisis presents to government. Indeed, they frame this opportunity as a time when the market is less meaningful, and political economy moves to the forefront of market influence. Such a

⁸ Lees, Loretta. (2009). Urban Renaissance in an Urban Recession: The End of Gentrification? *Environment and Planning*, 41. p1530-1531.

⁹ Lees, Loretta. (2009). Urban Renaissance in an Urban Recession: The End of Gentrification? *Environment and Planning*, 41. p1532.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Priemus, Hugo. (2010). The Credit Crunch: Impacts on the Housing Market and Policy Responses in the Netherlands. *Journal of Housing and the Build Environment*, 25. p109.

shift means that socio-economic initiatives are easier to implement, and the largely capital-market forces that were dominant in the past will be weakened¹², thus giving government actors (whether it be in economics, housing, or planning) much more power to effect change in urban centers. It is the intention of this report to study whether this is now the case in Dublin, Ireland.

3.1.2 Weakening Planning Regulations during Recessions to Allow for Markets to Self-Correct:

However, others believe government macro-economic policy will ensure the market will remain the dominant force in planning post-recession. Indeed, Engelen *et al* (2010) believe that government funding shortages will result in the market taking a greater role in housing markets, as they force municipal governments to loosen planning and development regulations. Indeed, they speculate that with the decline in national resources, policies that were designed to introduce mixed-use owner-occupied developments in lower-income areas, urban regeneration will stagnate or come to a halt as a result of less ability for national agencies to assist with such municipal programs.¹³ As such, if and when private development does begin again, such development will be located in less-risky places (such as greenfield sites) due to a lack of government incentives to invest in poorer neighborhoods.

Lovering (2010) goes even further by stating the market will become even more entrenched in post-recessionary planning via government arms-length (i.e. market/developer-focused) development incentives. His belief that a drive for municipal competitiveness (i.e. the need to make cities competitive between one another), means that planning has become an exercise not in providing higher quality of life, and certainly not a practice in social equality, but rather a market-catering entity that seeks only to provide fuel to the 'competitive fire' of a city¹⁴. Indeed, he does not see this changing as a result of the recent recession, and in fact takes the view that such planning characteristics will only become more entrenched after the crisis as

¹² Lees, Loretta. (2009). Urban Renaissance in an Urban Recession: The End of Gentrification? *Environment and Planning*, 41, p1531.

¹³ Engelen, Ewald. Musterd, Sako. (2010). Amsterdam in Crisis: How the (Local) State Buffers and Suffers. *International Journal of urban and Regional Research*, 34, 3. p706.

¹⁴ Lovering, John. (2010). Will the Recession Prove to be a Turning Point in Planning and Urban Development Thinking? *International Planning Studies*, 15, 3. p241

competition for resources and development between cities attempting to recover becomes more fierce.¹⁵ If this were the case in Dublin, then a relaxing of planning regulations would be expected from this reports review of planning changes in Dublin in post-crisis Ireland.

3.2 Case Study Preparation

The socio-economic reality that planning operated under prior to the financial crisis was starkly different to the reality seen now, both in Ireland and internationally. A brief review of the background to the global financial crisis of 2008, as well as the economic impacts this crisis has had on Dublin and Ireland will aid in an understanding of the new socio-economic planning landscape that planners and policymakers now face in Ireland. This reality will of course play a major role in determining how planners and policymakers react to the crisis and what policy actions are possible given the economic difficulties that are ongoing both locally and nationally.

3.2.1 Planning System Context

Prior to the financial crisis, planning in Ireland was largely a product of municipal council-priority, and focused on facilitating rapid development in as little time as possible. Indeed, planning largely operated under the idea that “all development is good development.”¹⁶ A report published recently by the National Trust for Ireland indicates that a “systemic failure on a nationwide basis on the back of a generally very poor performance by councils in discharging their planning functions”.¹⁷ This poor performance is expressed on-the-ground, in that “councils which scored poorly generally had the highest rate of residential vacancy, the highest rate of population decline and out-migration, the highest levels of unfinished ‘Ghost Estates’, [and] lower residential property prices”.¹⁸ The root of this failure is largely a result of the single-tier system of planning that Ireland operated under prior to the recession, since

¹⁵ Lovering, John. (2010). Will the Recession Prove to be a Turning Point in Planning and Urban Development Thinking? *International Planning Studies*, 15, 3. p241

¹⁶ The National Trust for Ireland. (April 2012). State of the Nation: A Review of Ireland’s Planning System 2000-2011. p7. Accessed: Oct 27th, 2012.
URL: http://www.antisce.org/Portals/0/Reports/20120419StateoftheNation_PlanningSystem.pdf

¹⁷ The National Trust for Ireland. (April 2012). State of the Nation: A Review of Ireland’s Planning System 2000-2011. p11. Accessed: Oct 27th, 2012.

URL: http://www.antisce.org/Portals/0/Reports/20120419StateoftheNation_PlanningSystem.pdf

¹⁸ Ibid. p9.

municipalities were largely insular in planning decision making (i.e. planning decisions were made without regard for regional or national priorities). As such, this report will illustrate the challenges resulting from, and action taken as a result of, this locally-centric planning environment, including the renewed focus on comprehensive planning that accounts for national planning and development priorities.

3.2.2 Global and National Economic Crisis Background:

While it is difficult to definitively define the exact cause of the crisis, two major reasons are often given for the housing bubbles which burst in both the US and Ireland prior to the crisis. The first is the idea of “irrational exuberance”¹⁹ in both markets, as the period prior to 2008 was a time of economic boom for both countries. This irrational exuberance led to relaxed housing market regulations which encouraged market-driven development surges. Indeed, Irish housing policy prior to the crisis was largely focused on encouraging home ownership as it was seen as being the pinnacle of good housing tenure.²⁰ As such, credit markets were encouraged to facilitate the availability of easy credit to support this policy.

This leads to the second reason for the global crisis, that being the availability of easy credit in the housing market. While terms such as ‘subprime mortgage’ are now instantly associated with the housing crash of 2008 in the United States, the massive inflow of international capital to Ireland and the US, often referred to as a “capital bonanza”²¹, also resulted in the long-sustained low borrowing rates for housing seen prior to the crash. This helped to support the ‘irrational’ belief that the housing market would continue to boom indefinitely, which then shaped planning policy to support such a boom.

3.2.3 City of Dublin Economic Decline:

¹⁹ Connor, G. Flavin, T. O’Kelly, B. (2010) The U.S. and Irish Credit Crises: Their Distinctive Differences and Common Features. *Irish Economy Note No. 10. (Government of Ireland)*. p2.

²⁰ Dept. of Environment, Community, and Local Government (Feb 2007). *Statement of Housing Policy*. Government of the Republic of Ireland. p 43.

²¹ Connor, G. Flavin, T. O’Kelly, B. (2010) The U.S. and Irish Credit Crises: Their Distinctive Differences and Common Features. *Irish Economy Note No. 10. (Government of Ireland)*. p2.

When the Irish housing bubble burst and credit markets ground to a halt in 2008 the economy of Dublin was hit particularly hard. House prices in Dublin fell almost 25% from their 2007 highs (Irish and US Crisis Comparison Article, p. 8), while house completions across Ireland fell from over 90,000 units/annum to just 50,000 units/annum from 2006 to 2008.²² Indeed, the 90% decline in the number of issued planning permissions from the City of Dublin's 2006 high²³ mirrors this decline in the number of housing completions, and indicates this low level of development will continue into the short and medium-term. This radical decline in the number of new housing units and planning permissions issued would naturally impact planning practices, especially when past policy (such as the Irish Housing Policy discussed previously) explicitly supported the rapid housing development seen during Ireland's pre-crisis boom period.

3.2.4 Post-Recession National and Municipal Reality:

The post-crisis reality currently seen in Dublin, and Ireland more broadly, is one of national austerity and economic stagnation. Governmental instability has cast doubt on the ability for politicians to institute reform policy that may aid in national recovery. For example, in November of 2011 the Minister of State for Housing and Planning resigned from the ruling Labour Party in an ongoing dispute over the implementation of infrastructure cost-cutting measures²⁴. Further disagreement and uncertainty over the need for Ireland to request a second bailout package from the European Union (EU) have been raised in 2012, even as Irish politicians admit the nation faces "very significant economic challenges" in the near future²⁵. Indeed, national unemployment levels have not improved across the nation since 2007, with levels increasing from 4.7% in Dec 2007 to 14.3% in Dec 2011²⁶. Indeed, planning permissions for new dwelling construction have remained at their historic lows as of Q4 of 2011.²⁷

²² Connor, G. Flavin, T. O'Kelly, B. (2010). p10.

²³ Cudden, Jamie. O'Leary, Helen. (Q2, 2010). Dublin City Indicators: A Commentary on Dublin's Performance. *Dublin City Council – Think Dublin! Research Series*. p14.

²⁴ The Journal (News). 15/11/2011. Labour TD resigns from Government over barracks closure. Accessed: March 12th, 2012. URL: <http://www.thejournal.ie/speculation-mounts-that-labour-td-to-resign-over-barracks-closure-279760-Nov2011/>

²⁵ Irishtimes.com. 12/01/2012. Kenney rules out second bailout. Accessed: March 12th, 2012. URL: <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/breaking/2012/0112/breaking2.html>

²⁶ Central Statistics Office. Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Statistics. Government of Ireland. Accessed: March 13th, 2012. URL: <http://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/labourmarket/principalstatistics/seasonallyadjustedstandardisedunemploymentrat>

With little end in sight for the economic depression, the new economic and planning directions outlined in the documents to be reviewed and analyzed in chapters four and five will be increasingly important in shaping the future physical and economic landscape of Ireland and Dublin. Again, while it is clear that the crisis is an ongoing matter that will likely result in further national and municipal policy changes impacting planning and development in Dublin, it is still important to understand how the initial national policy response to this crisis will impact planning at the local level. The following two chapters of this report will review policy documents related to this initial national recovery program, and assess the impact these national policies have had on post-2008 municipal planning policy in Dublin.

²⁷ [essur/
Central Statistics Office. Planning Permissions Granted by Type of Construction – Q4 2008-Q4 2011. Government of Ireland. Accessed March 13th, 2012. URL: http://www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/Statire/SelectVarVal/saveselections.asp](http://www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/Statire/SelectVarVal/saveselections.asp)

4.0 | Documentation Review

Since the onset of the financial crisis, numerous national and municipal policy documents have been published and/or updated in an attempt to respond to the downturn. These policies largely frame their direction-setting goals and objectives within a setting of national or local economic, physical, and social recovery. As such, foci can be seen in increasing the social and spatial integration of urban landscapes via creating connectivity (both physical and transportative) between communities within Dublin, and by better utilizing existing infrastructure through increases in urban densities and the better utilization of vacant lands within inner cities. Reasons for these policy changes are clear – fiscal and social realities have changed at the local and national levels, which have changed how Irish citizens live and work within their communities. However, it will also be shown that developments of the past (i.e. the rapid and almost uncontrolled building of suburban communities throughout Ireland) must catch up in terms of physical and social infrastructure. As such, the greater government control of construction phasing and tenures is a common theme of these policies, in order to ensure developments provide physical and social services to their residents as they are built, and not years after residents locate in them. This chapter will provide an initial introduction to each of the policy documents to be assessed and analyzed in chapter five, and will aid in this reports ability to clearly draw common themes of policy change throughout the national and municipal policy levels under investigation in this report.

4.1 National Policy Review

4.1.1 Implementing the National Spatial Strategy: 2010 Update and Outlook:

This document was created by the Department of the Environment, Heritage, and Local Government as a follow-up to the National Spatial Strategy (NSS), which was released in 2002. The NSS was originally a strategy path to making Ireland more economically, physically, and socially stable over the next 20 years²⁸. However, the foreword of the 2010 update and outlook document explicitly states that due to the “serious global economic and environmental challenges now facing Ireland and the significant necessary national economic budgetary

²⁸ Ministry for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. (2010). *Implementing the National Spatial Strategy: 2010 Update and Outlook*. Government of the Republic of Ireland. p2.

constraints”²⁹ of the nation, serious adjustments must be made to the NSS. It is the purpose of this update to consider this new economic reality, and make appropriate adjustments to the NSS, especially in the following two areas:

1. Balanced regional development, and;
2. A re-adjustment of capital investment priorities

Both of these areas are, according to the update, key in driving a “sustained approach” to Ireland’s economic recovery.³⁰

In relation to balancing regional development, the NSS Update seeks to ensure a more consistent focus on “plan-led development”³¹ across the country. Areas where it is recognized this must occur include making city and town centers a greater focus for development as opposed to the past focus on suburban decentralized development.³² This past decentralized, non-regional development pattern has resulted in settlement landscapes around hub-cities that are recognized as being uneconomical and inefficient.³³ Such inefficient and fragmented development is stated to have occurred due to “excessive and inappropriately located zoning”³⁴ at the municipal level.

In response to this NSS regional development challenge the NSS Update proposes a number of initiatives, which include:

1. Increasing the “strategic role and relevance of RPGs [Regional Planning Guidelines] in guiding and coordinating local development, and for ensuring much greater coherence between national land use policy, capital investment programmes, development plans and local area plans.”³⁵; and
2. “Existing arrangements must be improved for investment co-ordination, sectoral alignment and planned prioritization between... [the] activities of Government

²⁹ Ministry for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. (2010). p2

³⁰ Ibid. p4

³¹ Ministry for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. (2010). Implementing the National Spatial Strategy: 2010 Update and Outlook. Government of Ireland. p3.

³² Ministry for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. (2010). p4.

³³ Ibid. p5.

³⁴ Ibid. p5.

³⁵ Ibid. p6.

Departments and agencies, and the planning and development activities of regional and local authorities.”³⁶

Both of these major policy adjustments show a clear propensity for greater integration of regional and local regulations and initiatives within national economic policy directives. These adjustments from the original NSS of 2002 signal an overall shift in spatial planning to a strategy of integration and top-down comprehensive planning practices. The implementation of this integrated regional framework for development will be done via the creation of Regional Planning Guidelines for the Dublin Region, as well as the creation of a new Regional Development Board in Dublin³⁷.

In relation to the re-adjustment of capital investment priorities, the NSS Update focuses largely on transportation infrastructure development and the reorientation of such infrastructure to supporting inner-city rejuvenation. This is a result of a recognition that “population growth in some Gateways and Hub towns has underperformed, while smaller towns, villages and rural areas within 50 – 80 km commuting range of major cities and towns have experienced significant population growth”³⁸, which naturally results in inefficiencies in transit and other civil infrastructures and a reduction of population influxes to downtown areas.

Within the *‘balancing regional development’* focus area of the Update, numerous key policy adjustments are proposed to ensure capital investment priorities are in line with the new economic reality in Ireland. Some of these include:

1. The goal that “...future investment in transport infrastructure should be weighted heavily in favor of public transport and supported by more compact settlement patterns.”³⁹
2. The “aligning [of] spatial planning and transport through environmentally focused planning and design”, which is meant to reduce the demand for developer-led,

³⁶ Ibid. p6.

³⁷ Ibid. p43-44.

³⁸ Ibid. p5.

³⁹ Ministry for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. (2010). Implementing the National Spatial Strategy: 2010 Update and Outlook. Government of the Republic of Ireland. p6.

uneconomic infrastructure servicing demands in outlying areas where a “critical mass of population” is unrealistic.⁴⁰

4.1.2 *Building Ireland’s Smart Economy 2008:*

The Building Ireland’s Smart Economy (BISE) 2008 document is a foundational direction-setting policy for guiding Ireland’s recovery from the 2008 financial crisis. With the express goal of building a “Smart Economy”, which consists of a renewed enterprise sector, improved employment quality, ‘first-class’ infrastructure, etc, the BISE seeks to reprioritize government infrastructure and regulatory resources⁴¹ given Ireland’s new economic reality. The document seeks to do this via taking action in five key priority action areas, which include:

1. Securing the Enterprise Economy
2. Building the Ideas Economy
3. Enhancing the Environment and Securing Energy Supplies
4. Investing in Critical Infrastructure
5. Efficient and Effective Public Services and Smart Regulations

For the purpose of this review, priority areas one, four and five will be focused upon.

In *Securing the Enterprise Economy*, the key focus area in relation to planning and development is in the ‘Aiding the Restructuring of the Construction Sector’ subsection. Key action points through which the national government will provide financial and/or regulatory support include:

1. Continued support for a local authority mortgage scheme, to “assist purchasers who wish to become homeowners but who are, for the time being, unable to obtain loan finance”⁴²;
2. “Provide incentives to increase investment in household and business energy efficiency”⁴³; and

⁴⁰ Ibid. p8.

⁴¹ Government of Ireland. (2008). Building Ireland’s Smart Economy: A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal. p1.

⁴² Government of Ireland. (2008). Building Ireland’s Smart Economy: A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal. p50.

⁴³ Ibid. p50.

3. A reform of the stamp duty on commercial properties to “provide an impetus to the commercial property market and help stimulate commercial development and investment”⁴⁴.

The overarching rationale for these action points is to redirect the construction industry from an overreliance on residential activities (as it was prior to the recession) to being a diversified industry that is better able to weather downturns in the future. More specifically, it also seeks to diversify the tenure of residential construction starts to be consistent with the new “long term demand”⁴⁵ reality in the housing market. Thus, the BISE introduced a three-pronged approach for national assistance in urban construction in light of the recession, including: financial aid for home purchasers (demand-side aid), fiscal relief for construction industries (supply-side aid), and regulatory guidance to ensure these supply and demand-side aids are directed towards sustainable developments (such as downtown regeneration projects).

In relation to the *Investing in Critical Infrastructure* priority area, the BISE recognizes the critical role of the National Spatial Strategy (discussed previously) to ensuring regional infrastructure investment is comprehensive and efficient.⁴⁶

4.1.3 National Housing Policy Statement 2011:

The 2011 National Housing Policy Statement is a response to the failures of the comprehensive *2007 Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities* Housing Policy, which focused on promoting single-family homes as the tenure of choice for Ireland. Within this, the Policy indeed states that “pro-cyclical policies” prior to the crisis led to housing investment not based on “hearth and home”, but on the basis of investment and yield.⁴⁷ They state that they now know this “was based on a mirage and a false assumption that the normal rules of supply and demand somehow did not apply to Ireland.”⁴⁸ In order to combat this, the Statement seeks to redirect

⁴⁴ Ibid. p50.

⁴⁵ Ibid. p50.

⁴⁶ Government of Ireland. (2008). *Building Ireland’s Smart Economy: A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal*. p92.

⁴⁷ Ministry of the Environment, Community and Local Government. (2011) *Housing Policy Statement*. Government of Ireland. p1.

⁴⁸ Ministry of the Environment, Community and Local Government. (2011) *Housing Policy Statement*. p1.

housing's new role to be 'complimentary' to the economy, rather than a "key driver" of the economy.⁴⁹

Actions found within the 2011 Statement that will facilitate this paradigm shift include:

1. The introduction of "equitable regulatory treatment for all forms of non-ownership housing",⁵⁰
2. Ending financial assistance for purchasing a home for individuals or families who have the resources to rent an equivalent home in a "vibrant community";⁵¹
3. A redirection of state resources to support those in most need, via greater financial and regulatory support for social housing;
4. A move from "capital-funded programmes of construction and acquisition to more revenue-funded options", which will "promote the evolution of mixed tenure communities through the provision of housing for market sale and rent as well as social renting",⁵² and;
5. A shift from the past public-private partnership model for developing social housing to a reliance on state funding for regeneration and improvement programs for social housing projects, as a result of current market conditions across the nation.

4.2 Dublin Municipal Policy Review

4.2.1 Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017:

The Dublin City Development Plan (DCDP) for 2011-2017 has been developed around a core strategy which incorporates a number of new and updated guidelines for the urban development and growth of Dublin. The document has been structured with the following concepts being key to its creation:

⁴⁹ Ibid. p3.

⁵⁰ Ibid. p1.

⁵¹ Ibid. p1.

⁵² Ibid. p2.

1. A compact, quality, green well-connected city, which generates a dynamic, mixed-use environment for living, working and cultural interaction.
2. A smart city, creating long term economic recovery.
3. A city of sustainable neighbourhoods and socially inclusive communities.

Each of these core strategy areas will now be summarized in order to facilitate the analysis of the DCDP in the following chapter.

A compact, quality, green well-connected city, which generates a dynamic, mixed-use environment for living, working and cultural interaction:

This core strategy addresses many of the built environment challenges that have resulted from the unhindered development during Ireland's economic boom, such as disconnected neighborhoods, a loss of investment and development in the downtown core, and an underutilization of hard infrastructure already built throughout Dublin's urban fabric. Whereas in previous development plans a focus on the physical expansion of the city into such areas as the Docklands and Heuston was emphasized, this updated plan complements these physical expansions with the "consolidation of the inner city", via mixed-use developments and good urban design.⁵³

Another central focus under this strategy area is in ensuring the connectivity of outlying suburban developments with the broader Dublin City Region. As the DCDP states, while there has been "significant achievements in providing an urban structure to accommodate" the influx of people to Dublin over the last half-decade, the new challenge is to ensure these communities are "integrated with the rest of the city". While these neighbourhoods are subcategorized in the DCDP with separate policies created to deal with the unique circumstances of each community, they broadly encourage the linking of the "critical mass"⁵⁴ with either surrounding communities, or with the core of Dublin.⁵⁵

⁵³ Dublin City Council. (2011). Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017. Section 3.3.1.1.

⁵⁴ Dublin City Council. (2011). Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017. Section 4.4.1.1

⁵⁵ Ibid. Sections 4.4.1.2 & 4.4.2.1.

Finally, of great consequence to the purpose of this report and another key feature of the DCDP is the inclusion of a policy to “carry out an audit of vacant and derelict sites in the city, to expedite their redevelopment as part of the reinstatement of the urban form and structure of the city.”⁵⁶ Such an explicit recognition that the urban structure of the city must be rejuvenated, inexplicitly, but assuredly as a result of the deterioration wrought on various areas of the city as a result of the economic crisis, is a critical variable to consider in understanding how planning has changed as a result of the crisis. Such a refocusing of the development strategy in Dublin from an expansionary to an internal urban regeneration strategy is an indicator of the significant planning changes brought on by the economic crisis.

A smart city, creating real long term economic recovery:

This strategy area focuses on connecting planning and development goals with attracting economic investment to the Dublin City Region. While a more in-depth analysis of how this strategy is related to national economic recovery goals will be conducted in the following chapter, the fundamental goal behind this strategy is to make Dublin “attract creative talent and foreign investment”, in order to create the “necessary critical mass to compete and collaborate with other [international] cities”.⁵⁷ A key policy behind this drive to make Dublin the creative economic engine of the Irish economy is the *Building Irelands Smart Economy*. Also, the DCDP discusses that for the first time, the “four local authorities in the Dublin City Region have collaborated to produce an Economic Development Action Plan”⁵⁸ for the Dublin Region, which is incorporated into the DCDP.

City of sustainable neighbourhoods and socially inclusive communities:

Keeping in mind that the socio-economic reality of Dublin’s residents has changed since the onset of the crisis, the City has also placed a greater emphasis on social and community sustainability in their new DCDP. This social emphasis has been directed into two critical areas:

⁵⁶ Ibid. Section 4.4.1.1.

⁵⁷ Ibid. Section 3.2.2.1.

⁵⁸ Dublin City Council. (2011). Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017. Section 3.2.2.1

Promoting Quality Homes

The *promotion of quality homes* policy falls in line with the Housing Policy Statement reviewed previously. Numerous new initiatives are introduced which are meant to support both the rejuvenation of urban areas and the better mix of housing types, both in regards to tenure mix and availability of affordable housing. Within housing tenure, the DCDP calls for “mixed tenure neighbourhoods, catering for a whole range of family types”⁵⁹. This is in contrast to previous Irish policy which focused on the support of single-family dwelling markets. Another central tenet of this policy is the increasing of density provisions within areas already serviced by urban infrastructure, which the DCDP states will create a “consolidated urban form which fosters the development of compact neighbourhoods and a critical mass which contributes to the viability of economic, social, and transport infrastructure.”⁶⁰ Furthermore, this new mix of tenures, especially regarding larger apartment developments, will be more closely monitored to ensure local facilities and support infrastructure are provided in tandem with development⁶¹ rather than post-construction, as has been the case in the past. As such, policy QH8 of the DCDP calls for the “requirement” of larger development schemes to be phased over a “considerable period of time”, to ensure infrastructure is available to initial occupiers of the development.⁶²

Regarding affordable housing, the socio-economic climate which currently presides in Dublin necessitates a renewed focus on ensuring a stable and sufficient supply of affordable housing is available for citizens impacted most strongly by the recession. The DCDP calls for improving affordable housing stock by providing different types and sizes of affordable housing, while also improving social mix within public housing developments.⁶³ As such, two policies have been created which will require that 20% of land zoned for residential use will be reserved for social and affordable housing (QH25), and that a pilot housing scheme (QHO1) based on the Boston Model will be undertaken.⁶⁴ The spatial distribution of social housing is also being targeted as an area in need of improvement, via policy that calls for the avoidance of the “proliferation of

⁵⁹ Dublin City Council. (2011). Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017. Section 3.2.3.1

⁶⁰ Ibid. Section 11.4.2.

⁶¹ Ibid. Section 11.2.

⁶² Ibid. Section 11.4.2.

⁶³ Ibid. Section 11.4.10.

⁶⁴ Ibid. Section 11.4.10.

[social housing] facilities in any one part of the city” (NC21), and to support urban regeneration in areas “across the city in order to enhance social cohesion and potential for positive change in traditionally marginal areas” (NC20).⁶⁵

Creating Good Neighbourhoods and Successful Communities

This provision in the DCDP draws largely from the preceding *Promoting Quality Homes* section of the plan. While again emphasizing the need for complete communities that provide for both physical and social infrastructure at each phase of the development process, it also reiterates the need for a healthy reorientation of social housing developments into mixed-use neighbourhoods.⁶⁶ However, in addition to these initiatives, the policy states that the creation of good neighbourhoods can only be done if they recognize the “important role that community groups play in the city and engage with consultative forums” that include all age groups.⁶⁷

Furthermore, Urban Design Statements will be required in applications for large-scale development proposals (described as those with over 200 units or 20,000m²), to ensure that they are in harmony with the character of both the local neighbourhood and the wider City of Dublin.⁶⁸ Key within these design statements will be the need for public spaces within these developments to ‘fit’ within the local network of existing or planned public spaces.⁶⁹ Such guidelines are meant to ensure better physical and social neighbourhood integration throughout the Dublin City Region, likely to prevent the past pattern of ‘community islands’ which proliferated during Ireland’s development boom.

As such, the DCDP can be broadly viewed as a plan for the refocusing of Dublin’s social and physical development to be inward-looking, as opposed to the expansionary plans produced during the Irish economic boom. An increase in urban density is to be accompanied by a

⁶⁵ Ibid. Section 12.4.7.

⁶⁶ Dublin City Council. (2011). Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017. Section 3.2.3.2

⁶⁷ Ibid. Section 12.4.1

⁶⁸ Dublin City Council. (2011). Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017. Section 12.4

⁶⁹ Ibid. Section 12.4.2

renewed focus on social and economic cohesion between different areas of the city region, via the utilization of existing infrastructure, and the assurance that social infrastructure will be available in all neighbourhoods. While the plan also addressed many other areas of city building that were not reviewed in this chapter, the pertinent sections of the DCDP for this report were covered as thoroughly as possible within a document review of this scale.

4.2.2 Dublin City Development Board Action Plan 2009-2012:

The Dublin City Development Board (DCDB) is a public agency created in 2001 whose mandate is to “enhance the coordination and integration of public service delivery, while maximizing the contribution of all stakeholders to the betterment of the social, economic and cultural life of the city.”⁷⁰ As such, their policy activities largely center on enhancing socio-economic cohesion and development throughout the Dublin City Region. The 2009-2012 action plan is a (brief) update to the *Dublin – A City of Possibilities, 2002-2012* ten year strategy document which they published shortly after 2001. This updated plan is a response to their recognition that the “current [economic] climate is leading the country into unknown and uncharted territory”, as a result of the collapse in predicted tax revenues and increases in unemployment.⁷¹ Areas of importance for the purpose of this report include the reports themes of *Social Inclusion* and *Economic Development*.

Regarding social inclusion, the DCDB update is largely focused on building a better understanding of the extent to which exclusion is present through Dublin. As such, they call for the development of an information system to “better capture social exclusion” in order to provide better information for statutory agencies working to target “social and economic deprivation.”⁷² Another inclusionary objective is to enhance the social participation of communities in the decision-making process. To do this, they aim to broadly “enhance cooperation and synergies with established local development structures through the cohesion

⁷⁰ Dublin City Development Board. (2009) Review 2006-2008; Action Plan 2009-2012. Dublin City Council. p3.

⁷¹ Dublin City Development Board. (2009) Review 2006-2008; Action Plan 2009-2012. p28.

⁷² Dublin City Development Board. (2009) Review 2006-2008; Action Plan 2009-2012. p31.

and endorsement process”⁷³. However, the mechanisms through which this ‘enhancement’ would take place are less than clear.

The other key theme relevant to this report is *Economic Development*. Major objectives included in the DCDB report are the establishment of an “economic sub-group” which will develop an action plan for 2009-2012, and more broadly, to “support economic development for the Greater Dublin area.”⁷⁴ While the mechanisms for this development support are not described, it shows an emphasis on economic recovery and stability moving forward.

⁷³ Ibid. p32.

⁷⁴ Ibid. p35.

5.0 | Assessment and Analysis

An assessment and analysis of the documents reviewed in chapter 4 is conducted below, using the questions identified in the methodology chapter of this report. This chapter asks pertinent questions related to both national and municipal documents, which aids in identifying cause and effect relationships between the two tiers of government policies. These questions have been developed to provide a cross-spectral assessment of the basis for, and impacts of, the documents under review. As such, correlating and identifying linkages between the national level economic recovery policies and on-the-ground Municipal (Dublin) planning impacts related to these national policies is uncovered.

5.1 Implementing the National Spatial Strategy: 2010 Update and Outlook Document (2010)

5.1.1 Assessment

Q1. What is the primary focus of the policy?

This policy is primarily focused on facilitating the integration of Ireland's various socio-spatial regions both economically and physically. This is done through a nation-wide comprehensive plan which, while unlike conventional official plans as we understand them in Canada, provides a national framework for directing investments to areas in need of rejuvenation (both socially and physically). This policy document does not however illustrate this national strategy, and instead is a summary compilation of various ministerial and national reports which have been published since the economic crisis began. These combined reports are seen as the national framework for restructuring development and planning practice in Ireland.

Q2. Is the policy prescriptive or advisory in nature? (i.e. does it dictate mandatory action or only provide non-mandatory recommendation?)

The 2010 Update is both prescriptive and advisory, as it does demand various actions be done by local governments, while it also acts as a facilitator of action with regards to numerous other national-level action documents. One of the most prescriptive actions which the Update calls for is that zoning at local levels must now be "evidence based, and consistent with"⁷⁵ the

⁷⁵ Ministry for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. (2010). Implementing the National Spatial Strategy: 2010 Update and Outlook. Government of the Republic of Ireland. p45.

sustainability goals of the NSS. This zoning requirement is in response an oversupply of land which is zoned residential, which would provide enough residential lands for over 900,000 dwellings (or enough land for over 45 years at the construction levels seen in 2010)⁷⁶. Indeed, many of the documents to which it advises actions would themselves be classified as prescriptive. For example, an action item within the Update calls for the development of “proposals for a more effective co-ordination and implementation of regional plans and strategies in the context of the White Paper on Local Government and NSS implementation actions”⁷⁷. Such an action will result in the publication of a prescriptive policy document which would directly impact planning governance and processes throughout Ireland.

Q3. What barriers, tools for increased planning regulation, or shifts in planning direction are encouraged or introduced by the policy?

Regarding planning regulations, key to the Update is a call for the increased “strategic role and relevance of” Regional Planning Guidelines in the creation of local policy, along with the improved coordination of infrastructural investments between different levels of government.⁷⁸ These overarching goals encompass the shift to regional and comprehensive planning that the NSS is primarily meant to achieve. While it is recognized in the NSS Update that both the regional development and infrastructure reorientation goals have been partially addressed even prior to the financial crisis via government ministers pursuing the “appropriate alignment of plans at national, regional and local levels by commenting on and on occasion requiring such alignment”⁷⁹, the plans being aligned during Irelands boom period were focused on facilitating developer-driven, suburban and “extra-urban commuter” growth.⁸⁰ As such, the NSS Update seeks to explicitly reorient infrastructure investment via the regeneration of “existing disadvantaged urban areas... and in catching up on infrastructural deficits in areas such as

⁷⁶ Ministry for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. (2010). Implementing the National Spatial Strategy: 2010 Update and Outlook. p39.

⁷⁷ Ministry for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. (2010). Implementing the National Spatial Strategy: 2010 Update and Outlook. Government of the Republic of Ireland. p47.

⁷⁸ Ibid. p6.

⁷⁹ Ibid. p14.

⁸⁰ Ibid. p14.

school provision in areas that have developed rapidly in recent years”⁸¹. This new downtown redevelopment initiative is being implemented via changes made to the *Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010* regarding “development plan core strategies”⁸², which the Update explicitly requires implementation of.

Q4. Does the policy remove any regulatory or provide incentives regarding development costs or the approval/planning process?

While the Update does not explicitly remove regulatory hurdles or provide economic incentives towards any planning initiatives, it does seek to prioritize numerous planning actions which are needed in response to the economic downturn. For example, the Update lists the “Prioritization of housing regeneration projects in key gateway locations” as an action item to be undertaken. While the means through which this goal is to be fulfilled is not made clear, a potential action would be the bureaucratic or financial prioritization of such regeneration projects, which would require both regulatory and financial incentives for such developments. Beyond such focuses on certain socio-economic priority areas, the Update is largely an exercise in reorienting and strengthening planning controls, not reducing regulatory planning powers.

Q5. Does the policy increase or decrease national government involvement in municipal planning processes or policy, or maintain the status quo?

The 2010 Update is heavily focused on increasing the national governments involvement in planning and development processes. As has been discussed, the Updates strengthening of regional and national policy strategy impacts on local planning regimens via the closer coordination of regional, national, and local planning policies means that national socio-economic policy in Ireland will now be the overarching foundation which will dictate local planning priorities. This is especially pertinent for cities such as Dublin, which the Update names as a ‘Gateway City’, and whom therefore must focus on greater co-ordination with government bodies in undertaking investment activities.⁸³ Other requirements, such as the

⁸¹ Ibid. p34.

⁸² Ibid. p48.

⁸³ Ministry for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. (2010). Implementing the National Spatial Strategy: 2010

evidence-based zoning requirement discussed previously, reaffirm the fact that this document seeks to increase national policy impacts on local planning in Ireland.

5.1.2 Analysis of Municipal Documents in Relation to the Implementing the National Spatial Strategy: 2010 Update and Outlook Document:

5.1.2.1 Dublin City Development Plan (DCDP) 2011-2017:

Q1. Was the focus area of the national-level policy addressed or a subject of this document?

Indeed, the DCDP's core purpose is to ensure it follows the "guidance, strategies, and policies"⁸⁴ set forth by higher levels of government. As such, the DCDP recognizes the NSS as the top-tier direction-setting planning document with which it must confer and, if required, come into conformity with (similar to the Provincial Policy Statement in Ontario). The figure shown below, taken from the DCDP⁸⁵, illustrates the fact that the NSS is a guiding document in the creation of municipal planning policy (including the DCDP) in Ireland.

Figure 2: Planning Policy Hierarchy in Ireland



The DCDP recognizes that the physical consolidation which the NSS calls for in the Greater Dublin area is a priority⁸⁶, and sets policy in place to support such consolidation. Furthermore, consolidation and investment in public transit is seen as key to assisting with this consolidation

Update and Outlook. Government of the Republic of Ireland. p41.

⁸⁴ Dublin City Council. (2011). Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017. Section 3.2.

⁸⁵ Dublin City Council. (2011). Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017. p303.

⁸⁶ Dublin City Council. (2011). Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017. p303

goal. Both of these broad policy reorientations; from the past sprawling and low-density development regime to the now compact and transit-friendly planning programme; are used explicitly to support and implement the NSS's goal of "creating a better quality of life for all people, a strong competitive economy and an environment of the highest quality"⁸⁷. The Plan also addresses the NSS's goal of achieving greater planning coordination between the various levels of government, by adding in the 2011 version of the Plan a policy which states they will "collaborate with adjacent authorities and the regional authority to ensure that a coordinated approach is taken to the planning of the Dublin region..."⁸⁸

Q2. Does the document incorporate the actions or recommendations found in the policy?

The DCDP does incorporate many of the actions proposed in the National Spatial Strategy. Most importantly, the DCDP introduces a comprehensive "Core Strategy" to its 2011 Plan, which is meant to ensure comprehensive, higher-level planning goals and objectives are rooted in a strategic, city-wide vision for the cities growth and development⁸⁹. The inclusion of a Core Strategy in local Development Plans was made required by the NSS. Other specific policies found with the DCDP, including policy HR4 which states the DCDP will "collaborate with adjacent authorities and the regional authority to ensure that a coordinated approach is taken to the planning of the Dublin region"⁹⁰, is explicitly noted as a policy set forth as a result of the NSS's call for collaborative and coordinated local planning throughout Ireland.⁹¹

Within the land use zoning principles set out in the DCDP, a key policy newly incorporated in the Plan states that;

"Development should be encouraged in established centres and the redevelopment of underutilized and brownfield land in these areas should be promoted with the view to consolidating and adding vitality to existing centres, and ensuring the efficient use of urban lands thereby, according with the principles set out in the National Spatial Strategy..."⁹²

⁸⁷ Ibid. p303.

⁸⁸ Dublin City Council. (2011). Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017. Section 8.4.3.

⁸⁹ Dublin City Council. (2011). Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017. Section 3.3.

⁹⁰ Dublin City Council. (2011). Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017. Section 8.4.3.

⁹¹ Dublin City Council. (2011). Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017. p303.

⁹² Dublin City Council. (2011). Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017. p188.

This policy is made a reality via the introduction of areas zoned as 'Z14', which are areas targeted for physical and social regeneration, which allow for more flexible, mixed-use developments to take place.⁹³ Indeed, without the above NSS policy encouraging development in "established centres", such a focus on rejuvenating Dublin's core areas would have potentially been superseded by the previous focus on expansion into suburban areas around the city.

Q3. Does the document provide for any increase in regulatory frameworks, if present in the national policy?

Yes. Within the 'Implementation' chapter of the DCDP, it is stated that the "development plan sets out new ways of working and new mechanisms to supplement the statutory requirements to ensure effective implementation of the plan."⁹⁴ One such mechanism is the introduction of sustainability indicators, where performance of the Plan with regards to the NSS's goal of achieving such goals as sustainable neighbourhoods and creating compact, quality, and connected cities will be measured every year in which the Plan is in effect.⁹⁵

The DCDP also increases regulatory environments with regards to urban design considerations in areas of Dublin's downtown. The strengthening of design standards in these areas is meant to support the NSS's goal of encouraging integrated, regenerated downtowns throughout Ireland. For example, the DCDP states that a renewed emphasis on quality urban design will "contribute to the vision of a compact, green city with an enduring economy and quality neighbourhoods"⁹⁶, as encouraged in the NSS. The paradigm shift of the NSS to encouraging compact development is a key catalyst in Dublin's ability to dictate urban design standards in its downtown. Indeed, the 2011 Plan has included an entirely new chapter (chapter 16) which was absent from the 2005 Plan, which contains detailed regulatory guidelines for the good urban streetscape design of Central Dublin. Such standards include a "greater emphasis on" sitting

⁹³ Ibid. Section 15.10.13.

⁹⁴ Ibid. Section 13.0.

⁹⁵ Ibid. p397-398.

⁹⁶ Ibid. Section 3.3.1.1.

and recreation design in the downtown area, along with “hard landscaping with a civic character”⁹⁷, during the development review process. Also, the design of adjoining buildings must now focus activity on the street, in order to encourage healthy and vibrant street life.⁹⁸ These actions are stated as being necessary in order to “shape and structure the inhabited world”⁹⁹ within Dublin.

Q4. Does the document dictate the deregulation of, or incentives for, development or planning approvals, if present in the national policy?

No. The plan is largely focused on increasing regulatory guidance in directing development and investment into core and/or areas in need of regeneration. While the application of more specific and defined regulations regarding targeted development have been outlined above, the Plan takes a directive-based approach to encouraging this development, rather than a market approach (i.e. they do not decrease regulations to encourage development in priority areas).

5.1.2.2 Dublin City Development Board Action Plan 2009-2012:

Q1. Was the focus area of the national-level policy addressed or a subject of this document?

While the Development Board (DCDB) Action Plan had two key discussion areas (being social inclusion, and economic development), only the economic development portion of the DCDB Plan touches on the themes seen in the NSS. Unfortunately, it is difficult to determine how much the NSS directly influenced the DCDB Plan’s discussion of economic development, as only similar discussion themes can be seen without any explicit statement that the NSS influenced the DCDB. These include the documents shared theme of facilitating and aiding economic recovery at the national and local levels.

Q2. Does the document incorporate the actions or recommendations found in the policy?

Very broadly, the DCDB again only generally mirrors some of the broader concerns that the NSS addresses, without explicitly incorporating any of the NSS’s action items. A broad theme which

⁹⁷ Ibid. Section 16.1.1.

⁹⁸ Ibid. Section 16.1.5.

⁹⁹ Ibid. Section 16.1.10.

both documents do share however is the DCDB Plan's statement that they seek to "support economic development for the Greater Dublin Area", and establish "economic sub-groups"¹⁰⁰, while also "enhancing cooperation and synergies with established local development structures through the cohesion and endorsement process"¹⁰¹ during the economic recovery process. Both of these statements very closely mirror the NSS's goal of encouraging "co-ordination arrangements" between groups¹⁰² during the ongoing recovery process.

Q3. Does the document provide for any increase in regulatory frameworks, if present in the national policy?

No. As has been shown, the DCDB Action Plan is much more a catalyst for future action to be taken in support of social and economic development in Dublin, and therefore does not explicitly create or develop any new regulations.

Q4. Does the document dictate the deregulation of, or incentives for, development or planning approvals, if present in the national policy?

No. Again, as the Action Plan is a direction setting document and thus is not focused on creating or dissolving any regulatory frameworks, it only recommends that reports which have the potential to deregulate be completed. The Action Plan does not directly speak to regulation or deregulation of planning or development processes.

5.2 Building Ireland's Smart Economy 2008

5.2.1 Assessment

Q1. What is the primary focus of the policy?

The primary focus of *Building Ireland's Smart Economy (BISE) 2008* is to redefine the priority areas for Ireland's future economic and employment development towards a "Smart Economy", where value-added enterprise and smart growth is given top priority¹⁰³. The key planning-

¹⁰⁰ Dublin City Development Board. (2009) Review 2006-2008; Action Plan 2009-2012. Dublin City Council. p35.

¹⁰¹ Dublin City Development Board. (2009) Review 2006-2008; Action Plan 2009-2012. p32.

¹⁰² Ministry for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. (2010). Implementing the National Spatial Strategy: 2010 Update and Outlook. Government of Ireland. p41.

¹⁰³ Government of Ireland. (2008). Building Ireland's Smart Economy: A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal. p18.

related areas which the BISE impacts are in the restructuring of the construction sector, and the guidance which the BISE provides in the investment of public funds in infrastructure projects in order to both support the priorities of the NSS and ensure the construction industry is no longer as reliant on residential development as it was prior to the economic collapse.

Q2. Is the policy prescriptive or advisory in nature? (i.e. does it dictate mandatory action or only provide non-mandatory recommendations?)

The BISE report is prescriptive in nature, as it sets out new, clear, and defined actions that must be taken by national and local authorities to support the three-pronged approach discussed in section 4.1.2 of this report, being financial aid for home purchasers, fiscal relief for construction industries, and regulatory guidance to ensure these fiscal programs are directed towards sustainable development practices (as are also focused upon in the NSS). Indeed, the fiscal structuring of this support is described at length in the BISE, such as €1.3 billion in social housing in 2009, €102.5 million for affordable housing and “other private housing supports”, and €581 million for school building programs¹⁰⁴, all of which are key infrastructure initiatives during Ireland’s post-crisis recovery. These financial influxes to urban development would however *require* changes to planning and development practices in areas that receive such funding, specifically in the “gateways and hub” areas of the nation (such as Dublin)¹⁰⁵. Thus, the prescriptive nature of the BISE is clear.

Q3. What barriers, tools for increased planning regulation, or shifts in planning direction are encouraged or introduced by the policy?

Yes, a key area within the BISE is to indeed increase the regulatory underpinning for both sustainable and regionally-comprehensive development practices. Two key regulatory action points have been developed in the BISE to support the sustainable implementation of national development initiatives. These are:

¹⁰⁴ Government of Ireland. (2008). Building Ireland’s Smart Economy: A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal. p95.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. p92.

1. “The land zoning for development purposes will be further modernized by mid-2009 to ensure that the location and quantum of zoned land continues to be adequate for future economic development *but is more closely aligned to national and regional planning policy* (emphasis added)”¹⁰⁶, and;

2. “Statutory Guidelines will be published early in 2009 on Sustainable Residential Development which will be given a stronger [national] legal underpinning”;¹⁰⁷

These two actions are the foundation through which the BISE intends to encourage the restructuring of the construction industry to be more diversified in tenure focus, and also ensure that housing markets do not experience the rapid development and resulting crash seen in the early months of the financial collapse.

Q4. Does the policy remove any regulatory or provide incentives regarding development costs or the approval/planning process?

Yes. Most specifically, the BISE seeks to incentivize and support the regeneration of Irelands ailing downtowns. To do this, it states the national government will “promote sustainable development in the Gateways under the National Spatial Strategy”, via national financial and regulatory support for regeneration agencies in Dublin and Limerick City.¹⁰⁸ It is important though that the BISE recognizes that public-sector agencies will be at the forefront of this revitalization effort as opposed to private developers, which is a reflection on the current development industry status throughout Ireland.

Q5. Does the policy increase or decrease national government involvement in municipal planning processes or policy, or maintain the status quo?

Both of the action items highlighted above (land zoning alignment with national policy and stronger legal underpinning for sustainable residential development) clearly illustrate an emerging focus on national/regional priorities exerting greater influence on municipal planning practices. The focus on national strategies for tackling the housing sustainability crisis which has gripped Ireland is a again, a new direction for the Government of Ireland, which is clearly

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. p98.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. p98.

¹⁰⁸ Government of Ireland. (2008). Building Ireland’s Smart Economy: A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal. p50.

attempting to redirect local planning authorities to focus on comprehensive planning for the benefit of the entire nation, rather than simply their own local/municipal jurisdiction.

5.2.2 Analysis of Municipal Documents in Relation to the Building Ireland's Smart Economy 2008 document:

5.2.2.1 Dublin City Development Plan (DCDP) 2011-2017:

Q1. Was the focus area of the national-level policy addressed or a subject of this document?

Regarding the BISE's stated principle objective to "reprioritize the business of Government and to re-focus resources in a manner that will hasten economic renewal", the DCDP directly addresses this concern when it states that its main goal is to "maximize the efficient use of land and integrating land use..."¹⁰⁹ A specific area where the DCDP is influenced by the BISE report is in regards to environmental efficiency initiatives in building and community design. For example, the BISE report states they will implement "incentives to increase investment in household and business energy efficiency"¹¹⁰, such as an investment of €32 million in the upgrading of housing form to be more efficient.¹¹¹ This commitment is paralleled in the DCDP, which states they will "require that proposals demonstrate that sustainability has been properly considered at the strategic, urban design level... so as to improve the level of environmental efficiency achievable in the detailed design of buildings."¹¹² Other similar policies reiterate a commitment to building and community sustainable goals.

Q2. Does the document incorporate the actions or recommendations found in the policy?

Overall, the DCDP does mirror many of the policy concerns which the BISE report addresses. Again, such matters as aligning the zoning allocation of land for residential development with rational, evidence-based growth targets is illustrated in the DCDP, which conducts an analysis of the amount of zoned land available for housing throughout Dublin (503.1 ha)¹¹³, while releasing

¹⁰⁹ Dublin City Council. (2011). Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017. Section 1.1.

¹¹⁰ Government of Ireland. (2008). Building Ireland's Smart Economy: A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal. p50.

¹¹¹ Ibid. p86.

¹¹² Dublin City Council. (2011). Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017. Section 4.4.9.1.

¹¹³ Dublin City Council. (2011). Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017. p306.

these zoned lands in a “sustainable manner so that the housing needs of the city are met.”¹¹⁴ The second regulatory action which the BISE calls for (being the alignment of local policies to national and regional priorities¹¹⁵), has already been shown to be present in the DCDP through the NSS policy discussion. Again, this illustrates the interconnectedness of the national goals that have emerged in planning and development policy since the onset of the Irish economic crisis.

Q3. Does the document provide for any increase in regulatory frameworks, if present in the national policy?

A priority within the *Creating Real Long Term Economic Recovery* portion of the DCDP is to facilitate a shift in employment to creative economies, such as those in academia, green/clean technologies, digital industries, etc. As such, new innovation corridors will be created radiating from the city centre to aid in leveraging “growth across the city region”.¹¹⁶ This radial development pattern holds true to many of the foundational strategies put in place both through the DCDP and the BISE, including a focus on integrating development with the city centre of Dublin, ensuring transportation and economic linkages across the city region, and facilitating urban regeneration through development in priority areas. This increased regulatory framework through which the creative economy of Dublin will be physically nurtured indeed addresses the BISE’s key priority area of “Building the Ideas Economy”, which included the action item to provide incentives for the international community to “intensify innovative, high-value activity and technological convergence which will provide quality jobs.”¹¹⁷

Q4. Does the document dictate the deregulation of, or incentives for, development or planning approvals, if present in the national policy?

The DCDP does address the BISE’s desire to improve environmental sustainability in Dublin’s built environment, through a series of planning exemptions for the construction or development of environmentally-friendly projects. For example, the DCDP reiterates the

¹¹⁴ Ibid. Section 3.2.3.1.

¹¹⁵ Government of Ireland. (2008). *Building Ireland’s Smart Economy: A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal*. p98.

¹¹⁶ Dublin City Council. (2011). *Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017*. Section 3.2.2.2.

¹¹⁷ Government of Ireland. (2008). *Building Ireland’s Smart Economy: A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal*. p13.

planning exemption for “micro-renewable energy technologies for domestic houses...”¹¹⁸. However, beyond this exemption, the DCDP does little to reduce regulatory requirements for other BISE goals, such as promoting commercial development, and in fact does the opposite in requiring retail and other similar uses to locate in downtown centres, when it states that “all options in a centre... should be assessed before other sites are considered”.¹¹⁹

5.2.2.2 Dublin City Development Board Action Plan 2009-2012:

Q1. Was the focus area of the national-level policy addressed or a subject of this document?

The DCDB Action Plan is indeed an attempt to reorient the economic foundation of Dublin, from an economy based on unchecked growth and expansion (both physical and regulatory), to a “strong, vibrant, successful, inclusive, multi-cultural, and healthy city where all can achieve their full potential.”¹²⁰ This echo’s the focus area of the Building Ireland’s Smart Economy document, which seeks to (among other things) improve employment quality and diversity¹²¹. However, the two documents focus on different areas within the overall fabric of the Irish economic/social reorganization, in that the Smart Economies paper focuses largely on material supports and regulatory changes to improve Ireland’s economy, while the DCDB is much more focused on improvements in governance processes.

Q2. Does the document incorporate the actions or recommendations found in the policy?

No. As was stated, the underlying policy discussion between these two documents was significantly different, and therefore the material recommendations which the Smart Economies proposed were largely not a subject of discussion and/or implementation in the DCDB Action Plan. While common themes could be seen between the DCDB and the Smart Economies Report, such as in the Smart Economies action plan to allocate €1.3 billion for social housing¹²² and the DCDB’s desire to build inclusive communities¹²³, the DCDB approaches this

¹¹⁸ Dublin City Council. (2011). Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017. p306.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. p340.

¹²⁰ Dublin City Development Board. (2009) Review 2006-2008; Action Plan 2009-2012. p28.

¹²¹ Government of Ireland. (2008). Building Ireland’s Smart Economy: A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal. p1.

¹²² Government of Ireland. (2008). Building Ireland’s Smart Economy: A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal. p20.

¹²³ Dublin City Development Board. (2009) Review 2006-2008; Action Plan 2009-2012. p31-32.

goal through increasing inclusionary governance processes within communities, instead of taking the DCDB's fiscal approach.

Q3. Does the document provide for any increase in regulatory frameworks, if present in the national policy?

No.

Q4. Does the document dictate the deregulation of, or incentives for, development or planning approvals, if present in the national policy.

No.

5.3 Ireland's National Housing Policy Statement 2011

5.3.1 Assessment

Q1. What is the primary focus of the policy?

The National Housing Policy Statement focuses on redirecting and reprioritizing national regulations surrounding housing tenure preference which existed prior to the financial crisis. This policy recognizes that the past propensity for Irish housing and planning policy to support single-family housing as the 'tenure of choice' was a key factor in the economic crisis now facing the country. The 2011 Policy indeed explicitly attacks this view, recognizing that it was a mistake to not provide broad-based, multi-tenure housing in order to provide housing for all socio-economic categories of citizenry. In order to correct this, the Statement seeks to balance the types of housing available and ensure that all demand is satisfied (such as demand for low-income rental properties). Indeed, in order to do this the Policy states they will now focus on "choice, fairness, equity across tenures and on delivering quality outcomes for the resources invested", by no longer fiscally encouraging housing to be a commodity or a means of economic growth.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ Dept. of Environment, Community, and Local Government (2011). Housing Policy Statement. *Government of Ireland*. p3.

Q2. Is the policy prescriptive or advisory in nature? (i.e. does it dictate mandatory action or only provide non-mandatory recommendations?)

The Housing Statement is prescriptive in nature, outlining a number of definitive actions meant to ensure the paradigm shift of housing policy is realistically completed. These include such policies as ensuring the “provision of equitable regulatory treatment for all forms of non-ownership housing”, along with the radical step of “standing down all existing affordable housing programmes to reflect current affordability conditions”, in order to ensure that the “mistakes of the past” are not repeated by allowing those same regulations to continue to exist.¹²⁵

Q3. What barriers, tools for increased planning regulation, or shifts in planning direction are encouraged or introduced by the policy?

The Housing Statement explicitly calls for planning in Ireland to focus more on mixed tenure communities, through the “provision of housing for market sale and rent as well as social renting”, while also offering “a new path to ownership” for tenants via various incremental purchasing arrangements.¹²⁶ This specific policy direction is meant to implement the broader goal to “allow for a future in which housing services are accessible by a wider cohort of people based on a less stratified model of service provision.”¹²⁷ Such a goal has wide-ranging ramifications for planning practices in Ireland, as it means the past regimen of planning support for single-family detached tenure development has been directed to end, and instead planning must ensure that new developments conform to the new national strategy of building communities that are socially, economically, and physically mixed and diverse. As such, the Statement makes reference to a review of the Planning and Development Act 2000¹²⁸, in order to ensure such regulatory directions are enacted within planning law throughout Ireland. Regarding social housing and planning initiatives, the Statement does call for the prioritization

¹²⁵ Ministry of the Environment, Community and Local Government. (2011) Housing Policy Statement. Government of Ireland. p2

¹²⁶ Ministry of the Environment, Community and Local Government. (2011) Housing Policy Statement. Government of Ireland. p2.

¹²⁷ Ibid. p1.

¹²⁸ Ibid. p2.

of the regeneration and improvement of existing social housing developments, which will necessitate planning supports for such rehabilitation projects.¹²⁹

Q4. Does the policy remove any regulatory or provide incentives regarding development costs or the approval/planning process?

No, the Statement is almost purely a direction-setting policy document which seeks to refocus planning direction within Ireland to support mixed-use, socially rejuvenated communities. It does not address development charge incentives or other fiscal/regulatory directives to support the development of these new mixed-tenure communities. Indeed, the Statement acknowledges that the private market is no longer a viable forum through which to expect development of socially healthy (i.e. mixed) projects, and thus states that “there is a greater reliance than ever on the Exchequer to support both large-scale regeneration projects and smaller estate-wide remediation projects”, which will include the reutilization of vacant lots and stock for socially beneficial development.¹³⁰ Therefore, because of this focus on government action in social development projects the Statement ignores the role that the private sector could potentially have in developing social housing stock, if such construction was incentivized.

Q5. Does the policy increase or decrease national government involvement in municipal planning processes or policy, or maintain the status quo?

The Statement greatly increases the involvement of the national government in municipal planning processes, especially when considering the construction and regulation of social housing. Two of the action items found in the Statement highlight this increased national participation in what was previously a largely municipal policy realm:

1. A redirection of state resources to support those in most need, via greater financial and regulatory support for social housing; and

¹²⁹ Ibid. p3.

¹³⁰ Ibid. p3.

2. A shift from the past public-private partnership model for developing social housing to a reliance on state funding for regeneration and improvement programs for social housing projects, as a result of current market conditions across the nation.¹³¹

These key actions, along with the previously stated desire by the national government to require mixed-tenure communities, indicate a movement towards greater government involvement in the housing market via strengthened fiscal and regulatory oversight.¹³² This is a result of the past government policy orientation towards allowing market forces to dictate and be the driving force behind the national housing market.

5.3.2 Analysis of Municipal Documents in Relation to Ireland's National Housing Policy Statement 2011:

5.3.2.1 Dublin City Development Plan (DCDP) 2011-2017:

Q1. Was the focus area of the national-level policy addressed or a subject of this document?

The DCDP does address many of the major subject areas of the Housing Statement. The Plan focuses more on social housing policy and creating integrated, mixed-tenure communities to a much greater extent than the previous Dublin Development Plan. Indeed, a major tenant of the DCDP, found within the "Providing Quality Homes in a Compact City" chapter of the Plan, states that "the City Council has introduced standards to improve the quality and livability of individual apartment units in the city"¹³³. This overarching desire by the Dublin Council to focus on improving apartment dwelling standards exemplifies the desired paradigm shift in the Housing Statement for Municipalities to reorient their policy focus from encouraging single family households to improving and supporting more affordable residences within urban areas throughout Ireland.

Q2. Does the document incorporate the actions or recommendations found in the policy?

The DCDP does address many of the actions which are presented in the Housing Policy Statement, especially with regards to social housing initiatives. For example, in terms of the

¹³¹ Ibid. p3.

¹³² Ibid. p3.

¹³³ Dublin City Council. (2011). Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017. Section 11.0.

Statements desire to create mixed-tenure communities which include social housing, a new provision within the DCDP states that “Ideally when purchasing/leasing private sector vacant units for social housing, areas with above average levels of social housing should be avoided, instead the focus should be on areas with low levels of social housing”¹³⁴. This provision ensures that the focus on dispersing and integrating social housing projects within mixed tenure communities, as is called for in the Housing Statement, is realized. Regarding zoning provisions within the DCDP, the amount of zoned land for affordable housing is indeed recognized as being in need of increase. For example, the DCDP states that while nearly 33% of housing units created from 2011-2017 will be in the “social and affordable” category, Dublin will continue to reserve 20% of zoned lands for social/affordable development. However, in response to the greater need for social housing, they will alter the ratio balance of zoned land from 10:10% social/affordable, to 15:5% social/affordable.¹³⁵

Q3. Does the document provide for any increase in regulatory frameworks, if present in the national policy?

Regarding the Housing Statements desire to provide new paths for ownership, the DCDP does call for the continued support for ownership co-operatives.¹³⁶ These co-operatives allow for individuals who have been impacted by the financial crisis to own their residence via combined investments from multiple parties, and thus ensures a broader pool of citizens a means of purchasing their home. Furthermore, the DCDP identifies a number of Strategic Development & Regeneration Areas (SDRAs). These are areas with “the potential to deliver a significant quantum of mixed-uses and create synergies to regenerate their respective areas. The plan prioritizes the renewal and regeneration of these areas by a series of guiding principles”¹³⁷, which include (but are not limited to):

1. “To create a highly sustainable, mixed-use urban district, based around high quality public transport nodes, with a strong sense of place.”

¹³⁴ Dublin City Council. (2011). Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017. p311.

¹³⁵ Ibid. p322.

¹³⁶ Ibid. p316.

¹³⁷ Ibid. Section 3.2.3.

2. “Enhance existing, and establish new and appropriate land uses that support a growing mixed-use community, and seek innovative planning responses for the key sites in the area, that respond to the environmental, social, cultural and economic issues and demands facing the area.”
3. “To provide for the integration of the new community with the established community.”
4. “To provide for a balanced mix of residential tenure.”¹³⁸

These guiding principles exemplify many of the key changes sought in the Housing Statement, and further highlight the national governments desire for cities to ensure their communities are more socially and physically integrated than in the past.

Q4. Does the document dictate the deregulation of, or incentives for, development or planning approvals if present in the national policy?

Again, deregulation is not an avenue which the DCDP explores in the implementation of the new density and mixed-use built forms which are emerging in local and national policy. The DCDP takes a very pro-governance, regulation-strengthening stance to promoting its major goals and objectives. This shows a major shift in policy development from the former focus on market-oriented laissez-faire regulations regarding the housing market, to recognition that governance and regulations enforcing sustainable, community-oriented housing markets are the new reality necessary in both Dublin and throughout Ireland.

5.3.2.2 Dublin City Development Board Action Plan 2009-2012:

Q1. Was the focus area of the national-level policy addressed or a subject of this document?

Indeed, one of the key themes within the DCDB Plan is “Social Inclusion”, a subject which is a foundation of the Housing Statement. The objective of the DCDP Plan to “Develop an information system to better capture concentrated social exclusion”¹³⁹ will aid in facilitating the Housing Statements desire to disperse social housing developments, and runs parallel to the

¹³⁸ Ibid. Section 16.3.1.

¹³⁹ Dublin City Development Board. (2009) Review 2006-2008; Action Plan 2009-2012. p31.

DCDP's desire to locate social housing in communities which do not currently have a large concentration of such housing.¹⁴⁰

Q2. Does the document incorporate the actions or recommendations found in the policy?

While the DCDB Action Plan and the Housing Statement largely focus on different avenues through which to improve the housing market and landscape in Ireland/Dublin (the DCDB largely focusing on inclusiveness in governance, and the housing statement focusing on physical and regulatory improvements to housing), the DCDB does indeed implement one of the actions from the Housing Statement. This is in the area of community integration, where the Housing Statement calls for the tackling of “issues relating to anti-social behavior across all housing tenures”¹⁴¹. From this, the DCDB Action Plan includes the objective to “progress integration of new communities”, by implementing the “10-point commitment in the Charter for Integration”¹⁴².

Q3. Does the document provide for any increase in regulatory frameworks, if present in the national policy.

As has been discussed previously, the DCDB Action Plan is largely an agenda-setting, advisory document and thus falls short on the strengthening of on-the-ground regulations. As such, it does not specifically implement any of the tangible regulations found in the Housing Statement. Instead, it builds a foundation and seeks to gain an understanding of the magnitude of social exclusion, from which the priorities found in the Housing Statement could be implemented in the future.

Q4. Does the document dictate the deregulation of, or incentives for, development or planning approvals if present in the national policy?

As above, the DCDB does not take a regulatory approach to implementing its goals and objectives.

¹⁴⁰ Dublin City Council. (2011). Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017. Section 12.4.7.

¹⁴¹ Ministry of the Environment, Community and Local Government. (2011) Housing Policy Statement. Government of Ireland. p3.

¹⁴² Dublin City Development Board. (2009) Review 2006-2008; Action Plan 2009-2012. p32.

6.0 | CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS FOR PLANNERS

6.1 Conclusions

The preceding assessment and analysis of national and municipal policy documents has clearly indicated a number of common areas in which planning policy at the different levels of government have changed as a result of the economic crisis in Ireland. Specifically, these changes could be grouped into three major areas, those being changes in planning economies, development and infrastructure priorities, and relationships between different levels of government in setting out policies related to socio-economic and physical planning.

6.1.1 Planning Economics

It is clear that the economics of planning policy within Dublin and throughout Ireland have changed as a result of the financial crisis. The fiscal realities of national and local governments have changed such that incentives and disincentives for development have been largely demonetized, and instead replaced by regulatory policies that have less of a fiscal impact on governments. For example, the removal of funding for supporting single-family homeownership (through the removal of incentives for this housing tenure, as is found in the National Housing Statement), and the replacement of this mono-tenure support for policies supporting mixed-tenure communities illustrates this shift away from fiscal intervention in the market economy of the nation. Also, the attempt to divest the national construction economy from residential dependency, to more broad-based construction industry (i.e. the stamp duty reduction policy for commercial properties as found in the BISE), while not typically viewed as a realm for planning policy, would impact planning practice as municipalities need to shift their development approvals regimens from the past focus on residential developments to commercial/industrial development. Such a shift could impact everything from land allocated to these uses in official plans, to a greater emphasis on commercial development in secondary plans and development cost charges. Indeed, this again shows the shift from a hyper-market dependence to government-induced housing market balance that was discussed in Section 5.3.1 of this report.

Perhaps most clear is the shift in planning economies to an ‘economies of scale’ approach to planning and development. As opposed to the ‘regime of sprawl’ that dominated Dublin prior to the crisis, now both national and (therefore by necessity) municipal planning policy is focusing on making better use of existing infrastructure and on clustering developments in order to create both complete communities and to reduce development and servicing costs to governments. Two excellent examples of this are the focus on intensification and infill development found in the policies reviewed in this report, and also the shift to a smart economy where the clustering of high tech industries is promoted by national policy, which therefore contributed to Dublin’s policy encouraging radiating economic/employment clusters from Dublin’s downtown¹⁴³.

Thus, overall within the realm of the ‘economics of planning’, there has been a paradigm shift from the prior belief that fiscal incentives and market-driven development should be supported to encourage what was then a booming residential sector. Now, a focus on increasing regulations and supporting targeted development has emerged in to ensure development is less driven by market economics and more driven by sustainable fiscal and physical planning environments.

6.1.2 Development & Infrastructure Priorities

Related to the preceding discussion of planning economics is the shift in development priorities for both national policy makers and (therefore) municipal planners. Most critical is the recognition by national authorities that social and affordable housing is now a priority that can no longer be ignored. As the Housing Policy Statement illustrates, the past single-family market focus was a mistake, and now planners and policy makers must address the fallout of their failures in providing new forms of tenure; including social and affordable housing; to the residents of Ireland. The national government indeed states that the national government will now be needed more than ever to provide such affordable housing due to the failure of many developers to survive the crisis. Dublin mirrors this sentiment in their increasing of lands zoned

¹⁴³ Dublin City Council. (2011). Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017. Section 3.2.2.2.

for affordable housing, and in their new policies surrounding mixed-tenure communities. Furthermore, the spatial location of priority development has taken a radical about-face in the years after the crisis, in that Greenfield development is now explicitly discouraged and instead infill development is given priority within Dublin¹⁴⁴ in order to both (as was stated previously) take advantage of existing infrastructure, and to ensure already-established communities are kept vibrant and viable. Much of Dublin's new policy focus on infill and intensification is shown as being a result of the National Spatial Strategies desire to promote "consolidation" within the Greater Dublin Area¹⁴⁵, and again illustrates the concept of planning for economies of scale regarding municipal infrastructure servicing.

The construction of infrastructure is also shown through this reports analysis to be a new development focus for policy makers at the national and municipal levels. While this does include such projects as the provision of new transportation infrastructure (i.e. inter-regional highways at the national level, and public transit infrastructure at the Municipal level, it also includes the "catching up" on of social and community infrastructure which did not grow at a parallel level to the housing boom prior to the financial crisis¹⁴⁶. Schools in particular are cited as in great need of expansion, with the *Building Irelands Smart Economy* document providing over €580 million in funding for school construction and expansion¹⁴⁷. This harkens to the DCDP's call for such things as complete communities and viable neighborhoods where people can have a better quality of life.¹⁴⁸

6.1.3 Planning Governance Relations

The key message taken from the assessment and analysis of these documents is that national government policies now have a much more important role in planning policy at the Municipal level. The financial crisis of 2008 indeed awakened policy makers at all levels of government to realize that integrated, multi-tier planning is necessary to ensure both the integrity and

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. p340.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. p303.

¹⁴⁶ Ministry for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. (2010). *Implementing the National Spatial Strategy: 2010 Update and Outlook*. Government of Ireland. p34.

¹⁴⁷ Government of Ireland. (2008). *Building Ireland's Smart Economy: A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal*. p95.

¹⁴⁸ Dublin City Council. (2011). *Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017*. p303.

sustainability of the urban landscapes through Ireland. Indeed, the days of ‘free-for-all development’ both within and between Municipalities is over, and the age of integrated, comprehensive planning has emerged from the ashes of the financial/housing crisis. All documents analyzed in this report allude to this new reality, with examples being (from the DCDP), the creation of a Core Strategy as is required by the National Spatial Strategy and the recognition that the DCDP’s core requirement is to follow the “guidance, strategies, and policies” of higher level governments¹⁴⁹. Meanwhile, the DCDB Action Plan also addresses the greater influence of national policy and priorities in its goals and objectives, such as in the discussed statement of facilitating and aiding economic recovery at the national and local levels. This type of language alludes to the now-realized interconnection of national and local priorities in all efforts to rejuvenate and regenerate urban spaces with the new economic reality facing Ireland.

The national policies and documents reviewed in this report also explicitly call for the integration of national recovery policy within municipal planning/development policy. The NSS, Housing Statement, and Smart Economies documents all share the similar goal of rejuvenating Ireland’s economies and communities, both socially and physically. Such action is only achievable at the local level, and as such, these national policies either call for or require a paradigm shift in policy by Municipal governments. From consolidating communities spatially through mixed-use, integrated neighbourhoods (as all three national policies call for), to altering the regulatory measures placed on development typologies (as the NSS and Housing Statement dictate), national governments are shown to influence the decision making and regulatory environments within which municipal planning officials must operate going into the future.

It is important to note that it is not only national government policy which is gaining a foothold in municipal planning priorities. Indeed, regional governments are often cited as being more important players in facilitating the integrated and sustainable city goals that have been

¹⁴⁹ Dublin City Council. (2011). Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017. Section 3.2.

dictated at the national level. While a review of Regional policies and regulatory frameworks was not within the scope of this report, the recognition of the importance of regional governing bodies in facilitating some of the policies discussed in this analysis only highlights the paradigm shift that municipal planners have had to undergo as a result of the financial crisis, and illustrates again the importance of limiting sprawl and ensuring urban containment priorities are in fact realized. This is because without a regional scope when deciding planning policy it would be exceedingly difficult to ensure economies and landscapes do not compete with one another, and therefore hinder, the economic and social recovery sought by all of the documents analyzed in this report.

In essence then, it could be said that the planning priorities and hierarchies in Ireland have taken on some similarities to the Ontario planning governance landscape. The Government of Ontario has over the last decade greatly strengthened regulations at the Provincial level which impact planning policy and decision making at Municipal levels. Such policies as the Provincial Policy Statement, the Greenbelt Plan, and Places to Grow all encourage both the consolidation of urban centres and the creation of complete/mixed-use communities, just as these new policies emerging in Ireland and Dublin do. There are numerous reasons for this, including the need for higher-tier governments to reign in the desire by many municipalities to 'compete' against one another for development (either by allowing sprawl, reducing their sustainability or regulatory regimes to encourage development, or their desire for increasing municipal revenue via development charges). The national crisis in Ireland has indeed created an impetus for higher-level planning objectives by recognizing that the nation must invest in and rejuvenate their urban centres in a coordinated manner if national recovery is to ever be realized.

6.2 Implications for Planners in Other Jurisdictions

This review of the impacts and implications of Irelands National Recovery policies on planning in Dublin has highlighted numerous implications for planners whom either are planning in a downturn economy, or whom wish to plan in a forward-thinking manner in order to soften the radical implications on the physical and economic landscape seen in Ireland as a result of the

crisis, in anticipation of a crisis occurring in their own jurisdiction. The following lessons for planners are in need of consideration for planners who recognize that housing and economic cycles will eventually bring a form of economic downturn or stagnation to the jurisdiction in which they plan, and whom wish to plan in a manner which may avoid many of the needed paradigm shifts seen throughout this report in Ireland and Dublin.

6.2.1 Development Patterns

It is clear that sprawling development has become the greatest victim of the crisis in Ireland and Dublin. Governments at all levels have recognized that the future of a vibrant and economically viable Dublin depends on concentrating urban centres and building in, not out, of already established urban areas. Indeed, the financial crisis impacted the United States in a similar way, where the suburbs of hard-hit States were the first victims of the housing market crash. While this is the result of a variety of factors (credit market factors, banking regulation inadequacies, along with unchecked planning/development regulations), some urban centres (such as Portland) have fared quite well due to the past focus of municipal planning officials on planning comprehensively and sustainably. Thus, one can see that planning is not simply the regulation of land use; it is instead a direct influencing factor on the economic vitality of our cities. Indeed, the economic benefit of consolidated development can be measured in the resilience of an urban area to the natural market cycles that are present in both the housing market and broader economic landscape of nations. The close ties between planning regulations and economic recovery policy shown throughout this report illustrate this to great effect.

6.2.2 Infrastructure

The crisis in Ireland has been a wake-up call to policy makers that infrastructure, including public transit, schools, and other infrastructure that makes communities more livable must be built parallel to other development, not proceeding development. Ireland is now forced to invest hundreds of millions of euros in infrastructure projects at a time when the government has drastically less resources to expend than during the construction boom, which is indeed when infrastructure should have been developed originally. Similarly, Iceland (another nation

that has experienced an economic and housing market crisis similar to Ireland's) is facing challenges in infrastructure; however, their challenge is that *too much* infrastructure was built in anticipation of development that now likely will not occur for decades. Roads, hydro and water infrastructure, along with other services now sit idle across Ireland because policy makers simply anticipated the boom that was occurring prior to their own financial crisis would continue in perpetuity, instead of recognizing the reality that economic cycles do exist and thus they must plan accordingly. Planners and policy makers in jurisdictions around the world should take notice of this, and again, ensure infrastructure is provided as development occurs, not before or after. Doing so will hedge against market fluctuation and ensure infrastructure expenses are indeed paid for by development revenue as it becomes available.

6.2.3 Social Planning

Throughout the policies analyzed in this report, it is clear that the national recovery policies assessed have influenced or required Dublin to consider social integration more seriously than prior to the crisis. Dublin is now implementing policies to ensure social and affordable housing developments are not located in urban areas that already have higher proportion of such housing, thus ensuring a mix of socio-economic groups within the previously discussed 'new' complete communities. Numerous municipal governments in Ontario have already begun to recognize this, in such social housing redevelopments as Regent Park where a mix of socio-economic groups will now cohabitate in an area east of Toronto's downtown. Indeed, Ireland has shown that communities must be planned to ensure all people can intermingle or otherwise, those areas that are exclusively higher-income will survive and areas with larger clusters of social housing will be much more sensitive to fluctuations in national economic cycles.

6.3 Final Thoughts

The conclusions of this report indicate that Lees' and Priemus' assertion that periods of economic decline will result in governments and planners becoming more active in facilitating physical and social rejuvenation was correct, as was discussed in section 3.1.1. Ireland has

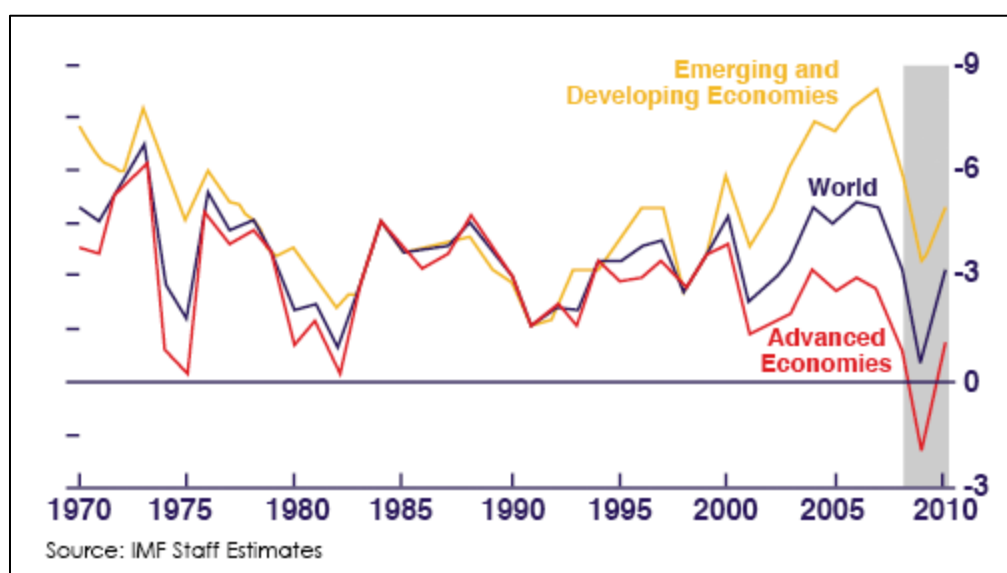
indeed taken on a more active role in ensuring development related to crisis recovery is sustainable, and have also ensured that the locally-oriented, market-driven development patterns that were key prior to the economic crisis (as detailed in section 3.2.1) have now been replaced by planning regulations which target development in areas that fit with the overall plan as set forth through the documents analyzed in this report. Indeed, the strengthening of the private market as was predicted by Engelen et al. and Lovering did not occur in Ireland, as there was a broad recognition that it was the unhindered actions of the private market which largely caused many of the issues now attempting to be rectified in these policies.

Thus, the complete package of mixed-use communities, 'multispectral' socio-economic neighborhoods, infrastructure provision parallel to development, and comprehensive higher-tier government oversight shown in the response to Irelands economic crisis needs to be recognized by planners and policy makers in countries around the world before an eventual cyclical downturn reaches their own planning jurisdictions. Indeed, no equity investor would assume that any investment providing a return will see a return in perpetuity, just as no planner or policy maker should assume that booming development will perpetually boom. As such, investors diversify their capital resources so as to hedge against fluctuations in the market. Similarly, the example of Ireland shows that policy makers at the provincial, state, regional, and local levels must diversify not only through the encouragement of mixed-use communities, but also by ensuring that that socio-economic classes mix within communities and that construction/housing markets are not mono-tenure in nature. Doing so will reduce the impacts that a downturn could have on a broader economy, and would reduce to need for significant swings back and forth between government intervention during economic downturns, and market-driven economies in times of economic growth/prosperity. While some may say that the economic crisis that has been sinc in the last five years is an isolated incident which will liely not occur again in the near, medium, or long term, such thinking is narrow-minded and excludes historical precedent that shows recessions have and do ccur from time to time. While such an economic decline has not been since since the great depression of the 1920's and 30's,

it is becoming more clear to governments and policy makers that uncertainty and instability is the new reality for societies around the world. As such, planning must adapt to this new reality.

These lessons can be applied around the world. While this report has already detailed the ongoing application of its lessons in Toronto's Regent Park, all planners working within a market-driven economy should heed the necessity to diversify in order to moderate economic boom and bust cycles. In this sense diversify means, again, the need to ensure housing markets, community infrastructure and social servicing is in place for all economic groups so that, in the event of a major economic bust the government and policy makers are not playing "catch-up" when reacting to the new economic reality. Economic cycles are a proven reality in the world today (as shown in figure 3 below¹⁵⁰), and as such, planners must ensure that long-term thinking accounts for long-term realities.

Figure 3: World GDP Growth Cycles Since 1970



Similarly, if we are not to continue blindly believing the Canadian real estate market will be in a continual state of boom, then we must plan accordingly and ensure housing market euphoria does not usurp good planning process in the eyes of our cyclical economic reality. Diversification measures, such as no longer relying on the condo boom in Toronto to fuel our construction industry and continuing the pattern of provincial-level comprehensive planning

¹⁵⁰ Financial Keys Financial Advisors (February 2009). Newsletter.
<http://www.financialkeys.com.au/newsletter28.htm>

policy implementation, will be key to ensuring our physical and economic landscape withstands any economic downturn in the future.

6.4 Future Research Opportunities

Future research could focus on comparing the impacts of national economic restructuring policy on municipal planning practice between Ireland and other national jurisdictions. For example, the European economic crisis which is still ongoing in countries such as Greece, Italy, Spain, and Portugal will undoubtedly impact municipal planning realities within their respective nations. Extreme economic restructuring policy, and shifts in the social fabric of these countries means new challenges and priorities for planning. Even Britain, which has been impacted to a lesser extent by the economic uncertainty in Europe has begun to rethink planning and its relation with the broader economic market. This was shown on September 6th, 2012 when the British Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister announced measures to get planning officers “off people’s backs” by relaxing regulations to allow housing extensions of up to 8 metres to proceed without approvals, while also relaxing provisions requiring affordable housing construction as a part of new developments¹⁵¹. These examples show there are many other opportunities to study how macro-economic changes impact planning regimens around the world, and as such, future research should compare such impacts across national boundaries to aid planning to become more in touch with, and thus better able to respond to, new and emerging global economic crises.

¹⁵¹ BBC News. (Sept 6th, 2012). Planning Rules on Extensions to be Relaxed ‘to Boost Economy’. URL: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-19496204>

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