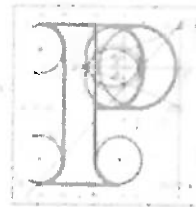


Our Case Number: ACP-323066-25



**An
Coimisiún
Pleanála**

National Transport Authority
Haymarket House
Smithfield
Dublin 7
D07 CF98

Date: 26 August 2025

Re: Gort Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement Project, Gort, Co. Galway
In the townlands of Gort, Co. Galway

Dear Sir / Madam,

An Coimisiún Pleanála has received your recent submission in relation to the above mentioned proposed development and will take it into consideration in its determination of the matter.

Please note that the proposed development shall not be carried out unless the Commission has approved it with or without modifications.

If you have any queries in relation to the matter please contact the undersigned officer of the Commission at laps@pleanala.ie

Please quote the above mentioned An Coimisiún Pleanála reference number in any correspondence or telephone contact with the Commission.

Yours faithfully,

Lauren Griffin
Executive Officer
Direct Line: 01-8737244

AA02

Tel
Glao Áitiúil
Facs
Láithreán Gréasáin
Ríomhphost

Tel
LoCall
Fax
Website
Email

(01) 858 8100
1800 275 175
(01) 872 2684
www.pleanala.ie
communications@pleanala.ie

64 Sráid Maoilbhríde
Baile Átha Cliath 1
D01 V902

64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902

An Coimisiún Pleanála,
64 Marlborough Street,
Dublin 1,
D01V902

An tÚdarás Náisiúnta Iompair
Teach Mhargadh an Fhéir
Margadh na Feirme
Baile Átha Cliath 7, D07 CF98
National Transport Authority
Haymarket House
Smithfield, Dublin 7, D07 CF98

01 879 8300
info@nationaltransport.ie
www.nationaltransport.ie

21st August 2025

RE: Gort Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement Project, Part 10 Application

Dear Sir / Madam,

The National Transport Authority (the "NTA") has reviewed the above referenced Part 10 Scheme and wishes to make the following observations and recommendations.

Proposed Part 10 Scheme

The NTA notes that the proposed Gort Town Centre Public Realm enhancement Project Part 10 application includes for the 'relocating of existing public bus-stops to Bridge Street/George Street and provision 1 no. new coach drop off area on Market Square'.

Drawing 3160-BDP-00-XX-DR-L-0001 indicates the proposed locations of the relocated bus stops. The proposed southbound stop is located to the south of the railway bridge, while the northbound stop is indicated as opposite the entrance to Aldi. These are roughly 250-350m from the current bus stop locations and are not located in the core town centre area.

The Scheme includes the addition of 2 no. new off-street car parks. The Design and Planning Statement states that *'Currently, there are 3 off-street car parks in Gort: at the train station, Lidl and Aldi. There is no off-street car park for town centre users, which has led to an abundance of on-street parking, sometimes at the expense of pedestrians and cyclists safety'*. The Scheme states that 'The proposed on-street parking provision is as follows: 165 on-street parking bays and 9 on-street disabled parking bays'. This appears to be a reduction from 252 no. on-street spaces, by a total of 78 no. spaces. However, the proposed new off-street spaces provide 100 no. spaces. There is therefore a net gain of 22 no. spaces.

The Mobility Management Plan states at 3.1.9. that *'the location of the bus stops opposite the square are inconvenient and dangerous due to the lack of crossing nearby....Moving the bus stops closer to the rail station would create a 'transport interchange'*. Section 8.1.5 states that the relocation of the bus stops will 'create additional public realm space at the Square, contributing to a reduced feel of vehicle dominance'.

Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031 and Draft Gort Local Transport Plan

The NTA previously made a submission to Galway County Council with regard to the *Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031* and associated *Draft Gort Local Transport Plan*. The NTA stated in this submission that there is no support for the relocation of bus stops on Crowe Street/Market Square.

The NTA is currently implementing the Connecting Ireland: Rural Mobility Plan which is a major national public transport initiative that will increase connectivity, particularly for people living outside the major cities. The plan aims to improve mobility in rural areas. It will provide better connections between villages and towns by linking these with an enhanced regional network connecting cities and regional centres nationwide.

It is the view of the NTA that the current bus stops in the town centre of Gort are well located, in a high profile, central location to facilitate high demand trips to/from town centre. It is the view of the NTA that this would disincentivise bus usage by increasing walking distance from residential areas and the town centre to the bus stops.

The NTA understood that the proposals to remove public transport stops in the town centre were removed from the proposed LAP and LTP at material alterations stage in June 2025 (MA26).

The NTA is therefore surprised that these measures are now being proposed as part of a Part 10 application, which will not align with the Gort LAP and LTP, nor with the interests of public transport provision as per the Connecting Ireland programme.

The NTA recommended to the LAP review that in relation to the town centre stops:

- The existing bus stops and associated facilities in the town centre should be maintained and any relevant Figures and text in the LTP should be amended to reflect this (i.e. Fig 6.3
- Public Transport Measure PTB01 should be replaced with the following: 'Work with the NTA, and other stakeholders as appropriate, to review bus stop locations and assess the need for bus infrastructure including turning facilities to support bus usage in Gort'.

Impact of Proposed Scheme on Public Transport Users

The impact of the relocation of the public transport stops for public transport users does not appear to have been adequately addressed in the Part 10 proposal. While car users have seen a relocation of car parking spaces, alternatives (including an increased number of overall spaces) have been provided in the town centre. In contrast, the public transport users will be relocated outside of the town centre area.

The Scheme documents state that the Aldi car park is not considered to serve the town centre car user requirements. While the proposed Scheme creates additional car parking in the town centre to serve car users, the public transport users are relocated outside of the town centre (one opposite the Aldi car park) with no apparent consideration of the effect this may have.

The aim of the Connecting Ireland programme is to enhance provision of public transport services for rural users. In order to make using public transport attractive and to compete with the convenience of private car use, providing direct and convenient access to key destinations is vital. In this regard, adding additional time and inconvenience to public transport users undermines the public transport offer.

While this additional walk may not appear to be significant to able-bodied users it may be to less able-bodied users.

The rationale for the removal of the bus stops appears to be primarily for urban realm gain and justified by the potential to create an 'interchange'. However, the aim of increasing bus patronage is to connect residential areas with urban centres in order that everyday trips can take place by public transport, and not only trips for commuting purposes.

While the accompanying MMP states that the current locations are 'dangerous' because of the lack of crossing points, the proposed Scheme includes crossing points which could have ameliorated this situation.

Recommendation

The NTA recommends that the proposed Part 10 scheme is not approved in its current form whereby bus stops are removed from the core town centre location, a key destination, which may have the effect of reducing the convenience and attractiveness of public transport usage in the town.

I trust that the views of the NTA will be taken into account in the assessment of the above Part 10 application.

Yours sincerely,



Michael Mac Aree
Head of Strategic Planning