Death by Nostalgia

Are we trying to reach the future through the past?

Context

Global
• Loss of Agricultural Role
• Urbanisation of Society

Local [Ireland]
• Intrinsic Differences of Opportunity
• Late, Slow Urbanisation
Consider the Facts
Many Rural Irelands

Proportion of farmers in the workforce is down 85% in last 50 years
75% of workforce is over 50.

Agriculture’s share of the workforce [4.6%] and of the economy is now very small

12% of all farms produce 60% of output
Less than 30% of the total farmed land area used

Rural Population declines in response to declining demand for Agricultural Labour
Consider the Facts

Ireland is Urbanising

Only country in Europe that has less people now than it did in the eighteenth century.

42% living in rural areas compared to the EU average of 27%

1916 33% Urban
66% Rural

2016 63% Urban: 37% Rural

Challenge
How to ‘cherish all children equally’ – when they are not equally endowed?

Consider the Facts
Intrinsic Differences drive Wealth

Environmentally Constrained
Ecological Designation
Concentrated Deprivation
Concentrated Wealth
Changing Main Street

- New Online Retail Model
  - Oxford St, London
  - O’Connell St, Dublin
  - George’s St, Dun Laoghaire
  - Main St, Anywhere
- ‘Traditional’ Main Street is relatively recent
- Irish Towns are relatively recent

Ireland: 60% shop online; Growing at 8% pa [5th highest in world] Average annual spend €1,000 €3bn overseas

Consider the Facts
Global Retreat of Retail

Rural Settlements are Changing

- Unsuitable Fabric and Layout
- Inflexible and Under-capitalised ownership
- Economic severance from Hinterland
- Burdened by External Values [Heritage, Tradition]
- Lack of Comparative Advantages [Cost, Convenience, Quality]
- Social Apartheid
- Unrealistic Expectations & Entitlement
Adverse Drivers

External Adverse Drivers - Society

Values
- Abstraction, idealism and precaution - *not action*
- Protection, preservation and restriction - *not use*

Economics
Agricultural change and modernisation

Internal Adverse Drivers - Residents

Values
- Nostalgia, blaming and denial - *not neglect*
- Opinions, expectations, entitlements - *not evidence*

Economic
Property Ownership

Solutions - General

• Purposeful Planning
  *What is each place for?*

• Select Spatial & Sectoral Specialism

• Admit, Embrace and Anticipate Change

• Avoid Blame

• Control Nostalgia
Solution Strategies

Accept Reality
Use it or lose it
Choose to change
Positive Planning

Solutions - Specific

Objectives
• Settlements-to-settle-in
• Rural transport Network is key
• Assigned Hinterland ‘New Townlands’

Actions
• Accept the Inevitable
• Incentivise Change
• Address Market Failure
Solutions – *Settlements-to-settle-in*

- Active conversion from Commercial to Residential Centres
- Adopt Measurable Expectations & Values
- Identify Specialisation and Concentration
- Pursue Quality-of-Life Targets

**Solutions – *Settlements-to-settle-in 1***

**Pursue Quality-of-Life Targets**
- Convenience [Connectivity]
- Affordability
- Expression [Culture & Leisure]
- Amenity [social, natural,

**Active Conversion from Commercial to Residential Centres**
- Rezoning and Exemptions
- Re-orientation away from Employment
- Re-define Success
- Invest
  - Affordability
  - Mobility
  - Connectivity
  - Facilities [Health, Childcare, Education, Age, Leisure]
Solutions – *Settlements-to-settle-in 2*

**Adopt Measurable Expectations & Values**
- Affordability
- Connectivity
- Availability
- Amenities

**Identify Specialisation and Concentration** [non-commercial]
- Aging
- Health
- Tourism
- Culture & Leisure
- Activity

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Solutions – *Rural Transport*

- Assigned Hinterlands
- Multi-modal Transport
- Transport blended with
  - Social Services
  - Quality of Life
  - Amenities
Solutions – *Assigned Hinterlands*

- Integrated Rural/Urban Policies & Plans
- Integrated Services and Specialisations
- Realistic Change Management Planning

Solutions - *Address Market Failure*

- Stagnant Ownership
- Scale change
- Investment in
  - New Residential Loop Roads
  - Sites
  - Infrastructure
  - Amenities
  - Mobility
Solutions – *Incentives for Change*

- Fiscal Incentives for Property Consolidation [Like Farmer Retirement]
- Vision-building around allocation of specialisations
- Awareness-raising
- Strategic and Purposeful Connectivity Investment

**Conclusion**

- Examining Emotions is the first step towards a lasting plan
- Accepting Realities is a necessity for progress
- Purposeful Planning must replace Development Management
- Every place can be the best at something
- Heritage must save the town first and the buildings second
- Residential Conversion must be actively pursued
- Rural and Urban must be planned as one
- Transportation is Key