



# Historic Dublin Market Assessment & Implementation Plan



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Draft for Public Comment

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## Introduction

Camoin Associates was retained by the City of Dublin to conduct a market assessment of Historic Dublin with the aim of identifying potential business opportunities and actions that the City might take to foster a healthy business climate in the District. As stated in the draft Historic Dublin Revitalization Plan, "One of the great challenges for Historic Dublin's future success is preserving the District's very essence and character while creating a successful business climate." While the draft Revitalization Plan addresses numerous issues facing the District, the City hired Camoin Associates to specifically outline the priority steps that should be taken to sustain a healthy business environment going forward.

To begin to address these questions, Camoin Associates conducted an analysis of demographic trends, retail spending and consumer behavior for three tiered trade areas defined specifically for Historic Dublin, and studied real estate market trends for residential and commercial property in Dublin and the Columbus area. To supplement the data analysis, Camoin Associates interviewed a number of local business and property owners, as well as developers and commercial real estate brokers. Camoin Associates also interviewed Dublin City Council members to identify policy considerations and determine an appropriate direction for the District. Lastly, Camoin Associates reviewed the draft Revitalization Plan and other relevant documents to gain an understanding of previous planning efforts related to Historic Dublin. All data analysis reports and a summary of interviews are found in the appendices to this document.

One of the things Camoin Associates found after conducting its initial research is that strong and positive market forces exist in the Dublin area to support a wide variety of development and redevelopment options in Historic Dublin. These options include high-density housing like condos, apartments and town homes; entertainment-focused businesses such as restaurants, other food and beverage establishments and boutique retail shops; and even a more traditional downtown mix of uses including civic uses, residential units and a mix of retail.

While market forces would support significant future growth in Historic Dublin, there are a number of other physical factors that have acted as constraints on its development potential. As stated in the draft Revitalization Plan, the topography and natural features of Historic Dublin, the limited availability of land, and the fact that the District is bisected by a major state route are prominent characteristics that, among other things, have contributed to the difficulty in achieving the critical mass of consumers and businesses necessary to sustain a vibrant Historic Dublin business district. Despite these constraints, the District has experienced tremendous success in recent years, as both the private sector and the City have invested significant resources in infill redevelopment projects and other improvements.

In order to build on this recent success and ensure that businesses in Historic Dublin enjoy a stable business climate well into the future, Camoin Associates feels the City should adopt a concise vision statement to focus future efforts and investment in Historic Dublin; agree on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to the ability to realize the desired vision (SWOT analysis); and adopt a detailed action plan that focuses on the achievement of realistic short- and long-term goals.

The draft vision statement and corresponding draft SWOT analysis are below, followed by the detailed draft action plan. The draft action plan is also summarized in table format in Appendix I.



## Draft Vision Statement

*Historic Dublin is a quaint village center distinctive in character and scale from its suburban surroundings. It is primarily an upscale entertainment district, with high-quality restaurants, unique specialty retail shops and a steady series of interesting and fun events year-round adding to its charm. The District is full of activity morning, noon and evening as residents, office workers and visitors walk around and enjoy all that Historic Dublin has to offer.*

### Supporting Statements

The following statements are intended to expand the vision statement to further describe what Historic Dublin should look like in the next 10 to 20 years.

- Historic Dublin is home to a balanced mix of commercial and residential uses, including a variety of restaurants; unique and locally owned small specialty retail shops and personal and professional services businesses; a mix of high-end, high-density housing where empty nesters, retirees and young professionals live; and a variety of small office users.
- Historic Dublin is comprised of a mix of well-preserved and maintained historic buildings, as well as new but compatible, two and three story buildings that have replaced non-historic structures.
- The District's health and vitality are supported by a renewed partnership between business and property owners and the City, which has been solidified by a public-private entity that provides a regular, formal process and forum for discussion of issues and coordination of events, marketing, maintenance and other activities.



## Draft SWOT Analysis

The table below organizes factors related to Historic Dublin's ability to achieve the draft vision into four categories: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Strengths are internal characteristics that the community can build on to achieve the desired vision. Weaknesses are internal issues that may make it difficult to achieve the vision, but are factors that the community can influence. Opportunities are things that the community can possibly take advantage of to achieve the vision. Threats are things the community should guard against.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Historic village character that is distinct from suburban surroundings</li> <li>▪ A variety of historic buildings</li> <li>▪ High quality restaurants that attract people from long distances</li> <li>▪ Interesting boutique retail shops with goods not offered elsewhere</li> <li>▪ Unique office spaces</li> <li>▪ Relative affluence and growth of the Dublin area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of critical mass of consumers to provide steady customer base for retail</li> <li>▪ Limitations of topography – slopes, river, ravine, etc.</li> <li>▪ Limited property available for development or redevelopment</li> <li>▪ Pedestrian safety</li> <li>▪ Volume of traffic on Bridge Street creates both a physical and psychological barrier that splits the District in two</li> <li>▪ Perceived parking limitations</li> <li>▪ Lack of coordination between hours of operation of restaurants and retail shops</li> <li>▪ Lack of regular events and coordinated marketing</li> <li>▪ Lack of entertainment options besides restaurants</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ School property offers possibility to increase development area of Historic District</li> <li>▪ Strong market for downsized empty nester housing in the region</li> <li>▪ Significant demand among local consumers for entertainment and retail options</li> <li>▪ Recent successes in Historic Dublin provide foundation for future efforts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inability to make progress in resolving various issues related to development/ redevelopment (school property, parking, pedestrian friendliness)</li> <li>▪ Lack of a concise vision for the District</li> <li>▪ State restrictions could pose difficulties for new restaurants to obtain necessary liquor permits</li> </ul>

## Draft Implementation Plan

### 1.0 Increase residential density

#### *1.1 Modify zoning*

As efforts continue to revise the zoning code for Historic Dublin, priority should be given to allowing increased residential density (condos, apartments, town homes and mixed use commercial/residential) that will support commercial activity. This effort will also address the growing need for senior and retirement housing for aging residents and affordable housing for young professionals. Zoning approvals should also be geared to providing a simplified, predictable process more appropriate to infill development. See Action #6.

Lead Agency: Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council

Timeframe: 6 months



**2.0 Strengthen organizational capacity to support an improved business climate**

*2.1 Establish a public-private partnership*

Establish a public-private partnership entity possibly known as the Historic Dublin Partnership, which would include the Chamber of Commerce, the Historic Dublin Business Association (HDBA), the City and other appropriate parties. The Partnership’s board would include representatives from each entity. The goal of the organization would be to provide a regular forum for enhanced communication and a mechanism to collaborate on initiatives, such as event coordination and marketing. The Partnership should convene monthly meetings to discuss issues of concerns, brainstorm solutions, make plans and ensure that plans are being carried out.

Lead Agency: City Council, Chamber of Commerce and HDBA  
 Timeframe: 9 months



*2.2 Create staff position for Historic Dublin*

Hire a Historic Dublin Coordinator and provide them with a budget for marketing, event coordination and business development and retention activities. This person would closely coordinate between the City and Historic Dublin Partnership. It would be important to obtain office space for this person in Historic Dublin to improve accessibility to local business owners. This person should have significant experience working with small businesses, building consensus, coordinating events and developing strategic marketing campaigns. Ideal candidates would include former directors of Business Improvement Districts, Main Street Programs or Small Business Development Centers.

Lead Agency: City Council and/or City Manager’s Office  
 Timeframe: 9 months

*2.3 Explore a Business Improvement District*

Eventually explore establishing a Business Improvement District (BID) as the need for staff and budget grow. In the long-term, it may be beneficial for the businesses in Historic Dublin to form a BID, which is a type of special assessment district, in order to finance the Partnership’s activities. As the Partnership’s efforts bear fruit and the District becomes even more of a destination with a full schedule of events, the need for staff capacity may grow to more than one person and the desire for additional maintenance and other beautification efforts may increase to a level that may not be appropriate for the City to fund on its own. A BID would provide additional resources and may be attractive to business owners after the Partnership is established and has shown success in contributing to a stronger business climate in Historic Dublin.

Lead Agency: Historic Dublin Partnership  
 Timeframe: 2-3 years

### 3.0 Increase activities in Historic Dublin that draw in consumers

#### *3.1 Develop a Historic Dublin schedule of events*

One way to increase the visibility of Historic Dublin among consumers is to coordinate a regular series of events. The Historic Dublin Coordinator should work with the Partnership board and local business leaders and officials to develop a list of events that currently take place in Dublin and identify gaps that could be filled by appropriately scaled events in the Historic District. A goal of holding at least two events each month in Historic Dublin, especially during the warmer months, would be appropriate.

Lead Agency: Historic Dublin Coordinator  
Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing



#### *3.2 Develop a marketing campaign*

The Historic Dublin Coordinator should develop a strategic marketing campaign to promote the schedule of events and advertise Historic Dublin offerings to trade area target markets. The Demographic Trends report completed as part of the market assessment includes a summary of the various market segments in the Dublin area that could serve as the basis for the strategic marketing campaign by informing the Historic Dublin Coordinator of the types of activities and products that would appeal to each of the segments.

Lead Agency: Historic Dublin Coordinator  
Timeframe: Launch campaign within 1 year; ongoing after that



#### *3.3 Incorporate businesses into events*

Building on the participation of many of Historic Dublin's fine dining establishments in Slainte Thursday, the Historic Dublin Coordinator should reach out to local businesses as events are planned in the District to discuss how they could participate, either by selling their product or service during the event, helping to promote the event by marketing it to their customers, or extending their store hours during the event so that event attendees can be steered to their place of business.

Lead Agency: Historic Dublin Coordinator  
Timeframe: Ongoing

## 4.0 Support existing Historic Dublin businesses

### *4.1 Establish a business retention program*

The purpose of a business retention program is to develop partnerships with existing business owners to help them address problems and capitalize on market opportunities. Through regular communication with existing businesses, local officials can identify issues that may become problematic, and develop programs, initiatives and/or policies that work toward the long-term retention of businesses. Historic Dublin's business retention program should include periodic site visits by the Historic Dublin Coordinator and a regular annual business survey. This program should be coordinated with the business retention efforts of Economic Development.

Lead Agency: Historic Dublin Coordinator and Economic Development for Dublin  
Timeframe: 1 year

### *4.2 Establish a microenterprise program*

Establish a microenterprise program that provides training, technical assistance and possibly a revolving loan fund for working capital for business expenses such as, advertising, wages, rent, and other operational costs. The Historic Dublin Coordinator could team up with City Economic Development Department staff to identify existing resources to incorporate into the program, such as providing scholarships for business owners to attend existing small business training courses at local colleges and identifying business consultants that the City could hire on retainer to provide tailored one-on-one technical assistance to business owners.

Lead Agency: Historic Dublin Coordinator, Economic Development for Dublin, City Manager's Office  
Timeframe: 2 years



## 5.0 Attract desired business types

### *5.1 Develop a list of preferred business types*

Based on the findings of the Retail Market Analysis conducted as part of the market assessment, the Partnership should develop a list of the types of businesses that should be attracted to Historic Dublin in the future to achieve the desired vision and complement the businesses that are already there. This may include additional restaurants and specialty retail shops, as well as new types of businesses that are listed on the first page of the Retail Market Analysis (included in the appendices). This list should be updated as the business mix in Historic Dublin changes over time. To ensure that this happens, the Partnership should build the updating of this list into their annual agenda.

Lead Agency: Historic Dublin Partnership & Historic Dublin Coordinator  
Timeframe: Initial list should be developed within 1 year; updates should be ongoing

### *5.2 Develop a list of target business owners*

Using the list of preferred business types, the Partnership should go a step further and identify existing businesses of those types in the greater Columbus area or beyond and should conduct research to find the owner's name and contact information, which should be compiled in a database for use in future recruitment efforts. This list should be updated at least twice each year as needs change and new businesses are identified.

Lead Agency: Historic Dublin Partnership & Historic Dublin Coordinator  
Timeframe: Initial list should be developed within 1 year; updates should be ongoing

### *5.3 Develop a marketing packet*

Develop and send a marketing packet to preferred businesses to educate them about Historic Dublin and the local market demographics. The marketing packet should preferably be no longer than 5-7 pages and should include an introductory letter from the Partnership welcoming them to come tour Historic Dublin, and contain summary information about Historic Dublin's trade area(s) with charts, graphs and

bullet points. The packet should summarize demographic characteristics, market segments and other factors that are unique to Historic Dublin. Camoin Associates' demographic and retail market analyses in the appendices provide a good deal of the information that should be included in the marketing packet.

Lead Agency: Historic Dublin Coordinator  
Timeframe: 1.5 years

### *5.4 Develop a database of properties and lease terms*

As part of the annual business retention survey in #4.1, ask local business owners if they own or lease their property, and if they lease, when their lease is up for renewal and what their plans might be at that point. Use this information to make a spreadsheet that should be referenced at least twice annually by the Historic Dublin Coordinator to identify space that may become available.

Lead Agency: Historic Dublin Coordinator  
Timeframe: 1 year; updates ongoing

### *5.5 Market available properties*

As lease terms are up for renewal and properties become available, approach the property owner well in advance and discuss what type of business would be a good fit. Help the property owner market their space by sending the marketing packet on Historic Dublin and information on the property to the preferred businesses and put them in contact with the property owner. Of course, the ultimate decision regarding a new lease lies with the property owner, but consistent and thoughtful communication between the Partnership and a property owner before that decision must be made could go a long way toward getting desired business types into available space.

In addition, if redevelopment of the particular property would be appropriate to explore with the property owner, an impending decision point on a lease renewal may be the right opening for that conversation.

Lead Agency: Historic Dublin Coordinator  
Timeframe: Ongoing

## 6.0 Continue to streamline Historic Dublin's development approval process

Recognizing that significant efforts have already been made to make the regulatory steps in the development process more efficient, such as streamlining the Architectural Review Board process and updating the Historic Dublin Design Guidelines, as noted in the draft Revitalization Plan, there are still additional steps the City could take to streamline its approval process for Historic Dublin.

proposals for properties not on the list should not be subject to review other than to ensure that they meet the objective criteria developed as part of #6.1.

Lead Agency: Architectural Review Board and City Council

Timeframe: 1 year

### *6.1 Create objective, written criteria for approval of projects*

While the Historic Dublin Design Guidelines are helpful and provide insight into the preferred standards for renovation and new construction, there is still a great deal of subjectivity and uncertainty involved in the project approval process. The City should put into writing a detailed set of criteria, specific only to the District, on the types and aesthetics of development desired. If projects meet these objective criteria, they should be granted approval or subject to limited additional review.

Lead Agency: Planning and Zoning Commission, Architectural Review Board, and City Council  
Timeframe: 1 year

### *6.2 Establish separate review process for Historic Dublin*

Building on #6.1 above, the City should consider establishing a completely separate review process for Historic Dublin that would allow for projects that meet the objective criteria defined to be approved through an expedited process.

Lead Agency: Planning and Zoning Commission, Architectural Review Board, and City Council  
Timeframe: 1 year

### *6.3 Allow for redevelopment of non-historic or non-contributing structures*

The Architectural Review Board and City Council should agree upon a list of historic properties in the District that should be preserved. Redevelopment



## 7.0 Make pedestrians feel safer

As noted in the review of the draft Historic Dublin Revitalization Plan below, while all of the recommendations in the draft Revitalization Plan are appropriate for vastly improving pedestrian access, many of them would entail very dramatic changes to the heavily traveled SR 161, making them difficult to implement in the short-term. The following recommendations reiterate several from the draft Revitalization plan and are those that Camoin Associates feels could be implemented relatively easily and would have a positive effect on pedestrian access and circulation. The recommendations are listed here in priority order, according to the anticipated ease of implementation.



*7.5 Use brick or other appropriate material to visually and textually separate pedestrian crosswalks at major intersections*

*7.6 Add a crosswalk on Bridge Street between Le Chateleine and Jason's*

Lead Agency: City Council, City Manager's Office, Planning, and Engineering  
 Timeframe: 7.1 and 7.2 should be pursued immediately, with the goal of accomplishing all actions listed here within 3 years



*7.1 Place on-street pedestrian crossing signs in all crosswalks on Bridge and High Streets*

*7.2 Move stop bars at intersections further back*

*7.3 Consider the addition of speed radar systems at the east and west entrances to the District on SR 161 to help slow traffic*

*7.4 Add pedestrian pathways to connect rear alleys and parking areas to public sidewalks*

## **8.0 Determine availability of School District property for redevelopment**

### *8.1 Review feasibility of a complete land swap with the School District*

Given the limited availability of land for redevelopment in Historic Dublin, the City should continue to explore possibilities for a land swap with the School Board. Regardless of the outcome of this exploration, the insights gained will further contribute to the City's ability to prioritize its efforts in the Historic District and make the best possible decisions about allocating financial resources there.

Lead Agency: City Council and School District  
Timeframe: 1 year

### *8.2 Explore possible purchase of SR 161 frontage from School District*

Barring a complete land swap, the City should also explore the possibility of purchasing the School District's SR 161 frontage (between High School Drive and Franklin Street) to expand the developable area of the District, reinforce the streetscape and establish a "gateway entrance" to the west. Again, determining the likelihood of this potential swap, regardless of the outcome, will help the City focus its efforts and resources going forward.

Lead Agency: City Council and School District  
Timeframe: 1 year

## 9.0 Continue to ensure adequate parking

### *9.1 Ensure adequate parking during peak times*

Continue to work with property owners to ensure that adequate parking is available during peak times and also continue to enhance wayfinding for available parking. The new Historic Dublin Partnership can provide a forum through which this issue can be addressed continuously to encourage sharing of existing parking.

Lead Agency: Historic Dublin Partnership  
Timeframe: Ongoing

### *9.2 Explore long-term parking solutions*

Through new partnership entity, keep the dialogue on parking open to explore issues and possible solutions and to implement solutions as needed.

Lead Agency: Historic Dublin Partnership  
Timeframe: Ongoing



## Review of Draft Historic Dublin Revitalization Plan

As part of our scope of work, Camoin Associates reviewed the “Issues and Recommendations” section of the draft Historic Dublin Revitalization Plan. The purpose of this review was to suggest modifications to the Revitalization Plan based on the relevant findings of the Historic Dublin market assessment, as well as input from City Council. In order to maintain consistency, the following changes to the draft Revitalization Plan are suggested:

### **Public & Private Parking**

Parking is clearly a growing concern for City officials and business owners. As the district develops, the need to resolve this problem will become more imperative, particularly as additional mixed and residential uses are encouraged in the district. However, solutions that include the development of a new multi-tier public parking facility do not appear to be warranted at this time given the associated costs. Instead, the City should continue to monitor parking needs closely and revisit more costly solutions as needs arise.

### **Access and Circulation**

Improving walkability is key to creating a unified business district in Historic Dublin. The draft Revitalization Plan includes many recommendations to achieve this. Some of the recommendations entail very dramatic changes to SR 161 that may be difficult to achieve in the short-run. Land Use and Long Range Planning and Engineering should consider presenting recommendations in priority order, with those that are easiest to achieve given highest priority. Some minor modifications made within a year could have significant positive effects and could help prioritize future efforts at improving pedestrian access. Camoin Associates has attempted to highlight those actions it feels are most likely to be implemented in the short-term in section #7 of our recommendations.

### **Economic Viability**

Historic Dublin experiences a number of barriers to expanded economic vitality, the most prevalent of which includes:

- Limited land available for development
- Parking limitations
- Current low commercial and residential density

These conditions will make the future location and expansion of civic uses (i.e. public library expansion, City Hall) and large scale commercial and residential development difficult and costly. Furthermore, it is unclear if the school district will be likely to move to a new location outside of Historic Dublin, which would make available significant property for residential/commercial/civic redevelopment. Barring this, large-scale redevelopment is not likely to occur in the immediate future.

While the City has been proactive in guiding future adaptive reuse of the 1919 Building as a civic use and redeveloping the surrounding property should an opportunity arise, recent private investment combined with the limitations noted above, suggest that expanded civic uses will not be critical to the district's success. As a result, the City Council may want to reconsider initiatives that call for the short term location and/or expansion of additional civic uses in Historic Dublin, particularly if the school property is not available for redevelopment. Instead, continued support for private investment by allowing for increased residential and commercial density will contribute the most to the economic viability of the District, and is acceptable to City stakeholders.

**Appendix I**  
**Draft Implementation Plan Matrix**

HISTORIC DUBLIN DRAFT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN MATRIX

	Goal / Action	Timeframe	Lead Agency	Page #
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Increase residential density.</b>			
1.1	Modify zoning to allow for increased residential density.	6 months	Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council	4
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Strengthen organizational capacity to support an improved business climate.</b>			
2.1	Establish a public-private entity, possibly known as the Historic Dublin Partnership.	9 months	City Council, Chamber, HDBA	5
2.2	Create a staff position focused only on Historic Dublin - the "Historic Dublin Coordinator."	9 months	City Council and/or City Manager's Office	5
2.3	Explore establishing a Business Improvement District.	2-3 years	Historic Dublin Partnership	5
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Increase activities in Historic Dublin that draw in consumers.</b>			
3.1	Develop a Historic Dublin schedule of events.	Immediate and Ongoing	Historic Dublin Coordinator	6
3.2	Develop a strategic marketing campaign.	Launch within 1 year	Historic Dublin Coordinator	6
3.3	Incorporate businesses into events.	Ongoing	Historic Dublin Coordinator	6
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Support existing Historic Dublin businesses.</b>			
4.1	Establish a business retention program.	1 year	Historic Dublin Coordinator & Economic Development for Dublin	7
4.2	Establish a microenterprise program.	2 years	Historic Dublin Coordinator, Economic Development for Dublin, City Manager's Office	7

HISTORIC DUBLIN DRAFT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN MATRIX

	Goal / Action	Timeframe	Lead Agency	Page #
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Attract desired business types.</b>			
5.1	Develop a list of preferred business types.	1 year; update on ongoing basis	Historic Dublin Partnership & Historic Dublin Coordinator	8
5.2	Develop a list of target business owners	1 year; update on ongoing basis	Historic Dublin Partnership & Historic Dublin Coordinator	8
5.3	Develop a marketing packet.	1.5 years	Historic Dublin Coordinator	8
5.4	Develop a database of properties and lease terms.	1 year; update on ongoing basis	Historic Dublin Coordinator	8
5.5	Market available properties to preferred business owners.	Ongoing	Historic Dublin Coordinator	8
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Continue to streamline Historic Dublin's development approval process.</b>			
6.1	Create objective, written criteria for approval of projects.	1 year	Planning and Zoning Commission, Architectural Review Board and City Council	9
6.2	Establish a separate review process for Historic Dublin.	1 year	Planning and Zoning Commission, Architectural Review Board and City Council	9
6.3	All for redevelopment of non-historic or non-contributing structures.	1 year	Architectural Review Board and City Council	9

HISTORIC DUBLIN DRAFT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN MATRIX

	Goal / Action	Timeframe	Lead Agency	Page #
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Make pedestrians feel safer.</b>			
7.1	Place on-street pedestrian crossing signs in all crosswalks on Bridge and High Streets	Immediate	City Council, City Manager's Office, Planning, Engineering	10
7.2	Move stop bars at intersections further back.	Immediate		10
7.3	Consider the addition of speed radar systems at east and west entrances to the District on SR 161 to help slow traffic.	3 years		10
7.4	Add pedestrian pathways to connect rear alleys and parking areas to public sidewalks.	3 years		10
7.5	Use brick or other appropriate material to visually and textually separate pedestrian crosswalks at major intersections.	3 years		10
7.6	Add a crosswalk on Bridge Street between Le Chateleine and Jason's.	3 years		10
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Determine availability of School District Property for redevelopment.</b>			
8.1	Review feasibility of a complete land swap with the School District.	1 year	City Council and School District	11
8.2	Explore possible purchase of SR 161 frontage from School District.	1 year	City Council and School District	11
<b>9.0</b>	<b>Continue to ensure adequate parking</b>			
9.1	Work with property owners to ensure adequate parking is available during peak times.	Ongoing	Historic Dublin Partnership	12
9.2	Explore long-term parking solutions	Ongoing	Historic Dublin Partnership	12