



Vision & Validate

Looking at the future of transport planning





Vision and Validate

In transport planning, 'Vision and Validate' is about putting people first through designing places that are healthy, socially inclusive, and economically vibrant. It makes sustainable modes of transport an easier choice.

It represents a move away from the traditional transport planning approach in which traffic growth and an increase in private car journeys are assumed. Instead, it focuses on an aspirational future and the journey in getting there.

Stantec's teams have been advocates of the Vision and Validate approach to development planning for more than a decade.

With offices across the UK and Ireland, Stantec is well placed to support land development schemes as this approach becomes increasingly important.

In this document, we explore the main facets of Vision and Validate, the associated terminology, and the rationale behind this approach.

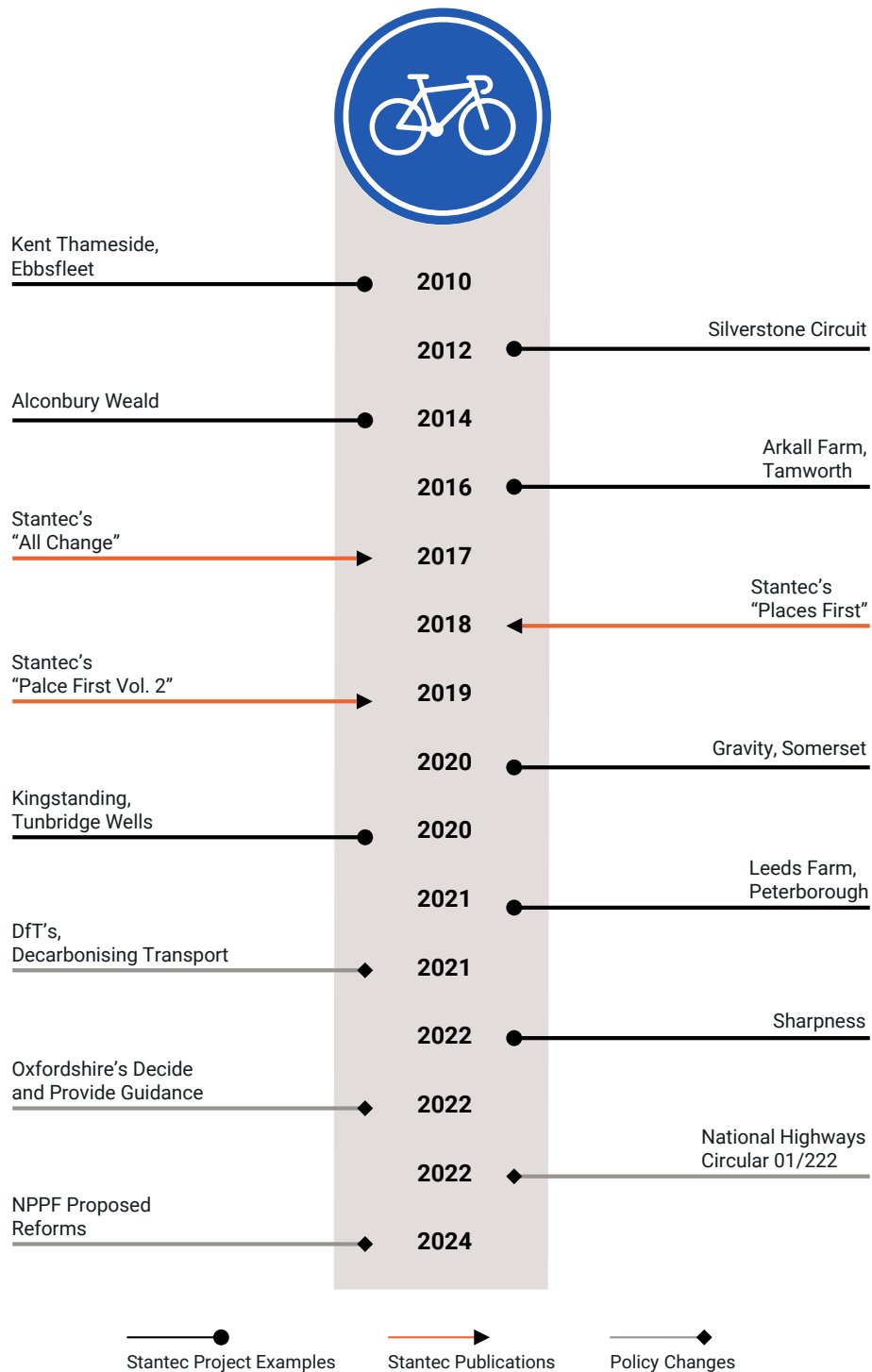
*Vision:
an idea or a
picture in your
imagination*





Stantec's experience in Vision and Validate

Stantec has been involved with advocating principles of Vision and Validate for some time, staying ahead of changing policies.





Understanding the terminology

Predict and Provide: Predicting future traffic levels based on previous travel patterns and planning highway capacity to accommodate this. The traditional approach we're moving away from.

Vision and Validate: Identifying a vision for transport movements, and proving this through validation. The best practice approach.

Scenario Testing: Testing scenarios of travel patterns to establish a realistic vision and potential outcomes. This can be considered as the first and preliminary stage of validation.

Monitor and Manage: A mechanism for the primary validation aspect, observing travel patterns over time (monitoring), and implementing required measures at the appropriate time (managing).

Decide and Provide: This is considered to be the same as Vision and Validate with the same principles applied, but excluding the validation aspect.

Then

Predict & Provide

Now

Vision & Validate

Scenario testing

Monitor & Manage



What is Vision-Led planning?

A vision led approach is about defining:

What the outcomes are you want to achieve, e.g. healthier places, increased localised economic activity, etc.

What land-uses need to be promoted or delivered to support these outcomes.

Sustainable transport schemes to help create that vision.

What behavioural changes are needed to instigate this change.

Who defines the Vision?

A credible vision must have input from:

Local residents and the workforce.

The future generation of workers and residents.

Local authorities - to ensure the vision matches the area and can leverage wider opportunities.

Land developers.

When is the Vision defined?

The vision must be identified at the local plan making Stage to maximise opportunities for substantial design changes.

This should include adaptations to Infrastructure Delivery Programmes to focus on sustainable modes of transport, and not highway capacity improvements.

Early public consultation should be undertaken with a broad demographic—to capture the vision.

This should continue up to submission of an application.



Bring communities with you

Whilst transport planners, developers, and authorities may have 'visions' we believe will be successful, for these 'visions' to be truly realised, they will require the buy-in from communities in the long-run.

Earlier, better community involvement is required—encapsulating different groups of society. This isn't simply a question of—do you want to drive a car in five years? Will you catch the bus if one was available every 15 minutes? But a more nuanced approach, to find out the outcomes that are important to people. Health? Outdoor space? Climate change and the impact on future generations?

Our work on Bridging the Gap identified an assessment process for how ready society is for change in travel behaviour referred to as a **Societal Readiness Assessment (SoRA)**.



Site-specific measures

Land-Use: We need to ensure land-uses are delivered in the right locations, with sustainable access possible to other suitable land-uses.

Digital Access: Broadband accessibility, shared working spaces in mobility hubs, e-scooter hire, e-bike hire, e-commerce, single ticketing platforms across modes—just some of the digital opportunities we have access to in the 21st century to reduce the need to travel and improve the usage of sustainable transport modes.

Mobility: Ensuring sustainable transport opportunities have the greatest priority and offer seamless routes between land-uses to maintain the convenience to travel. End-end active transport routes, public transport priority, mobility hubs to support multi-modal trips. The reallocation of investment away from highway capacity to these measures is essential to the credibility of achieving a vision.





Scenario testing to establish a credible vision

Once the principles of a vision are established, it is important to test this to establish how plausible it is.

For example, we cannot say 100 people will use a bus in the AM peak, if the bus capacity is only 50 people.

We cannot use the 'Go Dutch' Propensity to Cycle forecasts, if high quality infrastructure between key land-uses isn't provided.

Quantification of the vision needs to be realistic, and there may be a need to test a number of scenarios to understand the potential different outcomes.

This is often considered the first and preliminary stage of validation as it defines the preferred and most plausible scenario, but validation does not end here.

Adjusting our assessment process

To ultimately support Vision and Validate in a more appropriate way, and truly realise the benefits of a place-making, vision-led approach, we must adjust our assessment processes, away from junction capacity assessments and the impact of scenarios on vehicles—to an assessment process that looks at the impact of different scenarios on health, carbon, air quality, economics, quality of life.



Using Monitor and Manage

The 'validate' part of 'vision and validate' will be integral to achieving a vision for any schemes.

Validating (proving) that something has been achieved, can only be done once observations can take place of the delivered scheme to determine whether it has achieved the desired objectives.

This should happen incrementally at defined stages of implementation. To prove the success or failure of measures and enable the adaptation of measures. This will help realign schemes towards achieving the overall vision.

Why are we running a bus service for five years on a fixed route if it isn't where residents ultimately want to go?

How many people are using the active routes provided and are these having the benefits sought—or are additional measures required?

These are the types of validation checks we should be doing to make sure the right measures are being delivered and they are effective.

This is done using the mechanism of Monitor and Manage.

Important factors

Cost certainty (defining financial arrangements)

Ability to complete (no mechanism to halt development)

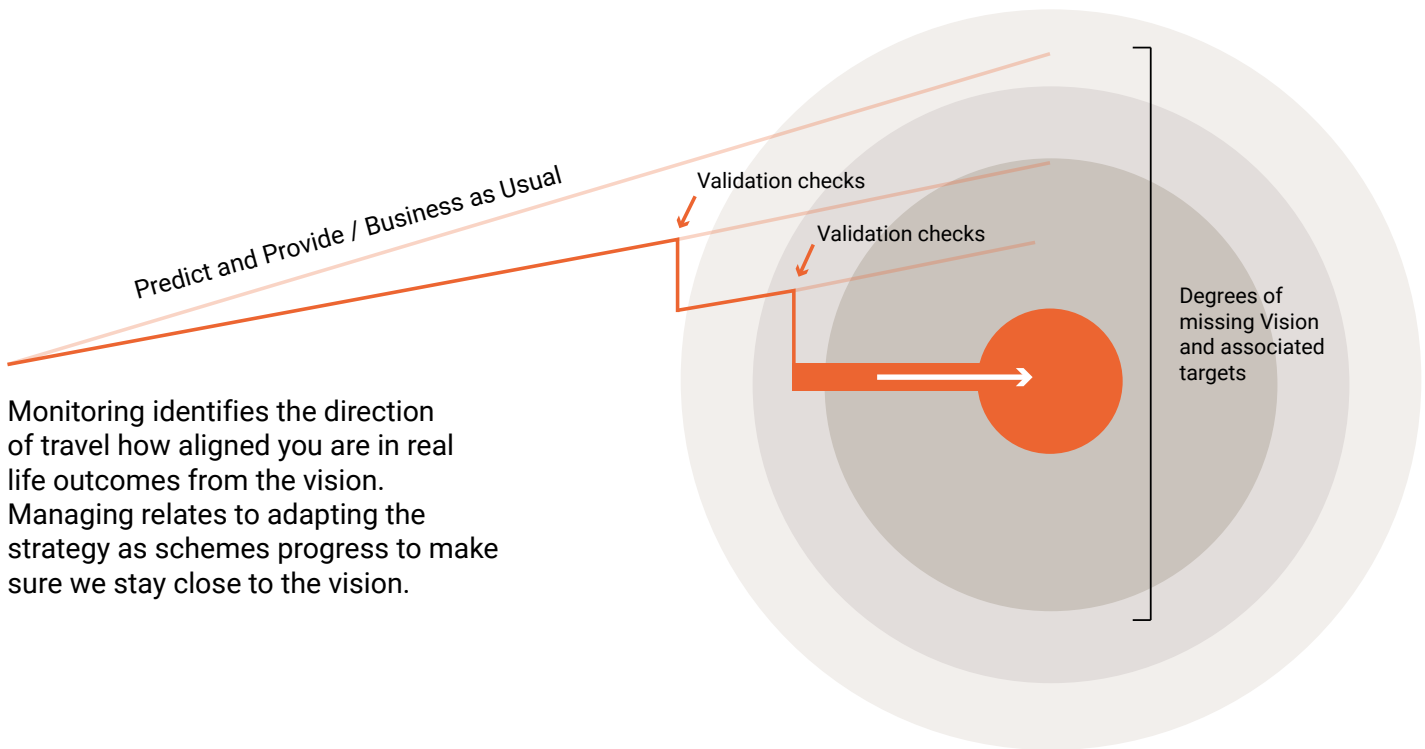
Mutually deal with change (review group with local authorities)

Defined triggers (monitoring against previously agreed triggers)



Validating the Vision using Monitor and Manage

The Mechanism of Incremental “Validation”



An opportunity for planning authorities to maintain control throughout the development



Project experience

Gravity, Somerset:

Stantec supported the Gravity scheme in Somerset, conducting and testing a range of potential travel pattern scenarios, to a point where a realistic vision was able to be foreseen and agreed with the highway authorities. The scheme will now be subject to Monitor and Manage to Validate the Vision.



Alconbury Weald, Cambridgeshire:

As a result of uncertainty relating to forecast travel patterns, our team supported Urban & Civic in agreeing with the highway authorities to bring forward the mixed-used scheme of a former airfield near Huntingdon in phases. This enabled the solutions to be based on real life observations and not artificial forecasts.



Arkill Farm, Tamworth:

Stantec advised Barwood Land on the development of 1,000 dwellings at Arkill Farm in Tamworth. A number of scenarios were tested in the Transport Assessment based on different levels of internalisation to reflect the mix of uses on site, levels of mode shift, and traffic from local committed development. It was agreed to review the appropriate interventions during the delivery phase of development. This approach was agreed with by the inspector at appeal.



For more information about how Stantec can support you in transport planning and incorporating vision and validate into your projects, contact:



Leigh Stolworthy
Director, Transport Planning
+44 121 796 8296
leigh.stolworthy@stantec.com



James Williams
Associate Transport Planner
+44 1604 878344
james.williams@stantec.com



Jason Lewis
Regional Growth Director
+44 1233 527285
jason.lewis@stantec.com

Stantec is a global leader in sustainable engineering, architecture, and environmental consulting. The diverse perspectives of our partners and interested parties drive us to think beyond what's previously been done on critical issues like climate change, digital transformation, and future-proofing our cities and infrastructure. We innovate at the intersection of community, creativity, and client relationships to advance communities everywhere, so that together we can redefine what's possible.

