

An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Memorandum ABP-321882-25

To: Commission

From: Donogh O' Donoghue, Planning Inspector

Re: Oral Hearing Recommendation for CPO application under Section 76 of Housing Act 1966, as extended by Section 10 of the Local Government Act No. 2 Act 1960 to be published in accordance with Article 4 (b) of the Third Schedule to the Housing Act 1966, as amended by the Planning and Development Act, 2000 as amended under Section 213 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended and Section 184 of the Local Government Act 2001 Application no. 321882-25

Date: 20th June 2025

Introduction

Galway City Council have made an application under Section 76 of Housing Act 1966, as extended by Section 10 of the Local Government Act No. 2 Act 1960, to be published in accordance with Article 4 (b) of the Third Schedule to the Housing Act 1966, as amended by the Planning and Development Act, 2000 as amended under Section 213 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended and Section 184 of the Local Government Act 2001, for approval in relation to lands to be compulsorily acquired for the implementation of a road development scheme. The proposed scheme is accompanied by an application reference ABP-321776-25 for which there is a separate Oral Hearing recommendation. The scheme forms part of a larger plan

for the development of multimodal sustainable transport corridors within the cities of the Country.

Description of Development

The proposed scheme submitted under this application will comprise the construction of the Dublin Road Bus Corridor on the R338 Old Dublin Road, which has an overall length of approximately 3.9km commencing at the Moneenageisha Junction in the west and tying into the Doughisha Junction in the east, all within Galway City Council administrative area. The proposed scheme will tie in directly with the permitted Galway BusConnects – Cross City Link scheme (ABP-314597-22) at the western extremity.

Key improvements include:

- The proportion of the route having bus priority measures will increase from 49% on the existing corridor to 100% on the Proposed Scheme.
- The proportion of segregated cycle facilities will increase from zero on the existing corridor to 100% on the Proposed Scheme.
- The provision of 9 junction upgrades.
- The number of pedestrian signal crossings will increase from 1 to 2 as a result of the Proposed Scheme.

Specific works proposed within the development include the following:

- 3.9 km (two-way) of bus priority infrastructure and traffic management.
- 3.9km (both directions) of cycling infrastructure and facilities.
- Provision of new / refurbished pedestrian facilities and footpaths along the scheme and associated ancillary works.
- Provision of 9 junction upgrades including the construction of a new “cyclops” (Cycle Optimised Protected Signals) junction at Skerritt junction.
- Bus stops will be enhanced to include shelters and information displays.
- Public Realm works including landscaping, planting, street furniture, street lighting, retaining walls, boundary walls, and sustainable urban drainage measures.
- Provision of road pavement reconstruction, road markings and ancillary works.

- Provision of boundary treatment works.
- Construction of accommodation works including boundary treatment and landscaping works.

The Construction Phase for the Proposed Scheme is anticipated to take approximately 24 months to complete. It will be constructed based on individual sectional completions that will individually have shorter durations typically ranging between 6 to 13 months.

Third Party Submissions

6 no. third party submissions have been received in relation to the CPO of lands and are summarised hereunder, none of which have requested an Oral Hearing. In relation to the content of the submissions it is of note that many issues raised are common to all of the submissions. These include interruption to operations as a result of the development and during the construction phase, removal of right turning lane, boundary treatment details, bus stop location and loss of green space.

1. Brothers of Charity

- Requests that a detailed review take place to ensure no interruption to operation of their service which includes two special needs schools and a variety of support services during the proposed works.
- During the early phase of the project, review of the effect of school traffic was considered and reviewed with the City Council but now with the development of a new school on the campus they would like to ensure all consideration is given to the bus vehicles entering the east campus entrance and turning left towards the new school access road.

2. Connacht Hospitality Ltd

- The proposals will result in significant changes along the hotel's entire frontage, with intensified road use, construction-related disruption, and permanent alterations to access and movement patterns.
- They recognise the need for enhanced infrastructure and support the broad objectives of Bus Connects Galway, however the current scheme design fails

to address their specific needs and undermine basic functional access requirements for staff, guests, and service providers.

- The scheme, in its current form, does not provide sufficient safeguards to protect essential operations during construction or thereafter. It does not adequately reflect the realities of their business that it depends on private vehicle and coach access. In addition, the hotel relies on a single-entry point.
- A particularly problematic feature of the proposed scheme is the removal of the existing right-turn lane that currently facilitates direct entry to the hotel from the eastbound (Oranmore) direction. With this movement eliminated, vehicles approaching from Oranmore and the eastern corridor would be forced to make circuitous and potentially congested detours. The current scheme design does not reflect the operational realities and places a disproportionate burden on them as an established and successful business.
- In the absence of a right turning lane there will be significant obstruction to traffic coming from the east. They strongly recommend that it should be retained in final design.
- In addition, the hotel's sole access point, located directly off Dublin Road, is included within the boundaries of the proposed Compulsory Purchase Order and is expected to be occupied during construction works. As there is no secondary entrance to the site, any disruption to this entry, even on a temporary basis, poses a serious operational risk.
- The entire entrance area falls within the CPO boundary and is proposed to be occupied during construction. This represents a critical threat to the hotel's operations. The construction timeline has not been clearly defined.
- The majority of hotel users arrive by private vehicle or coach. The potential for loss or restriction of on-site car parking is a significant concern due to the hotel's dependence on high levels of vehicle access and parking all year round. The CPO boundary may stop short of marked spaces, but this remains unclear as the mapping is tight and ambiguous. This as well as hotel roadside needs to be resolved through formal clarification.
- The scheme will restrict the hotel's ability to expand in the future as well as accommodating future buses/coaches parking.

- Proposed location of temporary access point during construction is wholly unacceptable from a hotel operations point of views.
- They were not consulted prior to publication of the scheme. They remain open and committed to further engagement with the Council, NTA and ABP to explore revised design solutions.
- A technical report prepared by Gerard Hannify, Chartered Engineer and transportation consultant accompanies this submission and provides a detailed engineering review of the likely short term and long-term impacts of the proposed scheme on the operations of the Hotel. The short-term impacts include impaired access to the hotel and the loss of car parking and signage with the loss of the turning lane identified as a long-term impact.

3. Duggans Supermarket Ltd

- The submission sets out that in the past, planning permission was granted for a retail development and that in lieu of suitable car parking a contribution was paid to the City Council.
- The next two adjoining properties fronting the Old Dublin Road have been purchased with the intent of redeveloping.
- The proposed development as initially instigated in 2020 showed that the Duggan property was not required. No explanation for this change has been provided.
- They object to the proposed acquisition as it is possible that the development would mitigate against their plans for further development of this immediate area.
- They stress that in the event the applicant wishes to resume discussions they require details prepared by accountants showing proposed alternative planning proposals that might be permissible on site in the event the intended purchase might proceed.
- They also require details on the proposed management of the property post-acquisition in the event the ground was to be acquired.

4. Flannery's Motor Inns DAC

- The hotel has 134 bedrooms and one of its major selling point, is the parking adjacent to the hotel.
- At present there are 97 car park spaces, 2 of these will be lost to the CPO.
- In addition, as a result of the proposed area for works, 26 spaces will be lost and there will be no facility for coaches to enter and park at the premises for the duration of the works.
- The main driver behind the works area appears to be the proposed bus stop at the front of the hotel. They recommend its relocation in line with international best practice spacing guidelines of 400m between bus stops.
- The CPO will remove the green area and trees to the front of the hotel and therefore additional noise and fumes will be an issue.
- The impact particularly during the work period could lead to the closure of the hotel and job losses.
- No indication provided of duration of works.
- Report attached from Candor Chartered Accountants Ltd providing an assessment of losses from proposed CPO of Road Frontage and Car Parking Spaces. The report concludes that the CPO as proposed currently will lead to significant additional losses for the duration of the works.
- Engineering Assessment report by Gerard Hanniffy, Consultant Civil Engineer detailing both the short-term and long-term impacts on the hotel.

5. HSE

- Submission on behalf of the HSE, who own the Woodlands Campus, situated along the proposed public transport route.
- The Woodlands campus is home to the Brothers of Charity Services, Galway who operate the Rosedale school at this location.
- The HSE is fully supportive of the project.
- They acknowledge the boundary treatment proposals, but requests that consultation will be made with the HSE, and that Method Statements are reviewed and approved prior to commencement of development.

- Clarification is requested regarding the management of the interface with the Woodlands Campus during the construction phase and the intended mitigation measures to protect the daily operations of the campus.
- A review of the CPO maps have identified discrepancies regarding the designation of land take – temporary versus compulsory within the Woodlands campus. They request clarification on the exact status of the land take in these locations and further details regarding the full reinstatement /replacement of these buildings.

6. HSE – Merlin Park University Hospital

- They fully support the proposed development.
- However, the scheme is inconsistent with the Galway City Development Plan and Galway Transport Strategy by not acknowledging the planned future access to the Merlin Park University Hospital (MPUH) campus.
- They recommend that the design of the Dublin Road/Galway Crystal junction should provide a fourth arm (to serve MPUH) and the overarching junction design in respect of signals, crossings, bus and cycle lane provision, should reflect this.
- These upgrades could assist with resolving the existing junction capacity issue identified in the GTS and that are an integral part of long established plans to facilitate improved accessibility to MPUH.
- In regard to the CPO Submission, concerns are raised that the land take at the interface between MPUH and the Dublin Road/Galway Crystal junction is considered to be insufficient to accommodate the extent of the works required for completion of the scheme, including the link into MPUH. To avoid delays and complications later in the process, the HSE requests that the Bus Connects Project thoroughly assess and make provision for the acquisition of the requisite lands as part of this current process.
- They acknowledge the boundary treatment proposals, but requests reassurance that consultation will be made with the HSE, and that Method Statements for the rebuilding of the existing wall are reviewed and approved prior to the commencement of development.

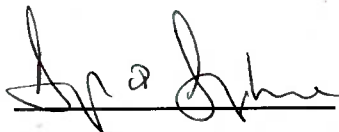
- Feasibility report prepared by Rhatigan Architects for the proposed new entrance and access road to MPUH campus included. It confirms that the development of a proposed new entrance and access road to MPUH campus is feasible to improve the functionality and accessibility to the campus as service demand necessitates in the fullness of time.

Recommendation

I have examined all of the submissions received, Galway City Council's response to the submissions and all of the documentation submitted with the application and I have considered all of the foregoing in relation to the Oral Hearing checklist which is appended to this memo within appendix 1. The information provided within both the CPO documentation and the response to the submissions provides detailed information pertaining to the proposed works and how such works will affect individual properties. None of the third parties have requested an Oral Hearing.

I am satisfied that the information submitted is of sufficient detail to allow for a full and proper assessment of the case. I therefore consider that the proposed development can be adequately assessed without recourse to an oral hearing.

In the absence of an Oral Hearing being held, I consider it prudent to permit a final round of circulation in relation to the applicant's responses to the submissions received. This document addresses each submission individually in detail and given the level of information provided within it, I consider it important to provide third parties with an opportunity to consider Galway City Council's responses and submit further written comments if deemed necessary.



Donogh O Donoghue

Planning Inspector

Inspectorate

20th June 2025



Appendix 1

Oral Hearing Recommendation – Bus Connects Project

File Refs: ABP - 321882-25

Project Title: BusConnects Galway – Dublin Road Development

In light of the application documentation, third party observations and response submissions received from the applicant:

- | | |
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| 1. Is there a lack of clarity or detail in the information available that would require a hearing? | No |
| 2. Are there outstanding issues relating to the design approach or alternatives such as would merit a hearing ? | No |
| 3. Are the number of submissions / complexity of issues raised in submissions such as to require a hearing ? | No |
| 4. Are there outstanding issues relating to the justification / need for the project that would require a hearing ? | No |
| 5. Are the nature and extent of impacts on third party properties uncertain or otherwise such as to justify a hearing ? | No |

Recommendation

Having regard to the above and as per the attached memo I –

- Recommend no oral hearing be held.

I recommend that the response submission received from the first party be circulated to all other parties for comment.

Planning Inspector

Donogh O' Donoghue

Assistant Director of Planning

Sarah Lynch