

**BusConnects Galway:
Cross-City Link
(University Road to
Dublin Road)**

July 2021

**Public
Consultation
2020-2021
Report**

**BUS
CONNECTS
GALWAY**

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FOR A BETTER CITY.

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1 Introduction

In October 2020, Galway City Council commenced non-statutory public consultation on the proposed BusConnects Galway: Cross-City Link (University Road to Dublin Road). This report is a summary of the submissions received, and Galway City Council's responses to questions, feedback and comments received.

Galway City Council would like to acknowledge and thank the public for their engagement in the process, and for taking the time to make comments and suggestions on the proposed Cross-City Link.

1.1 The proposed scheme

The Cross-City Link is one of the major projects identified for Galway City as part of the Galway Transport Strategy. The Galway Transport Strategy was developed by Galway City Council, Galway County Council and the National Transport Authority in 2016 and sets out a framework for the transformation of Galway's transport networks over the short, medium and long-term.

The Cross-City Link is a public transport corridor linking the western and eastern suburbs of Galway City, through the city centre core. This corridor will connect homes with places of work, study, retail, and recreation, with improved public transport journey times and reliability. High-quality public spaces, new and upgraded pedestrian and cyclist facilities and public transport priority will be provided, making it easier to move through the city, and to access destinations by sustainable means.

Car traffic, which does not have a specific destination in the city centre, will no longer travel into the medieval core of the city between the hours of 7:00am and 7:00pm – making routes safer for walkers, cyclists, and mobility impaired, and creating space for public transport to move freely.

The Cross-City Link facilitates new and existing bus routes, ensuring that more homes, schools and businesses are within 10 minutes' walk of a high-frequency bus service, as part of the 'BusConnects Galway' funding programme.

Bus routes will overlap in an 'interchange' at Eyre Square, allowing travellers to go from one part of the city on one route, to another part of the city on a different route, in a timely fashion.



Figure 1: Extents of the Scheme

Galway City is undergoing a transformative period with an aim to reshape it into a people-centric destination, with a revised hierarchy of priorities that places sustainable modes of transport (walking, cycling and public transport) above the private car. There is a strong need to address the transportation issues facing the city and surrounding areas at present, and to underpin future growth by establishing effective projects that counter the status quo in line with national policy, including the National Development Plan 2018-2027, the National Planning Framework 2040, and the Climate Action Plan 2019.

The project is being funded by the National Transport Authority.

1.2 Consultation and Engagement

Due to COVID-19 restrictions in place throughout 2020 and 2021, Galway City Council engaged in virtual and on-line non-statutory public consultation on the Cross-City Link project. In response to guidelines from the Irish Government and the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHET), no information events were held in person. As a consequence, a virtual consultation was undertaken. The purpose of the non-statutory consultation was to encourage stakeholders to identify questions or issues they want the Design Teams to consider, as the project progresses through design and statutory processes. The consultation commenced on October 22nd, 2020 and the initial duration of the consultation period was 6 weeks.

This consultation was primarily held via a virtual information room. This virtual room allowed members of the public and other stakeholders to view the relevant documentation associated with the scheme, including the emerging preferred scheme drawings, a range of information boards, an information video and a brochure relating to the scheme.

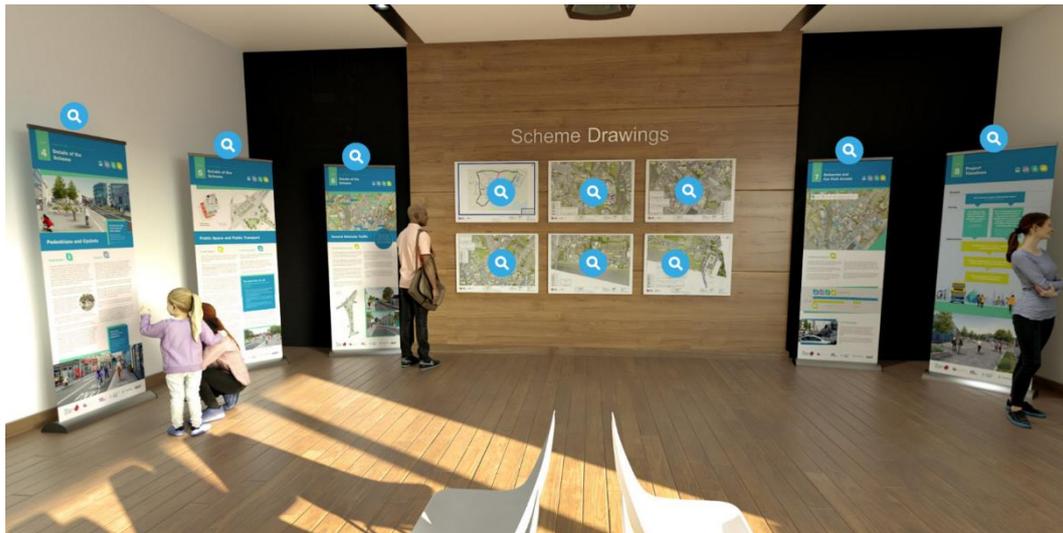


Figure 2: Virtual Information Room

Online submissions could be made through the virtual information room (in English or Irish), or via submission to Galway City Council by email or by post. In order to facilitate accessibility for those without digital access, materials could be requested in hard copy from Galway City Council.

Due to the reopening of the retail sector in December 2021, Galway City Council extended the non-statutory public consultation on the Cross-City Link project, to allow the business community in the city to engage at a point in time when their busiest season would be concluded, in January 2021. At the time of writing, the virtual information room remains live; however, submissions can no longer be made.

In order to make the general public aware of the public consultation event, an information campaign was rolled out by Galway City Council. This included advertising in local publications, notices on the Galway City Council website and social media (Twitter and Facebook) and the distribution of letters to properties along the route.

Lands adjacent to, or on, the proposed Cross-City Link (University Road to Dublin Road) were examined to identify potentially directly-affected landowners. Potentially directly affected landowners were written to, and invited to meet the Design Team at their convenience. Follow up letters were issued to landowners who did not respond to the initial invitation to meet/speak. The majority of potentially directly-affected landowners have now been met. These meetings took place on-line, due to Covid restrictions. Engagement by phone also took place with a number of landowners. Continued engagement with potentially impacted landowners is ongoing. This report does not summarise engagement or feedback of landowners, as these discussions are confidential with respect to potential land acquisition processes which may follow as part of the statutory consent process.

In addition to the general public consultation event, further targeted consultation took place through a series of stakeholder meetings in December 2020 and January/February/March 2021, with a range of organisations, key stakeholders and interested persons.

2 Information Provided in Public Consultation

2.1 Virtual Information Room

It was initially intended to hold public consultation events in the local community as part of this non-statutory public consultation. However, due to the ongoing Covid-19 global pandemic and in response to guidelines from the Irish Government and the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE), a virtual information room was developed as an alternative means of engagement. This virtual information room was designed to replicate, as close as possible, an in-person consultation event. Materials were prepared to tell the story of the project and provide as much information as possible to the public. These included story boards, drawings, an information video, and a brochure, all of which are further described below.



Figure 3: Virtual Information Room

2.1.1 Story Boards

The room contained eleven story boards under the following headlines, plus supporting scheme drawings and photomontages:

1. Welcome and introduction
2. The Galway Transport Strategy
3. Overview of the scheme
4. Details of the scheme - Pedestrians and Cyclists
5. Details of the scheme - Public space and public transport
6. Details of the scheme - General vehicular traffic
7. Deliveries and car park access
8. Project Timelines

9. Frequently asked questions
10. Frequently asked questions (continued)

A link to this virtual information room is provided below.

<https://virtualengage.arup.com/busconnects-galway-cross-city-link/index.html>

2.1.2 Information Video

A short information video was developed, setting out the rationale for developing the Cross-City Link; identifying the route and the benefits; and advising how to participate in the public consultation. A link to this video is provided [here](#).

2.1.3 Photomontages

A series of photomontages of key locations within the study area were developed which presented a virtual image of the proposed scheme overlain on photographs of the existing streetscape. The purpose of these photomontages was to provide stakeholders with a visual example of what the Cross-City Link will look like when completed to help people better understand the proposal. These photomontages were included throughout the materials published in the virtual information room.



Figure 4: Photomontage of Forster Street

2.1.4 Brochure

A 42-page brochure was developed and published as part of the virtual information room. It contained information on the Galway Transport Strategy, the planned Cross-City Link, key statistics, plans for loading and deliveries, plans for car park access, a section with frequently asked questions, a detailed section by section description of the scheme, an indicative timeline for implementation, data protection notice and information on how to participate in the non-statutory consultation.

2.1.5 Drawings

A series of scheme drawings were published as part of the virtual information room. In total 6 drawings, including the key plan were provided. These drawings provided the preliminary design, general arrangement of the proposed scheme, identifying road layouts and typical cross-sections along the route. A series of notes were also included on each of the drawings, informing the reader of particular proposals.

2.1.6 Feedback Form

A feedback form was included in the virtual information room. This form was made available for either online completion or was available to download and complete at a later date for future submission via email. The feedback form was available in both the English and Irish languages.

There were 4 sections for completion in the feedback form, inviting the respondent to provide information in relation to their interest in the scheme (e.g. resident, business, commuter etc.); asking the respondent what they like about the scheme and what they do not like about the scheme; and an area to add in any other comments they had in relation to the Cross-City Link.

2.2 Advertisements and Press Releases

The public was invited to participate in the public consultation process via advertisements and articles in the Galway Advertiser on Thursday 22nd October 2020 and the Galway City Tribune on Friday 23rd October 2020. Information on the scheme and a link to the website were provided in the advertisement.

The consultation was promoted on the Galway City Council website, and with a number of posts during the consultation on GCC social media accounts (Twitter/Facebook).

Galway Advertiser
Tel: +353 91 530 900 1970 2020 www.advertiser.ie
41/42 Eyre Square, Galway Thursday October 22 2020

Bank Holiday Kerosene Offer
€200 = 340L
Order & Pay Online
www.cosyhomeheating.ie
Call Pat to order
091 766200 / 087 6117595
Home Heating Oil • Boiler Servicing • Oil Tank Replacement
Cosyhome Heating

Supermac's
WE ARE OPEN!
SERVICES AVAILABLE IN SELECTED STORES!
Same great food brought to you in different ways...
TAKE AWAY HOME DELIVERY CALL / DRIVE & COLLECT DRIVE THRU
supermacs.ie

Public feedback invited on new Cross-City Link

BY UNA SINNOTT

The Galway City Council is inviting public feedback on a new sustainable transport corridor which will link University Road with the Dublin Road via the city centre. Plans for the new Cross-City Link are expected to be finalised next year, and will include bus, cycle, and pedestrian facilities along with high quality public spaces.

The city council, in conjunction with the National Transport Authority, has launched a non-statutory public consultation on the project, starting this week.

The Cross City Link is a public transport corridor

Proposed vision of Eyre Square

linking the western and eastern suburbs, through the city centre. This corridor will connect homes with places of work, study, retail, and recreation, with improved public transport journey times and reliability. High-quality public spaces, new and upgraded pedestrian and cyclist facilities, and public transport priority will be provided. The project aims to make it easier to move through the city, by sustainable means.

Galway City Council invites the public, landowners and other stakeholders to review the proposals, and to share their feedback through www.busconnectsgalway.ie.

The Cross-City Link (University Road to Dublin Road) is a significant component of both the Galway Transport Strategy and BusConnects Galway. Beginning at the junction of University Road and Newcastle Road and continuing across the Salmon Weir Bridge, this Cross-City Link proposal continues through St Vincent's Avenue, St Francis Street, Eglinton Street, Eyre Square, Forster Street, College Road, and on to the Dublin Road. Through traffic, with no specific destination in the city centre, will be diverted.

Continued on Page 4

Figure 5: Front Page of Galway Advertiser

2.3 Letter drops

In order to further raise awareness amongst those living and working along the Cross-City Link, and other roads within the scheme, of the public consultation event, Galway City Council undertook a letter drop to all properties and businesses with accessible letterboxes. This letter drop began on October 23rd 2020. In total approximately 300-320 addresses were targeted with letters. These letters advised recipients of the scheme and ongoing public consultation, inviting participation.

2.4 Stakeholder Engagement

In addition to the virtual information room, a series of engagement sessions with various stakeholders was held during the consultation period. Over 130 stakeholders were invited to 5 virtual 'sectoral' briefings, as part of the non-statutory public consultation. Invited stakeholders included public transport operators, community groups, emergency services, businesses, taxis operators, car park operators, educational institutions, transport consultancies, and cycling groups. A total of 36 stakeholders attended these meetings. A list of stakeholder organisations invited are provided in Appendix A. All attendees were encouraged to make submissions to Galway City Council as part of the public consultation process.

To allow for businesses that were reopening over the Christmas period after a 'lock-down' due to the on-going pandemic, an additional stakeholder meeting with Galway Chamber members took place on the 28th January 2021. Approximately 75 people participated in two hours of discussion and engagement. Attendees were invited to make submissions by email by the 11th February 2021.

2.5 Landowner Engagement

During the preliminary design process, 23 no. land folios were identified as potentially requiring either full or partial acquisition in order to complete the Cross-City Link as currently proposed. An investigation of the land registry database was undertaken to identify potentially impacted landowners.

In total 31 landowners were identified as potentially affected by the scheme including some lands in the ownership of local authorities. Letters, outlining the scheme, were sent to identified landowners on 16 October 2021. Where landowners were not readily identifiable, letters were issued to the property.

The letters issued contained a brief description of the scheme and an invitation to meet with a member of the design team.

Landowner meetings commenced in January 2021 and have occurred across all of 2021 to date. As of June 2021, contact has been made with representatives of the majority of potentially impacted folios.

3 Submissions Received

A total of 93 submissions were received. Submissions were received via the public information room, through emails to Galway City Council, and by phone.

4 Analysis of submission

4.1 Approach

The review of the submissions commenced in April 2021 once the consultation period had closed. Most submissions were received either via the virtual information room or via email.

All submissions were entered into a database and assessed. An initial review indicated that submissions often address more than one issue and a number of themes emerged from the submissions.

Due to General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) individuals are not identified in the analysis documented in this report nor in their comments or submission.

4.2 Profile of those making submissions

All submissions received were recorded by respondent type. As part of the virtual information room feedback form, respondents were given options relating to their interest in the Cross-City Link, with multiple selections possible. A large number of submissions identified themselves as both residents and commuters, so for this reason resident and commuter were combined into a single classification. This represented the largest group of respondents accounting for 45% of all submissions. In addition to this grouping, submissions were received from Businesses, Educational Institutions, Elected Representatives, Representative Bodies, Residents, Transport Providers and Others, which included visitors.

Figure 6 below provides a breakdown of the submissions received by respondent.

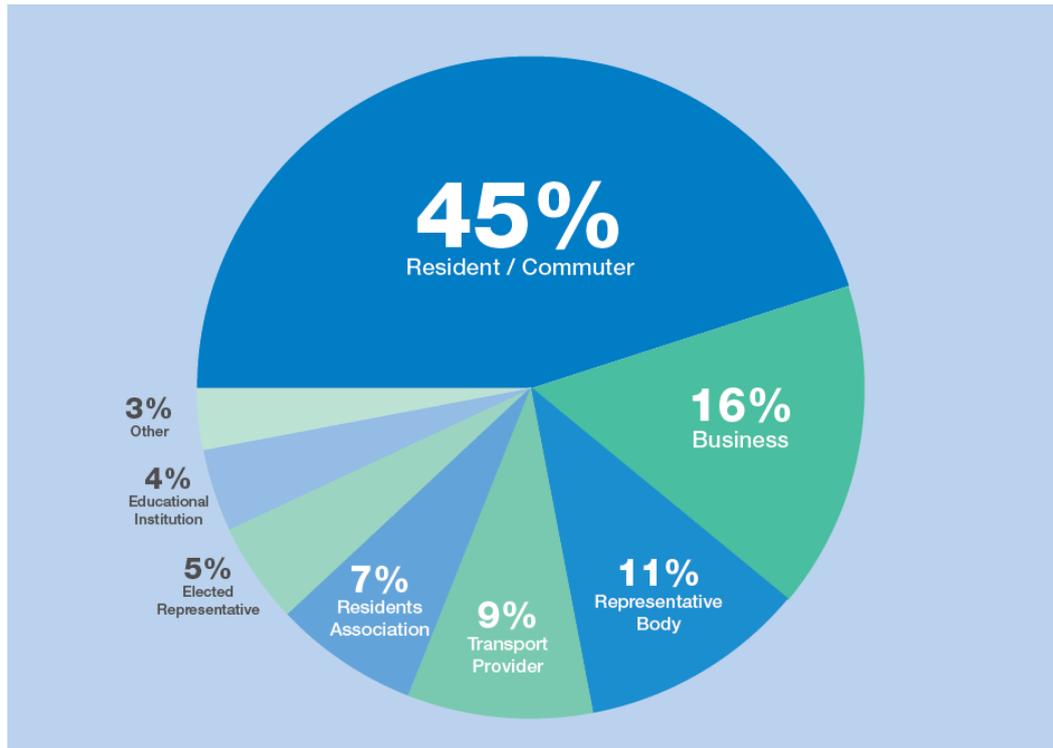


Figure 6: Profile of Respondents

The general sentiment of each of the submissions was assigned, based on the content or each submission and overall attitude expressed towards the scheme as a whole. The majority of the submissions (60%) were classified as either Very Positive, Positive or Neutral, while 29% of submission were classified as negative or very negative and 11% were classified as mixed.

It was noted that 28 of the respondents requested a follow up meeting with representatives of Galway City Council. It is the intention of Galway City Council to engage further with Stakeholders during the design process.

4.3 Issues identified by section of the scheme

The scheme was divided into twelve sections, and the issues raised in each submission were entered and categorised in the database by geographical section, by theme and by issue. In addition to the twelve sections, submissions were also categorised as relating to ‘The Entire Scheme’ where the submission referred to multiple areas, or the scheme as a whole. The scheme sections and the frequency of submissions relating to each section as presented below in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Scheme Sections and Frequency of Submissions

Scheme Section	Frequency	%
University Road	3	3%
Gaol Road / Galway Cathedral	0	0%
Salmon Weir Bridge	3	3%
St Vincent's Avenue	4	4%
St. Francis St. / Eglinton St. / Williamsgate St.	4	4%
Eyre Square	7	8%
Foster Street / Bóthar Uí hEithir	2	2%
Prospect Hill / Bóthar na mBan / Headford Road	0	0%
Wood Quay	2	2%
Forthill Street / Merchants Road / Queen Street	2	2%
College Road / Dublin Road	17	18%
Nun's Island	1	1%
Entire Scheme	48	52%
Total Submissions	93	100%

Most submissions (52%) were made in relation to the entire scheme although a large number was related to College Road / Dublin Road (18%) or Eyre Square (8%) specifically.

4.4 Issues identified by theme

All 93 of the submissions received were reviewed and the issues raised were categorised, summarised, and analysed. A total of 8 main themes were identified during this review process. These key themes and the frequency of comments relating to these key themes are presented below in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Key Themes and Frequency of Comments

Key Themes	Frequency of Comments
Accessibility / Traffic Impact	70
Supportive	41
Safety	40
Integration/Bus Network	36
Environment	24
Social Impact	24
Economy / Impact on Local Business	18
Public Consultation Process	14
Total Comments	267

From this it can be seen that **accessibility and traffic** impact is one of the main themes of the comments (70 comments). These comments were generally related to:

- Access arrangements for certain areas, e.g. College Road, Woodquay, Corrib Terrace and as a result of restrictions on streets and on the Salmon Weir Bridge;
- Access to the core city centre area;
- Access arrangements for businesses and how the scheme will impact same;
- Displaced traffic due to the restrictions and the impact of same.

An important theme that emerged through the comments was that participants were **supportive** of the planned enhanced priority for buses and cyclists, improved pedestrian facilities and upgrades to the public realm and reduction of traffic along the corridor and particularly within the city centre core area (41 comments).

Another strong theme related to overall **safety concerns** (40 comments). These were mostly linked to issues related to cyclist and pedestrian safety, but also related to some general issues with regard to the public realm and loss of access.

4.5 Summary of Main Issues Raised

This section identifies the key issues raised throughout the consultation process. Galway City Council will seek to establish the validity of the concerns, the potential consequences for the project, and how best to address the issue and /or mitigate any potentially negative impacts. Irrespective of the count or issues, all submissions were considered equally on their merits in relation to the proposed scheme. The key issues raised and the frequency of comments received in relation to each key issue are shown below in **Table 3**. Each of these issues has been raised under one or multiple themes identified in Section 4.4 above.

Table 3: Key Issues and Frequency of Comments

Key Issues	Frequency of Comments
Public Realm	37
Deliveries	7
Additional Traffic	12
Loss of Access	45
Cyclist Safety	39
Pedestrian Safety	40
Other Galway Transport Strategy Projects	13
Loss of parking	18
Devaluation of Property	1
Land Acquisition	6
Associated Bus Facilities	7
Noise Pollution	6
Total Comments	231

The main issues raised were related to **loss of access** (45 comments), and these primarily related to the perceived loss of vehicular access issues to College Road, city centre and arising from bus priority measures on the Salmon Weir Bridge.

Additionally, **pedestrian and cyclist safety** (40 and 39 comments respectively) and the **public realm** (37 comments) featured in many submissions.

With regards to the comments received in relation to pedestrian and cyclist safety, these mostly related to the integration of these modes with public transport. The following key issues were raised:

- Enhanced/additional provision of dedicated cycling facilities and the impact of traffic flow changes on cycle routes;
- Additional pedestrian facilities, particularly at bus stops;
- Additional facilities such as bike parking, alternative crossing types, etc.

The issues raised are outlined in more detail in the following section.

4.6 Issues Raised and Galway City Council's Response

4.6.1 Issue 1: Public Realm

In total 37 of the submissions received included comments related to the public realm. 62% of these submissions were considered neutral or positive / very positive. 38% of these submissions were classified as mixed / negative / very negative and the themes related to:

- Accessibility / Traffic Impact;
- Safety;
- Integration / Bus Network;
- Environment.

Most of these mixed / negative / very negative submissions (64%) were related to public realm issues of the entire scheme and not specific to any individual section of the scheme.

4.6.1.1 Positive/Supportive

In summary the main positive/supportive submissions related to public realm were the following:

- Many submissions expressed support for proposals of new and improved footpaths and pedestrian facilities.
- Many submissions also expressed positivity towards the provision of pedestrian plazas and improvement of public spaces.

4.6.1.2 Issues Raised

In summary the main issues raised relating to public realm were the following:

- An interest was expressed in improved public spaces and additional footpaths throughout the Scheme, as it is suggested that many residents are currently dissatisfied with the condition of numerous existing footpath surfaces within the scheme area. Some submissions also requested the provision of more seating and improved lighting in public spaces.
- A small number of submissions expressed concerns that there was a lack of cycle infrastructure proposed, in particular the provision of secure bike parking facilities.
- A representative body expressed concerns that there does not appear to be access for cyclists through the pedestrian plazas. It was suggested that there is a need for additional measures to ensure connectivity for cyclists through the scheme.
- A representative body raised concerns over the potential for an increase in noise pollution associated with the provision of pedestrian plazas. Concerns were also raised in relation to suggested contradictions between the Public Realm Strategy and the BusConnects Galway plans regarding access, parking, future public plazas, and an unspecified park redevelopment.
- A submission expressed concerns about the creation of pedestrian zones without the consent of residents, as it was suggested that it will lead to increased anti-social behaviour in and around these spaces.

4.6.1.3 Design Specific Suggestions

The main suggestions in terms of general design for public realm included the following:

- A large quantity of the submissions relating to public realm were focused on the provision of safer pedestrian and cyclist facilities such as increased pedestrian crossings and segregation from vehicles. Some submissions suggested that a removal of non-essential traffic and provision of improved public spaces would significantly help to promote a modal shift in the area;
- A number of submissions suggested that new public spaces need to be greener, suggesting the provision of raised planters throughout with consideration given to biodiversity and the utilisation of native planting;
- A small number of submissions referred to the potential for street art in public spaces and places, with some showing an interest in participating in the development of public art projects;
- One business expressed an interest in collaboration with the scheme in order to provide a consistent and permeable high-quality public realm.

4.6.1.4 Location Specific Suggestions

The main location specific suggestions for public realm were the following:

- A school within the scheme area made an enquiry in relation to the provision and design of bollards as a solution in maintaining access to the building.
- Submissions were received suggesting dedicated cycle facilities from Eyre Street to Headford Road via Woodquay should be incorporated.
- Submissions were made querying the impact of the scheme on casual trading on Eyre Square North.

4.6.1.5 Galway City Council Response to Issue 1

The designs which were published as part of the non-statutory public consultation are preliminary in nature and will require additional work to bring them to a point where Galway City Council is prepared to submit the overall proposal for planning consent. The various issues raised in this consultation process will feed into the designs in terms of the public realm. The design team will comprise of a multi-disciplinary team including experienced Landscape Architects, Transport Planners and Engineers. The Galway Public Realm Strategy will be a key documentation in the further design of Public Realm Spaces. It should also be noted that Galway City Council has received an allocation of funding through URDF Call 2 to enhance the public realm in public spaces in the city, including along the Cross-City Link.

Where feasible, further design changes will be made to enhance permeability through the study area in tandem with public realm enhancements.

It is intended that casual trading will remain within the Eyre Square north area, however vehicular access to this area will be amended from current practices. Casual Trading remains an activity licensed by permit, under the relevant Bye-Laws. Amendments to the Bye-Laws are a Reserved Function.

4.6.2 Issue 2: Deliveries

In total 7 of the submissions received included comments related to deliveries. Most of these submissions were mixed / negative / very negative and the theme related to accessibility / traffic impact. Three of these mixed / negative / very negative submissions were related to delivery issues along the College Road / Dublin Road section of the scheme, and the St Francis Street / Eglington Street / Williamsgate Street section of the scheme. The remaining four of these mixed / negative / very negative submissions were related to delivery issues of the entire scheme and not specific to any section of the scheme.

4.6.2.1 Positive/Supportive

While the majority of submissions relating to deliveries were considered to be negative, one submission with queries and concerns in relation to the issue of deliveries also contained positive and supportive sentiment on other aspects of the scheme as a whole.

4.6.2.2 Issues Raised

In summary, the main issues raised relating to deliveries were the following:

- Concerns were raised in multiple submissions relating to delivery access within the scheme. Questions were raised over how access will be achieved and if it will be by means of a permit system.
- A representative association raised concerns over the changing of delivery periods and access. The main concerns raised relate to appropriate consultation with all business owners. Concerns were also raised over what is defined as a delivery, and whether it applies to waste collection.
- Concerns were also raised over the enforcement of the proposed delivery arrangements within the scheme.

4.6.2.3 Location Specific Suggestions

The main location specific suggestions for deliveries were the following:

- St. Francis Street: A business owner located on St. Francis Street expressed concerns in relation to delivery access. The submission stated that deliveries in the current layout are already difficult as there currently is no loading bay on the street. The main concerns are that the proposals for St. Francis Street will further impact this business's ability to access their shop for loading and deliveries.
- College Road: A number of residents raised concerns over the restricted vehicular access to their property on College Road and queried whether household deliveries would be permitted under the local access only.

4.6.2.4 Galway City Council Response to Issue 2

The design proposals include a loading and delivery strategy, which has been prepared taking cognisance of the need to balance public transport reliability, pedestrian and cyclist comfort and safety, general traffic movements and loading and parking requirements.

In most cases, where loading bays are currently in operation, these have been retained, but will operate at different hours if located along the Cross-City Link. Along the Cross-City Link, it is intended that the hours of operation of these bus lanes will be 07:00-19:00. During the period of 10:00am to 13:00, deliveries are permitted along the Cross-City Link, and utilise any loading bays proposed on the route.

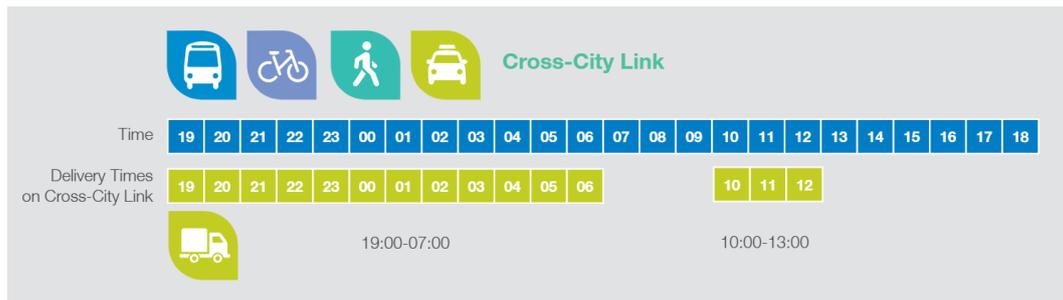


Figure 7: Delivery Times on Cross-City Link

St. Francis Street is not wide enough to provide a dedicated loading bay, and does not currently have a loading bay. In this location, loading bays on the surrounding streets e.g. Woodquay, St. Mary's Street and Newtownsmith will be available.

Access to every existing property along College Road will be possible for deliveries at all times. The routing of these deliveries will depend on the location of the destination on College Road.

Galway City Council will further examine the loading and delivery strategy in the context of this public consultation in order to further improve the proposed scheme where feasible. Engagement with the relevant business / representative bodies will form part of the development of this strategy. Waste collection requirements will also be considered.

4.6.3 Issue 3: Additional Traffic

In total 12 submissions included comments related to additional traffic. Most of these submissions were mixed / negative / very negative and the themes related to:

- Accessibility / Traffic Impact;
- Safety; and
- Integration / Bus Network.

Most of these mixed / negative / very negative submissions (71%) were related to additional traffic issues along the entire scheme and not specific to any section of the scheme.

4.6.3.1 Positive/Supportive

While the majority of submissions relating to additional traffic were considered to be negative, some residents and commuters shared a positive outlook on the reduction of non-essential traffic as a result of the Cross-City Link.

4.6.3.2 Issues Raised

In summary, the main issues raised relating to additional traffic were the following:

- A commuter to the city raised concerns over the current slow speed of buses travelling through the city and this impact on traffic.

- A resident raised concerns over the effectiveness of the scheme overall, with doubts that the scheme would lead to faster commute times to the city centre.
- It was also requested that more information be provided on the ‘marginal’ increase in journey time for certain private traffic trips on certain routes.

4.6.3.3 Design Specific Suggestions

The main suggestions in terms of general design for additional traffic were the following:

- A resident raised concerns in relation to the current condition of road surfaces being substandard with potholes throughout, close contact with other vehicles and sharp turns.
- A representative association raised concerns over the scale of overall change proposed and the lack of evidence presented regarding the impact of the scheme on traffic. Concerns were also raised on how the scheme will impact traffic flow in relation to increases of traffic, and a query on how traffic will utilise the routes available.

4.6.3.4 Location Specific Suggestions

The main location specific suggestions relating to additional traffic were the following:

- Salmon Weir Bridge: Concerns were raised about the suitability of the Salmon Weir Bridge for buses.
- Dyke Road: A commuter enquired about the possibility of the provision of direct access to the Dyke Road Car Park from the Headford Road, stating that this could alleviate some traffic from the Woodquay junction.
- Headford Road/Newtownsmith: A resident was concerned over the traffic implications associated with the scheme, in particular the movement of vehicles through the scheme with some routes now becoming inaccessible in the Headford Road and Newtownsmith Area.
- Nun’s Island: Concerns were expressed by a local representative relating to the implication of the scheme proposals on Nun’s Island, suggesting the scheme will lead to the creation of a ‘rat run’ for traffic that would have previously crossed the Salmon Weir Bridge.
- College Road: A business raised a number of concerns in relation to additional traffic generated from the scheme. It was expressed that the reduction in loss of access on College Road and Salmon Weir Bridge would further hinder access to the city centre and that the resulting displaced traffic would use other overburdened routes thereby adding to the city traffic problems.

- Woodquay: A resident raised concerns in relation to the traffic implication in the vicinity of Corrib Terrace, Walshe's Terrace and Steamer's Quay Area of Woodquay, stating that existing traffic volumes and movements can be high at peak times in the area. The main concern raised is that one access junction to this area, as is proposed in the scheme, will not be suitable to cater for the traffic flows in the area.

4.6.3.5 Galway City Council Response to Issue 3

The purpose of the Cross-City Link is to greatly enhance the public transport, pedestrian and cycling offer in Galway City, thereby encouraging greater use of these modes and a switch away from private, single-occupancy vehicle use.

Bus use in Galway City increased by 48.1% from 2013 to 2019 as identified in the NTA Bus & Rail Statistics for Ireland – State Funded Services. The Cross-City Link will be instrumental in increasing this figure further, with walking and cycling also increasing. As the population of Galway City is set to increase by 50% to 60% by the year 2040 in accordance with the National Planning Framework, modal shift from car to sustainable modes will be essential for the sustainable growth of the city.

A comprehensive traffic management plan is being proposed to manage traffic on the city centre road network. The precise impacts of the scheme on the surrounding road network, including along the Cross-City Link, as well as the surrounding areas, will be further assessed as part of the traffic modelling exercise currently being undertaken, with appropriate treatment and or mitigation measures provided where necessary. The potential impacts of the proposed scheme will be fully quantified as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process being carried out by Galway City Council.

4.6.4 Issue 4: Loss of Access

In total 45 of the submissions received included comments related to loss of access. Most of these submissions (69%) were mixed / negative / very negative and the themes related to:

- Accessibility / Traffic Impact;
- Safety; and
- Economy / Impact on Local business.

A large proportion of these mixed / negative / very negative submissions (35%) were related to the perceived loss of access issues of the College Road / Dublin Road section of the scheme, with 32% related to the loss of access issues of the entire scheme and not specific to any section of the scheme.

4.6.4.1 Positive/Supportive

While a large proportion of submissions relating to loss of access were considered to be negative, some submissions with queries and concerns in relation to the issue also contained positive and supportive sentiment on other aspects of the scheme as a whole.

4.6.4.2 Issues Raised

In summary, the main issues raised relating to loss of access were the following:

- A number of submissions raised concerns relating generally to access to the city centre. Some specifically referred to the loss of access by car via the Salmon Weir Bridge;
- A business owner expressed concerns that the success of retail in the city relies on the ease of access for all customers but particularly motorists from the hinterland. The main concern raised was that this scheme would further hinder ease of access to the city centre by car to the population who are not served by bus routes;
- A representative body raised concerns over the impact on the change in traffic arrangements in terms of overall access and requested further information on how traffic will be able to use routes;
- A number of residents raised concerns over the ability to access College Road by car;
- Concerns were raised about access to the school on St. Francis Street; and
- A representative body requested further information relating to access to the Waterside area via Headford Road by car.

4.6.4.3 Design Specific Suggestions

In summary the main suggestions in terms of general design in relation to access were the following:

- A local representative raised concerns over the design layout in the area of Dyke Road to The Plots where there is a loss of cycle access - the result being that cyclists must now take a longer route mixing with more traffic;
- A business raised concerns over the implications of the scheme design on St. Francis Street which will result in loss of vehicular access to businesses along this street;
- Concerns were raised that traffic entering Lombard Street, Market Street and Upper Abbeygate Street from the west side of the city will have no option but return home via Woodquay and either the Quincentennial Bridge or around by the Docks. In particular, this will include parents dropping off and collecting children by car from St. Patricks School which is a huge inconvenience;

- A representative body raised concerns that there does not appear to be access through pedestrian plazas for cyclists and requested measures to ensure connectivity for cyclists through the scheme;
- A business was concerned about the removal of existing yellow boxes at junction providing access to their property; and
- A resident requested vehicular access from the west of the Salmon Weir Bridge to Woodquay (Corrib Terrace, Walshe's Terrace, Steamer's Quay) should be retained.

4.6.4.4 Location Specific Suggestions

The main location specific suggestions relating to loss of access were the following:

- One submission suggested that traffic should not be allowed to travel through the city via Wolfe Tone Bridge and Lough Atalia Road.
- Nun's Island: A resident requested that vehicular access to Nun's Island should be ensured by automatic bollards, as it is unclear in the scheme how they will access Nun's Island.
- College Road: A number of residents expressed concerns relating to loss of vehicular access in the College Road area, some specifically relating to medical appointments, to do their shopping, access to the Sports Grounds, Connacht Rugby and The Greyhound Track, Loyola Park and Yates College. A business on College Road also raised concerns relating to the potential compromise of its vehicular access routes due to the scheme proposal.
- Salmon Weir Bridge: A business raised concerns that reducing motorist access on College Road and Salmon Weir Bridge would further hinder access to the city centre for customers and negatively impact city centre retail.
- Eyre Square: A number of submissions requested information on vehicular access to the Eyre Square trading area for traders.
- Lough Atalia Road: A representative association requested further information on local access arrangements in the Lough Atalia area.

4.6.4.5 Galway City Council Response to Issue 4

The objective of the Cross-City Link is to prioritise walking, cycling and public transport along its length, whilst facilitating essential private traffic on appropriate alternative routes.

The Cross-City Link provides dedicated space to serve all proposed city bus services, by providing bus priority through the city centre core. Regional, national and private bus operators, emergency vehicles and small public service vehicles will also benefit from the Cross-City Link providing enhanced access for these modes. These regional and national bus services will improve access to the city centre for those living in the hinterland of the city and provide a predictable journey by bus into the city centre, where they can access retail, education, medical, cultural or sporting activities amongst others.

Pedestrians will benefit from the traffic management proposals contained within the Cross-City Link scheme, with a reduction in traffic flow in the core city centre area resulting in a more welcoming environment. Footpaths will be upgraded, and pedestrian crossings provided or enhanced along the route, including at key junctions such as University Road, St. Francis Street, St. Bridget's Place, etc. These facilities will take into account the needs of persons with mobility issues and will provide high-quality public footpaths for young and old.

Cyclists will also benefit from the reduction in vehicular traffic along the 'primary' cycle corridor (from University Road to Eyre Square) and 'secondary' cycle corridor (from Forster Street to Moneenageisha) as identified in the Galway Transport Strategy. The proposed restrictions on private vehicles on parts of the route, e.g. Salmon Weir Bridge, Forster Street, College Road, etc. will not apply to cyclists – resulting in an improved environment for safe cycling due to lower traffic volumes.

Notwithstanding the above, a comprehensive traffic management plan, including a directional signage strategy (e.g. suite of turn bans, directional signage strategy) is being prepared to manage traffic on the road network while ensuring that access to all essential amenities such as schools, hospitals and sports facilities is retained. Access to these amenities by car will still be feasible in most cases, however motorists may have to take new routes to continue to use their private vehicles to access these amenities. Access to all city centre car-parks has been retained.

The design team has been cognisant of the potential of creating rat-runs whilst attempting to maintain access for vehicles. The precise impacts of the scheme on the surrounding road network, including along the Cross-City Link, as well as the surrounding areas, will be further assessed as part of the traffic modelling exercise currently being undertaken, with appropriate treatment and or mitigation measures provided where necessary. The potential impacts of the proposed scheme will be fully quantified as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process being carried out by Galway City Council.

4.6.5 Issue 5: Cyclist Safety

In total 39 of the submissions received included comments related to cyclist safety. Most of these submissions were neutral or positive / very positive. In general, the positive points that were made in the context of cyclist safety was that the proposed installation of segregated and protected cycle lanes will have a positive impact in terms of accessibility, safety, and integration; and that the promotion of cycling in this way should be a policy going forward.

Around 33% of the 39 submissions were mixed / negative / very negative and the themes related to:

- Accessibility / Traffic Impact;
- Safety; and
- Integration / Bus Network.

Most of these mixed / negative / very negative submissions (85%) were related to cyclist safety issues of the entire scheme and not specific to any section of the scheme.

4.6.5.1 Positive/Supportive

The main positive/supportive sentiments related to Cyclist Safety were the following:

- Some submissions expressed a positive and supportive outlook on the increased and improved provision of cycling facilities.
- It was evident from a number of submission that safety when cycling is a key interest and focus point, and while there was some specific concerns raised on the issue of cyclist safety, there was also a positive and supportive sentiment on other aspects of the scheme as a whole.

4.6.5.2 Issues Raised

In summary, the main issues raised relating to cyclist safety were the following:

- Many submissions raised concerns that there is a lack of segregated cycling facilities and infrastructure in the plan with a suggestion that cycling is treated like a secondary mode in the plan;
- A number of submissions raised concerns that cyclists will experience unsafe conditions due to potholes and general road condition;
- Concerns were raised by representative associations that cyclists will experience unsafe conditions due to the proposed design which includes sharp turns, close contact with vehicles, the sharing of bus lanes and unprotected right turns;
- A representative body raised concerns that vulnerable cyclists, especially children, old people, and people with disabilities, are not accommodated safely by the design;
- Some submissions suggested that there is uncertainty regarding the treatment of cyclists at bus gates; and
- A submission raised concerns that there could be delays for cyclists due to diversions as a result of the proposed one-way street arrangements and also stop-go systems at bus gates.

4.6.5.3 Design Specific Suggestions

In summary the main suggestions in terms of general design for cyclist safety were the following:

- A submission suggested that bus gates should include cycle lanes. Signalling at bus gates should allow movement for cyclists in both directions when there are no buses;

- Some submissions stated that cycle lanes should be wider and segregated, and more cycle lanes should take the design of Greenways or be protected by a kerb (not a white line);
- In terms of junctions, it was suggested by a representative body and a representative association to consider the Dutch (CYCLOPS) approach, which include island protected junctions, and protected turns at junctions. Suggestions for junctions also included: all junctions should have turning movements protected for cyclists, through improved traffic signalling; traffic signalling should have separate phases for pedestrians and cyclists; signalling could be “smart” and register cyclists in advance; junctions should have modified stop lines to allow cyclists a head start; left turn lanes should be provided for cyclists; guidance routes should be provided for cyclists at junctions; junctions should be wider to accommodate all movements; cyclists should have priority crossing minor junctions and private entrances.
- A resident, business and representative association felt that where cyclists have to share vehicular lanes, speed limits should be reduced. A safe transition space with ramps should be designed to move from segregated to shared spaces;
- A representative association suggested that cycle lanes should be provided to bypass bus stops. They should be provided on both sides of the roads or should be two-way. They should be provided to access facilities such as sports facilities;
- A number of submissions suggested the need for more cycle parking to be provided, and that these facilities should be sheltered, secured and visible; and
- In terms of the general approach, an off-peak cycling plan was suggested by a business. Some submissions requested a separate drawing outlining the flow of cyclists. A presentation of different design alternatives for cyclists was also suggested.

4.6.5.4 Location Specific Suggestions

The main location specific suggestions for cyclist safety were the following:

- A number of submissions requested the provision of cycle lanes along numerous streets such as St Francis Street, Eglington Street, Goal Road (contraflow), Woodquay (both ways), Merlin Park Meadows and from the city centre to Oranmore and Lough Atalia Road (segregated);
- Corrib River: There was a suggestion to provide cycle tracks / lanes along the river;
- Greenway: There was a suggestion from a number of commuters and residents to connects to the Moycullen Greenway and the old railway bridge over the Corrib river;
- Salmon Weir Bridge: There was a suggestion to consider a single lane for buses and the second lane can be used for cyclists in both directions;

- City centre: There was a request for the provision of changing / shower facilities;
- Pedestrianised streets and plazas: A representative body, along with a number of residents felt there were uncertainty about how cyclists will be accommodated in these areas. There was a suggestion to sign post “Share with Care” or “Pedestrian Priority with Cycles Permitted” in these areas;
- Dyke Road / The Plots area: Concerns were raised by a business that cyclists will be forced to climb a steep hill and by a local representative that there will be a loss of cycle access. The view was that in this area cyclist will have to mix with more traffic and divert along a longer route;
- G Hotel: A commuter suggested the implementation of a cycle lane at the G Hotel; and
- University: A representative body raised uncertainty about how cycling infrastructure will be improved for staff and students. A resident expressed the need for a safe right turn for cyclists turning into the university along University Road, along with segregated cycle ways along University Road.

4.6.5.5 Galway City Council Response to Issue 5

The Cross-City Link on public consultation is from Dublin Road to University Road, as per the figure below.



Figure 8: Cross-City Link Scheme Extents

Other projects as set out in the Galway Transport Strategy are/ will in time move through the relevant consent processes e.g. Salmon Weir Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge; Greenways; BusConnects Galway: Dublin Road, Cycle Network - Galway City Council welcomes feedback and support for these projects as and when they progress.

This response is limited to the Cross-City Link (University Road to Dublin Road) only, as set out in the route map above.

The designs presented as part of the non-statutory public consultation are preliminary in nature and will require additional work to bring them to a point where Galway City Council is prepared to submit the overall proposal for planning consent. The various issues raised in this consultation process will also feed into the designs. The final designs will be assessed against all relevant design standards including the National Cycle Manual, the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets and emerging guidance documents arising out of the BusConnects programme. In particular, Vulnerable Road User safety will be assessed through a Road User Audit, Road Safety Audit and Disability Audit of the scheme.

4.6.6 Issue 6: Pedestrian Safety

In total 40 submissions included comments related to pedestrian safety. Most of these submissions were neutral or positive / very positive.

Around 40% of the 40 submissions were mixed / negative / very negative and the themes related to:

- Accessibility / Traffic Impact;
- Safety; and
- Integration / Bus Network.

Most of these mixed / negative / very negative submissions (75%) were related to pedestrian safety issues of the entire scheme and not specific to any section of the scheme.

4.6.6.1 Positive/Supportive

In general, the positive points made in the context of pedestrian safety were that the additional proposed pedestrian walkways were welcomed and a much-needed addition to improve pedestrian safety. In addition, the provision of wider footpaths and pedestrianised areas, as well as the rebalancing of traffic lights were seen as a positive contribution to the future of Galway. The continuation of pedestrian priority and use of pedestrian crossings was supported.

4.6.6.2 Issues Raised

In summary the main issues raised relating to pedestrian safety were the following:

- Vulnerable users, especially children, old people, and people with disabilities, are not accommodated safely by the design.
- Many submissions suggested, in general, that the permeability and accessibility of the scheme could be improved.
- A number of residents, businesses and a representative association requested that adequate lighting should be provided throughout.

4.6.6.3 Design Specific Suggestions

The main suggestions in terms of general design for pedestrian safety were the following:

- It was suggested that footpaths should be wider throughout the scheme.
- Many residents, commuters and representative associations raised suggestions in relation to pedestrian crossings which included: more pedestrian crossings; include pedestrian crossings at bus stops; priority for pedestrians at pedestrian crossings as short cycle times lead to dangerous crossings; protected islands for pedestrians; and pedestrians should have priority crossing minor junctions and private entrances.
- A resident and some representative associations made suggestions with regard to junctions, where there were requests to give priority for pedestrians at traffic lights.
- A representative association made requests for more pedestrian only spaces and spaces like plazas for pedestrians.
- There were requests from a submission to remove dipped kerbs as these are not suitable for pedestrians with accessibility issues.
- In terms of the general approach, an off-peak pedestrian plan was suggested.

4.6.6.4 Location Specific Suggestions

The main location specific suggestions for pedestrian safety were the following:

- University Road: Many submissions requested the provision of new pedestrian crossings at a number of locations, including between Canal Road Upper and the University;
- Lough Atalia Road: a submission suggested an overhanging boardwalk; and further submissions suggested a railway bridge walking route between Eyre Square and Lough Atalia Road.
- Salmon Weir Bridge: There were a number of submissions from residents, commuters, and a representative association, with some raising uncertainty as to why a new pedestrian bridge is required as the existing Salmon Weir Bridge was viewed as suitable.

Suggestions also included converting the existing bridge to a pedestrian and cycle bridge and constructing a new bridge for the bus scheme, in this way the challenging chicane at the eastern point of the Salmon Weir Bridge can be avoided by the bus scheme / vehicular traffic.

An underpass was suggested between the Cathedral and Salmon Weir Bridge to cross under the road to Earls Island and the University.

- Dublin Road: There was a query on whether pedestrians are permitted to use the cycle path proposed along this road.

4.6.6.5 Galway City Council Response to Issue 6

The response is limited to the Cross-City Link (University Road to Dublin Road) only, as set out in the route map in section 4.6.5.5 above.

The current designs are preliminary in nature and will require additional work to bring them to a point where Galway City Council is prepared to submit the overall proposal for planning consent. The various issues raised in this consultation process will feed into the designs. The final designs will be rigorously assessed against all relevant design standards and take cognisance of other plans and strategies including the Galway Public Realm Strategy. In particular, Vulnerable Road User (VRU) safety will be assessed through a Road User Audit, Road Safety Audit and Disability Audit of the scheme. It is the intention of the Design Team to engage with representative groups during the design process to ensure the scheme is accessible to all.

4.6.7 Issue 7: Other Galway Transport Strategy Projects

In total 13 of the submissions received included comments related to other Galway Transport Strategy projects. 46% of these submissions were positive with 54% being mixed / negative / very negative and the themes related to:

- Accessibility / Traffic Impact;
- Safety; and
- Integration / Bus Network.

Most of these mixed / negative / very negative submissions were related to the integration of the proposed scheme with other potential schemes and were related to the entire scheme and not specific to any section of the scheme.

4.6.7.1 Positive/Supportive

The main positive/supportive comments related to other Galway Transport Strategy Projects related to the following:

- Some submissions expressed positive sentiment on the potential for collaboration between various Galway Transport Strategy Projects, and that presenting these projects together rather than as individual items could help to better understand the combined benefits.
- A number of submissions which raised specific concerns in relation to other Galway Transport Strategy Projects also expressed a positive and supportive sentiment on other aspects of the scheme as a whole.

4.6.7.2 Issues Raised

In summary the main issues raised relating to other Galway Transport Strategy projects were the following:

- A local representative expressed concerns that the scheme is not being presented in the context of the other Galway Transport Strategy projects that relate to it. It was suggested that this context is important as these other projects will have considerable impact on the success of this scheme;
- A business and a representative association raised concerns that there were currently many transport projects and strategies planned for Galway, and that it would be beneficial if the current proposals were presented in the context of the overall network. It was also suggested that facilitating public understanding of where they are at, and how they will come together could possibly be undertaken as a communication piece;
- A representative association suggested that a timeline for the overall BusConnects programme could also be shown, rather than just the Cross-City Link as a standalone project; and
- Concerns were also raised about how this scheme tied together with other BusConnects projects and whether this scheme will go ahead with or without the proposed Galway City Ring Road scheme.

4.6.7.3 Design Specific Suggestions

The main suggestion in terms of general design for other Galway Transport Strategy projects was the following:

- A submission requested that the Salmon Weir Bridge should remain accessible to the private car up until the completion of the N6 Galway City Ring Road.

4.6.7.4 Galway City Council Response to Issue 7

The Cross-City Link is one project out of many which are contained in the Galway Transport Strategy, as adopted by Galway City Council in 2017 and incorporated into the Galway City Development Plan and the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan and the National Development Plan. Galway City Council is in the process of developing a number of transport capital projects in the Galway Transport Strategy at present, with additional projects to come on-stream as funding and resources permit.

BusConnects network planning is a function of the National Transport Authority, and Galway City Council welcome the opportunity to collaborate with the NTA to progress a review of the network in due course. The Salmon Weir Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge is a separate project which, at the time of writing, is currently awaiting a decision from An Bord Pleanála on planning consent.

Likewise, the N6 Galway City Ring Road is currently going through the planning consent stage, under the auspices of Galway County Council, on behalf of Galway City Council. An Oral Hearing has been held with regard to this scheme, and a decision from An Bord Pleanála is anticipated in the coming months.

Other transport capital projects in the Galway Transport Strategy are also being developed through: Options Assessment, Preliminary Design, Statutory Process, Detailed Design and Tender, and Construction and Implementation, and will also include transforming the city's current public realm.

As funding and resources permit, Galway City Council will continue to deliver projects in the Galway Transport Strategy as a co-ordinated strategy to address transport demand.

The Galway Transport Strategy seeks to support those living, studying, working and visiting Galway to move around the city more easily by walking, cycling and by public transport. Those seeking to travel by private car will still be facilitated; however, the priority will be to cater for greater numbers of people travelling by sustainable means.

The schemes being delivered at any one time are dependent on many factors which are outside of the control of the Cross-City Link project, including funding, planning consent, annual service delivery plans etc.

The Cross-City Link design team will provide an overall for delivery of the Cross-City Link with respect to other Galway Transport Strategy schemes as part of the planning consent application for this scheme.

4.6.8 Issue 8: Loss of Parking

In total 18 of the submissions received included comments related to loss of parking. Most of these submissions (67%) were mixed / negative / very negative and the themes related to:

- Accessibility / Traffic Impact;
- Safety; and
- Economy / Impact on Local Business.

A large proportion of these mixed / negative / very negative submissions (41%) were related to the loss of parking issues of the College Road / Dublin Road section of the scheme, with 33% related to the loss of parking issues of the entire scheme and not specific to any section of the scheme.

4.6.8.1 Positive/Supportive

While a large proportion of submissions raised specific queries and concerns in relation to the issue of loss of parking and were considered to be negative, some also contained positive and supportive sentiment on other aspects of the scheme as a whole.

4.6.8.2 Issues Raised

- A number of residents and businesses were concerned about the general loss of parking spaces throughout the scheme, some also enquired about whether alternatives would be put in place for parking proposed to be removed. Some residents raised queries about parking permits, in particular in the College Road area.
- A business expressed concerns that retail relies on the ease of access by all customers and as such suggested low cost or free parking. Concerns were also raised by a number of businesses that the scheme will hinder access to the city centre for customers and negatively impact city centre retail, with suggestions for cheaper parking.
- A representative association raised concerns over the general lack of disabled parking in the different areas of the scheme. With another representative association enquiring about the provision of Blue Badge disabled parking in the city centre. It was also queried if people with disabilities could utilise parking in areas marked 'parking, loading, taxi bay'.
- A business enquired as to whether there are opportunities for advertising car park availability through parking apps.
- A number of submissions enquired about the provision of park and ride sites.

4.6.8.3 Design Specific Suggestions

- A representative association raised concerns that the proposed scheme would result in a loss of approximately 200 car parking spaces, it was queried if there was any plan for the provision of signposting alternative parking spaces.

4.6.8.4 Location Specific Suggestions

- A representative association expressed concerns about parking around the United Methodist Presbyterian Church. It was suggested that it would be difficult to access the church without parking;
- College Road: A number of submissions expressed concerns that the scheme will presumably reduce the availability of parking on College Road. As a result, it was suggested by some, that consideration should be given to increasing the availability of short-term visitor parking at City Hall;
- Lough Atalia: A representative association raised concerns over the loss of parking spaces in the area;
- City centre: A representative association raised a concern in relation to disabled bays in Eyre Square and Woodquay. Concerns were also raised in some submissions about the reduction in parking in Woodquay; and
- Forster Street: A business enquired about the provision of parking spaces outside the Church on Foster Street.

4.6.8.5 Galway City Council Response to Issue 8

The proposed scheme facilitates the continued accessibility to numerous off-street car-parks within the city centre, in particular along the Inner City Access Road from Headford Road to Lough Atalia Road via, Bothar na mBan, Prospect Hill, Bothar ui hEithir and Fairgreen Road.

The proposed scheme includes for the reduction of some on-street parking spaces along the Cross-City Link and some other locations including Galway Cathedral and Woodquay. Where Blue Badge Disabled Parking is being impacted by proposals it is intended that a similar proportion of Blue Badge Disabled Parking spaces will be provided in close proximity to that being removed. The removal of on-street parking will be mitigated by the significant improvement in reliability of bus journey time along this route and the modal shift from private car to sustainable transport modes within the city centre. Research by Transport for London indicates significant positive impacts from the provision of walking and cycling improvements and can increase retail spend by up to 30% (source: Lawlor, 2013), with cycle parking delivering five times the retail spend per square metre than the same area of car-parking (source: Raje and Saffrey, 2016). Galway City Council is providing additional on-street cycle parking, with positive feedback on usage to date. In 2020, Galway City Council installed 296 new cycle parking spaces - an increase of 28% year on year in 2020. There are currently 1,034 cycle parking spaces available on-street in Galway City.

Positive feedback on cycle parking provided to date, as well as requests for additional cycle parking, indicate an appetite for more sustainable transport options in the retail area of the city.

In engagement with Galway Chamber members in January 2021, as part of this non-statutory public consultation, the feedback and comments were largely supportive, with issues raised by the Chamber such as the need for effective communication as changes are implemented, duly noted by the project team. The Cross-City Link brings significant opportunities to address traffic congestion and keep goods, capital, people and services moving in and through the city.

4.6.9 Issue 9: Devaluation of Property

One submission received included comments related to devaluation of property. This submission was negative, and the theme related to economy / impact on local business. The submission was related to devaluation of property issues along the College Road / Dublin Road section of the scheme, at a point where land take is envisaged in order to progress the full scheme.

4.6.9.1 Galway City Council Response to Issue 9

Galway City Council does not believe that the Cross-City Link will devalue properties on College Road or Dublin Road. Instead the Cross-City Link will bring high quality, high frequency bus services within direct access of homeowners - increasing their ability to access work, education and facilities in the city.

Businesses will also benefit, as customers and staff will have improved access to their premises. This has been demonstrated through research of similar situations internationally. For example, the research paper “Public Transport Proximity Impact on Property Value. Evidence from Bucharest Residential Market” states that concerns over the quality of life have spread to the growing use of active transportation modes, and as so, proximity to the public transportation system is highly valued. The relationship between public transport accessibility and residential land value is the subject of many recent research. A house located near public transports will tend to be sold at higher prices.

Furthermore, the research paper “Effects of Transportation Accessibility on Residential Property Values” which was developed for the Lisbon Metropolitan Area suggests that the proximity to one or two metro lines leads to significant property value changes.

Research published in the paper titled “Interaction of Public Transport Accessibility and Residential Property Values Using Smart Card Data” found that properties located in well-connected, well-serviced, and accessible locations generally experience premiums in their values. The results indicate that there is value added to the property market from the public investment in public transport services and infrastructure.

In addition, pedestrian and cycling facilities will be enhanced along the route, supporting mobility, access to facilities and services and physical activity. These accessible facilities will support mobility impaired persons and an aging population to continue to access the city by multiple modes.

Where potential land acquisition is envisaged, Galway City Council will engage readily with landowners potentially impacted by the proposed scheme. This engagement process will seek to agree measures, whether financial and/or physical, to mitigate the direct impact of the proposed scheme. A Compulsory Purchase Order for this scheme will be required. The Compulsory Purchase Order process will fairly value the impact of the proposed scheme on properties and provide for mitigation measures including for the construction of new boundary walls.

The potential impacts of the proposed scheme will be fully quantified as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process which will be carried out by Galway City Council during the preparation of a planning consent application for the scheme. These impacts will be taken into account by An Bord Pleanála in their assessment of the scheme.

4.6.10 Issue 10: Land Acquisition

In total 6 of the submissions received included comments related to land acquisition. Three (50%) of these submissions were mixed / negative / very negative and the themes related to:

- Accessibility / Traffic Impact;
- Economy / Impact on Local business; and
- Social Impact.

These mixed / negative / very negative submissions were related to land acquisition issues along the College Road / Dublin Road section and the Eyre Square section of the scheme.

The other three (50%) of these submissions were neutral / positive / very positive. While they contained specific concerns or queries in relation to land acquisition, they also contained positive and supportive sentiment on other aspects of the scheme as a whole.

4.6.10.1 Galway City Council Response to Issue 10

Similar to Issue 9 above, where potential land acquisition is envisaged, Galway City Council will engage readily with landowners potentially impacted by the proposed scheme. This engagement process will seek to agree measures, whether financial and/or physical, to mitigate the direct impact of the proposed scheme.

The precise land acquisition required to deliver the scheme can only be determined at detailed design level, and its justification will be presented as part of a Compulsory Purchase Order process. The potential impacts of the proposed scheme will be fully quantified as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process which will be carried out by Galway City Council during the preparation of a planning application for the scheme.

4.6.11 Issue 11: Associated Bus Facilities

In total, 7 of the submissions received included comments related to lack of associated bus facilities such as toilets and bus shelters. Most of these submissions were neutral or positive / very positive. Two of these submissions were mixed / negative / very negative and the themes related to:

- Accessibility / Traffic Impact;
- Safety; and
- Integration / Bus Network.

These mixed / negative / very negative submissions were related to lack of associated bus facilities such as toilets and bus shelters along the entire scheme and not specific to any section of the scheme.

4.6.11.1 Positive/Supportive

While a number of submissions raised specific queries and concerns in relation to the issue of associated bus facilities, most of these also contained positive and supportive sentiment on other aspects of the scheme as a whole.

4.6.11.2 Issues Raised

The main issues raised relating to lack of associated bus facilities were the following:

- A submission was concerned about the lack of toilet/welfare facilities available for use by bus drivers and suggested the need for such facilities in the scheme.
- Some submissions requested and highlighted the need for a bus shelter on Cappagh Road.
- A representative body expressed concerns over the removal of bus stops along the Newcastle Road.

4.6.11.3 Galway City Council Response to Issue 11

The Cross-City Link provides the infrastructure for bus priority measures along a corridor which form part of 5 no. proposed new bus routes as identified in the Galway Transport Strategy. However, the scheme does not extend to the terminus points at either end of any of these routes, where it would typically be expected that bus drivers would take a break and may require welfare facilities. Bus network planning is a function of the National Transport Authority, which will decide the appropriate termini and facilities required along the routes. As such, the delivery of these facilities and other elements including bus shelters along the routes that are not on the Cross-City Link are outside the remit of the Cross-City Link scheme.

Welfare facilities for bus drivers is primarily the responsibility of their employer under Health, Safety & Welfare at Work legislation. Galway City Council provides a network of public conveniences throughout the city which are freely available to all members of the public. The development of the Coach Station at Fairgreen in the city was a very positive development for both bus operators and customers as such welfare facilities are provided in same. The City Council works closely with the National Transport Authority Bus Licensing unit to direct licensed operators to this facility as licenses come up for renewal.

Notwithstanding the above, Galway City Council continually engage with the National Transport Authority on the delivery of bus facilities outside the scope of this scheme and will continue to do so. Submissions made to Galway City Council as part of this consultation process will be considered as part of these ongoing delivery programmes. The National Transport Authority has been notified of the expression of interest in welfare facilities for bus drivers.

4.6.12 Issue 12: Noise Pollution

In total, 6 of the submissions received included comments related to noise pollution. Four (67%) of these submissions were mixed / negative / very negative and the themes related to:

- Accessibility / Traffic Impact; and
- Social Impact.

These mixed / negative / very negative submissions were related to noise pollution issues along the College Road / Dublin Road section, the Eyre Square section and the St Vincent's Avenue section of the scheme.

4.6.12.1 Positive/Supportive

While some submissions raised specific queries and concerns in relation to the issue of noise pollution, they also contained positive and supportive sentiment on other aspects of the scheme as a whole.

4.6.12.2 Issues Raised

In summary the main issues raised relating to noise pollution were the following:

- A resident expressed concerns about the increase in volume of buses travelling College Road, suggesting that this will result in noise pollution as buses produce more noise than cars.
- A number of representative bodies expressed concerns over a potential increase in noise pollution in open plaza areas.
- A business was concerned that proposed land acquisition to their boundary, and the distance to the road, will result in an increase in noise pollution.

4.6.12.3 Galway City Council Response to Issue 12

Under the BusConnects programme, the NTA intend to upgrade the existing bus fleet to transition to a fleet of low emission vehicles which will reduce both noise and air pollution. By 2023, half of the bus fleet are intended to be converted to low emission vehicles, with full conversion completed by 2030.

It should be noted that along College Road and other sections of the Cross-City Link, it is anticipated that there will be a significant reduction in the volume of traffic on this corridor, which is likely to have a positive impact on air and noise quality along this corridor. Also, the Cross-City Link is anticipated to significantly increase the number of trips made by walking and cycling, both of which would have a positive effect on air and noise quality.

The potential impact of the scheme in relation to Air quality and Noise impacts will be detailed as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process which will be carried out by Galway City Council during the preparation of a planning application for the scheme. This assessment will include for emissions and noise generated during the construction phase as well as the operational phase of the project.

5 Summary and Conclusions

The non-statutory public conclusion took place between October 2020 and May 2021. Due to COVID-19 restrictions in place throughout the consultation period, Galway City Council engaged in virtual and on-line non-statutory public consultation on the Cross-City Link project. The purpose of the non-statutory consultation was to encourage stakeholders to identify questions or issues they want the Design Teams to consider as the projects progress through design and statutory processes.

A total of 93 submissions were received. Submissions were received via the public information room, through emails to Galway City Council, and by phone. Each submission was assigned a sentiment comprising of either Very Positive, Positive, Neutral, Negative, Very Negative or Mixed. Of the submissions received 60% were classified as Very Positive, Positive or Neutral. 29% of submission were classified as negative or very negative and 11% were classified as mixed.

A number of issues were raised by respondents, each of which will be further considered during the ongoing design process of the Cross-City Link in advance of the submission of an application for planning consent to be submitted to An Bord Pleanála. Additionally, a full Environmental Impact Assessment Report will be prepared for the scheme and will accompany the planning application. It is expected that planning consent will be sought from An Bord Pleanála in Q1 2022.

This report will be made available for download on the project website, at www.busconnectsgalway.ie. Galway City Council would like to acknowledge and thank the public for their engagement in the process, and for taking the time to make comments and suggestions on the proposed Cross-City Link.



Appendix A
List of Invitees to
Stakeholder Meetings

Organisation	Organisation
Burkes Bus	Michael Moran Coach Hire
Bus Eireann	Paddywagon
Bus Feda Teoranta	Spirit of Ireland Executive Travel
Bus4U	Treacy Coaches
City Direct	Irish Rail
Coach Station Operator	Hynes Yard Car Park
ComfortDelGro Irish Citylink Limited - Citylink	Q Park Eyre Square
Cummer Coaches/ Go Bus	Spanish Arch Car Park - Q Park
Farrells of Athenry	Access for All
Galway Bus Ltd	An Taisce
Healy Coaches	Galway Cathedral
Kearns Transport	Galway City Community Network
Big O Taxis,	Galway City Partnership
City Taxis Galway,	Connacht Rugby
Claddagh Coach Hire	Galweigans
Galway City Taxis	Galway Business School
Galway Minibus Rental,	GMIT
Galway Taxis,	Green Schools
Local Taxis Galway,	GTI Fr Griffin Rd
Minibus Hire Galway	NUI Galway
Procabs	Yeats College
Around Ireland Day Tours Ltd T/a Wild Rover Tours	An Garda Siochana
Barrett Travel	Civil Defence
Corduff Travel	Fire Services
Dave Long Coach Travel	HSE Ambulances
Extreme Event Ireland	Order of Malta
Faherty Tours	Saolta - University Hospital Galway
Farrellys Coaches	Woodquay Residents Association
Finn McCool Tours	East of the Corrib
Fitzpatrick Coaches/ Meadow Tours Ltd	Oranmore Maree Planning & Environment Group
Galway Sightseeing Tour Company	Friends of Merlin Woods
Healy Tours	Aecom
Hidden Dublin Walks	Atkins
High King Tours	RPS
Irish Concert Travel	Tobins
Kennedy Coaches	MKO Ireland
Lally Coaches	Boston Scientific
Lally Tours	Galway Chamber of Commerce
Cyclist.ie	Galway City Business Association
Cyclist.ie/ An Taisce	Galway Convention Bureau
Galway Cycling Bus	Galway Shopping Centre

Galway Cycling Campaign	IDA
Galway Urban Greenway Alliance	Irish Hotels Federation - Galway Branch
Gensys	Latin Quarter
SAP	Restaurant Association of Ireland - Galway Branch
West Ireland Cycling	Salthill Village
An Rothar Nua	Vintners Federation of Ireland - Galway Branch
Transport SPC 2019-2020	Westend Traders
Cosain	Woodquay Traders
Eyre Square Association	Harbour Company
Failte Ireland Galway	



Appendix B
Sample Feedback
Extracts

Public Consultation Sample Feedback Extracts



'I would like to see a policy in promoting cycling - this project is a great start, but more needs to be done. Galway could be the best cycle city in Ireland if it embraced it.'

"I really like the enlarged area that will be pedestrianised and the much safer environments and routes for cyclists."

"I welcome this scheme which is desperately needed to improve transit within the city"

"I welcome the scheme and hope it makes the city much more accessible for people with disabilities"

"this is a complete overhaul of the existing structure, in favour of a sustainable and healthy option"

"Given the level of commuting to work and also the need for many to cross the city in order to travel between West Galway and anywhere else in Ireland, the scheme will only work in tandem with sufficient park and ride facilities, and with the proposed Ring Road"

"The proposed five bus routes will provide bus services for many more of the city residents than the existing bus services"



"We are excited by the proposals contained within Bus Connects Galway – in particular, the five high frequency cross city bus routes. This will enhance the punctuality of bus services no end."

"I think this scheme is essential. I wholly support its introduction. We need to move away from cars if we are to have a sustainable city, and people won't use public transport unless it is frequent, fast-moving and reliable."

"If a transition to public transport is needed in the city, then the merits of the proposed scheme in encouraging a shift from car should be presented more clearly"

"This development is an important piece of a bigger puzzle. If we don't get the other pieces in place this development will possibly add to traffic congestion"

"This change in how we access our city will come one way or another and keeping the centre vibrant and with commercial value is key to its success. We need public and commercial communities to start thinking of the change they need now"

"The installation of segregated & protected cycle lanes, the provision of wider footpaths and pedestrianized zones and the rebalancing of traffic lights in their favour can only enhance Galway and keep it thriving & safe"





Údarás Náisiúnta Iompair
National Transport Authority

National Transport Authority
Dún Scéine
Harcourt Lane
Dublin 2
D02 WT20



Comhairle Cathrach na Gaillimhe
Galway City Council



Project Ireland 2040
Building Ireland's Future