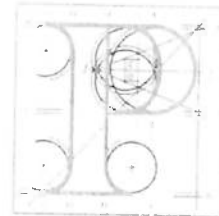


Our Case Number: ABP-321776-25

Your Reference: Connacht Hospitality LTD



An
Bord
Pleanála

Cunnane Stratton Reynolds
Copley Hall
Cotters Street
Cork
Co. Cork

Date: 17 April 2025

Re: BusConnects Galway: Dublin Road Development
R338 Dublin Road, Galway City.

Dear Sir / Madam,

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

Please note that the proposed road development shall not be carried out unless the Board has approved it or approved it with modifications.

The Board has also received an application for confirmation of a compulsory purchase order which relates to this proposed road development. The Board has absolute discretion to hold an oral hearing in respect of any application before it, in accordance with section 218 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. Accordingly, the Board will inform you in due course on this matter. The Board shall also make a decision on both applications at the same time.

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

Please quote the above-mentioned An Bord Pleanála reference number in any correspondence or telephone contact with the Board.

Yours faithfully,

Lauren Griffin
Executive Officer
Direct Line: 01-8737244

HA02A

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CSR Ref: CM/25207

CUNNANE STRATTON REYNOLDS

An Bord Pleanála,
Strategic Infrastructure Division,
64 Marlborough Street,
Dublin 1,
D01 V902,

Date: 16th April 2025

Submission Via Online Portal

RE: SUBMISSION BY THE CONNACHT HOTEL AND HOSPITALITY GROUP, DUBLIN ROAD, GALWAY, H91 K5DD TO AN BORD PLEANÁLA REGARDING THE PROPOSED BUS CONNECTS GALWAY – DUBLIN ROAD SCHEME BY GALWAY CITY COUNCIL. COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER REF BCGDR-CPO-001-2025

Dear Sir/Madam,

We, Cunnane Stratton Reynolds Ltd., located at Unit 3, Copley Hall, Cotters Street, Cork, T12 T938, make this submission to An Bord Pleanála on behalf of our client, The Connacht Hotel and Hospitality Group ("CH&HG"), whose principal address is The Connacht Hotel, Dublin Road, Galway, H91 K5DD. This submission is made in respect of the proposed Bus Connects Galway – Dublin Road Scheme, currently before the Board.

This letter should be read in conjunction with the accompanying technical report prepared by Mr. Gerard Hannify, Chartered Engineer and transportation consultant, based at Oran Town Centre, Station Road, Millplot, Oranmore, Co. Galway attached at **Appendix A**. The report provides a detailed engineering review of the likely impacts of the proposed scheme on the operations of The Connacht Hotel and its surrounding infrastructure.

The Connacht Hotel and Hospitality Group (CH&HG)

The Connacht Hotel is a long-standing and respected hospitality provider located prominently along the R338 Dublin Road, a strategic arterial route into Galway City from the east. The hotel is part of The Connacht Hospitality Group, which includes a portfolio of well-known venues in the city such as Hyde Hotel and Bar, An Púcán Bar, M Fitzgeralds Bar, Residence Hotel, and Active 24 Fitness, all of which contribute to Galway's dynamic tourism and leisure offering.

The Connacht Hotel has operated successfully for over 40 years and is one of the largest hotel facilities in the city, with a capacity to accommodate large tour groups, conferences, family stays, and business travellers. It features a wide array of amenities including an extensive surface-level car park, fitness facilities, and a conference centre. The hotel is open 365 days a year and frequently operates at or near full capacity, especially during high season, major events, and city festivals.

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The wider Connacht Hospitality Group is a significant employer in the region, supporting over 400 direct and indirect jobs across its operations. Its central role in Galway's visitor economy is well established, providing accommodation, food and beverage services, and hospitality experiences to both domestic and international tourists.

As a key stakeholder along the proposed Bus Connects corridor, the Group has a strong and legitimate interest in how public infrastructure projects affect accessibility, visibility, operational continuity, and guest experience. Given the direct impact of the proposed scheme on the hotel's only vehicular and pedestrian entrance, as well as on-road traffic circulation and service logistics, CH&HG is compelled to raise its concerns.

The Proposed Bus Connects Galway Scheme

Bus Connects Galway – Dublin Road is a key component of Galway City Council's wider strategy to deliver a more sustainable, efficient, and accessible transport system. Developed by the National Transport Authority (NTA) and funded through Project Ireland 2040, the scheme forms part of a national investment programme aimed at improving public transport infrastructure in Ireland's major urban centres.

The Galway: Dublin Road corridor proposal involves the creation of a continuous 3.9km route comprising high-quality public transport, cycling, and pedestrian facilities. It extends from east of the Moneenageisha Junction to the Doughiska Junction and passes a number of key institutions and commercial premises, including the Atlantic Technological University, Merlin Park and Bon Secours Hospitals, several schools, and The Connacht Hotel. The project also links with other planned infrastructure upgrades such as the Castlepark Road and Ballybane Road Cycle Network Schemes, the Doughiska Road South Cycle Network, and the proposed Cross-City Link, creating a more integrated urban mobility system.

As part of this corridor upgrade, the scheme proposes a comprehensive reconfiguration of the existing road layout. These works include the provision of dedicated bus lanes in both directions, new segregated cycle tracks, widened pedestrian footpaths, junction upgrades, and pedestrian priority zones. The stated objective is to support a long-term modal shift away from private vehicle use by promoting safe and convenient alternatives. These goals are aligned with national and regional planning policies, including the Galway Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (GMATS) and the Galway City Development Plan 2023–2029, which promote compact growth, sustainable travel, and improved urban connectivity.

While these objectives are supported in principle, the delivery of such transformative infrastructure involves substantial physical intervention along the Dublin Road corridor, including both permanent and temporary land acquisition. The implications for adjacent commercial and residential properties are considerable. In the case of The Connacht Hotel, the proposals will result in significant changes along the hotel's entire frontage, with intensified road use, construction-related disruption, and permanent alterations to access and movement patterns.

The section of Dublin Road adjacent to the hotel is earmarked for multiple interventions, including the installation of eastbound and westbound bus lanes, segregated cycle paths, upgraded footpaths, widened carriageways, and new pedestrian crossings. These interventions, while potentially beneficial from a network perspective, would be implemented directly outside the hotel's only point of access and would significantly alter the surrounding environment in both the short and long term.

A particularly problematic feature of the proposed scheme is the removal of the existing right-turn lane that currently facilitates direct entry to the hotel from the eastbound direction. With this movement eliminated, vehicles approaching from Oranmore and the eastern corridor would be forced to make circuitous and potentially congested detours, thereby complicating access for guests, suppliers, coaches, and emergency vehicles. This change would materially reduce the efficiency of the road network at a location where predictable, direct access is essential for business continuity. In addition, the hotel's sole access point, located directly off Dublin Road, is included within the boundaries of the proposed Compulsory Purchase Order and is expected to be occupied during construction works. As there is no secondary entrance to the site, any disruption to this entry, even on a temporary basis, poses a serious operational risk. Construction activity in this area will also coincide with periods of high occupancy, including peak tourism seasons, public holidays, and large-scale event bookings.

Although CH&HG recognises the need for enhanced infrastructure and supports the broad objectives of Bus Connects Galway, the current scheme design fails to address the specific needs of large-scale commercial properties that depend on uninterrupted access and legible, user-friendly circulation patterns. In the case of The Connacht Hotel, the proposed changes undermine basic functional access requirements for staff, guests, and service providers. The scheme, in its current form, does not provide sufficient safeguards to protect essential operations during construction or thereafter. The balance between transport improvement and business continuity has not been appropriately struck. The long-term success of Galway's urban development strategy depends not only on upgrading infrastructure but also on protecting the viability of key employers and tourism providers that underpin the city's economic resilience.

The scope of the proposed works affecting The Connacht Hotel is illustrated in **Figure 1** below, the planning documentation submitted as part of the application (refer to Drawing No. 22047-BTL-ZZ-ZZ-DR-CR-06009 – "The Connacht Hotel").

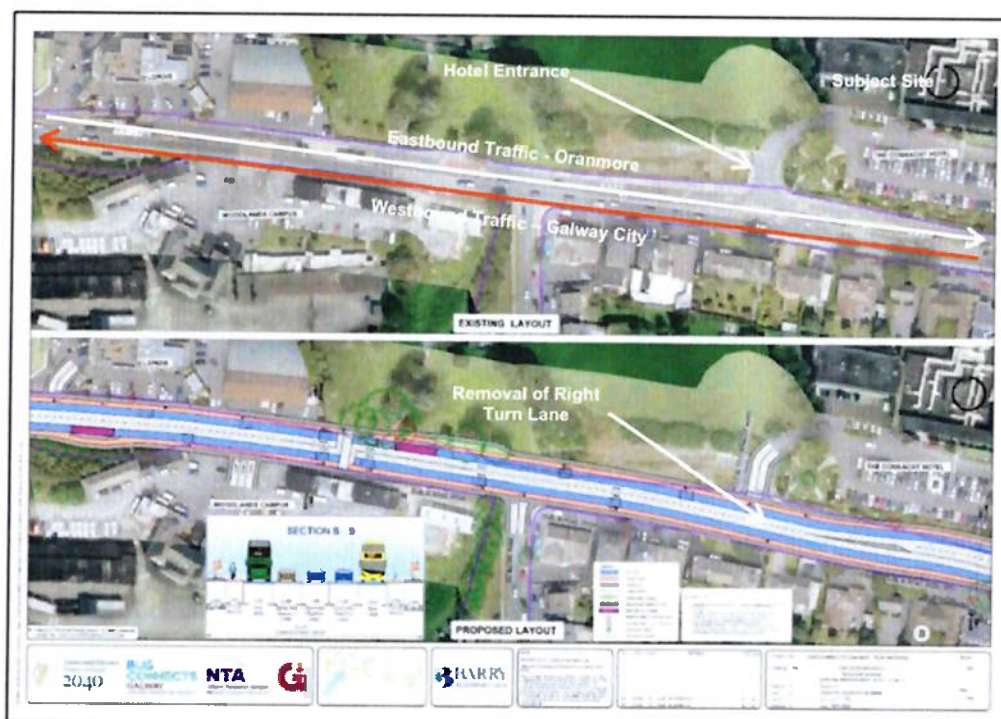


Figure 1: Extract from Bus Connects Galway – Dublin Road Drawing Number: 22047-BTL-ZZ-ZZ-DR-CR-06009 – "The Connacht Hotel".

CH&HG Position on the Bus Connects Galway Programme

The CH&HG supports, in principle, the objectives of the Bus Connects Galway Programme and recognises the long-term importance of developing a more sustainable, accessible, and connected Galway City. The Group acknowledges the need to reduce car dependency as part of a broader strategy for sustainable urban mobility. However, this support is tempered by serious concerns regarding the direct and immediate impacts of the proposed scheme, particularly the Compulsory Purchase Order (BCGDR-CPO-001-2025), on the operational viability of The Connacht Hotel.

The proposed scheme includes both temporary and permanent land take directly affecting the hotel's sole vehicular and pedestrian access point on Dublin Road. The entire entrance area falls within the CPO boundary and is proposed to be occupied during construction. This represents a critical threat to the hotel's operations, without safe, convenient, and continuous access to the site, the hotel cannot function effectively. Guest arrivals and departures, staff movements, deliveries, emergency services, and tour group logistics all depend on this single point of access. The construction timeline has not been clearly defined, and what is currently referred to as a "short-term" disruption could extend over many weeks or months, placing substantial strain on the hotel's ability to operate.

The potential for loss or restriction of on-site car parking is another significant concern. The Connacht Hotel's surface-level car park is essential to its operation, serving overnight guests, gym members, conference attendees, and customers of associated hospitality venues. While preliminary technical assessments suggest the CPO boundary may stop short of marked spaces, this remains unclear, and any ambiguity must be resolved through formal clarification. Even a marginal reduction in capacity could create significant operational difficulties, particularly given the hotel's reliance on high volumes of daily vehicle traffic, which were observed to be substantial even during off-peak periods.

In addition, the majority of hotel users arrive by private vehicle or coach, often carrying luggage, event equipment, or requiring mobility support. The nature of the hotel's services means that private vehicular access is not optional, it is essential. While the Group supports investment in public transport, it is not feasible to expect a complete shift to bus or active travel modes for large segments of the hotel's clientele. Families, tour groups, corporate guests, and those with reduced mobility depend on predictable, direct access to the premises.

The proposed removal of the existing right-turn lane into the hotel from the eastbound direction adds a further operational burden. This change would eliminate the ability for vehicles travelling from Oranmore and the eastern approach to enter the hotel directly, requiring them to undertake potentially congested detours and complicated routing. Such changes would be particularly disruptive during peak check-in and check-out times, for coach tours on tight schedules, and for emergency or service vehicles needing quick access. These access constraints would negatively affect the guest experience, potentially reducing future bookings, particularly from tour operators and event organisers who rely on movement efficiency.

CH&HG is fully supportive of Galway's transition toward more sustainable transport options, but the current scheme design places a disproportionate burden on an established and successful business that contributes significantly to the local economy. The Connacht Hotel is a major employer, a key component of Galway's hospitality offering, and an anchor for tourism-related activity along Dublin Road. The proposed access restrictions, traffic flow changes, and uncertain construction disruptions present unacceptable risks to its ability to continue providing a high-quality service to visitors and clients.

The Group believes that the objectives of Bus Connects Galway can and should be achieved without causing such adverse impacts. This will require meaningful engagement with affected stakeholders, targeted design refinements, and a more balanced implementation approach. CH&HG remains committed to constructive collaboration with Galway City Council, the National Transport Authority, and An Bord Pleanála to ensure that critical infrastructure improvements can proceed in a manner that safeguards the viability of long-standing, essential local businesses.

Planning Background and Key Planning Considerations

The Connacht Hotel is located on the R338 Dublin Road, a strategic approach route into Galway City and an important element of the city's transportation infrastructure. This corridor is identified within the Galway Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (GMATS) and the Galway City Development Plan 2023–2029 as a priority area for public transport enhancement, linking key land uses including healthcare, education, residential neighbourhoods, and commercial and tourism enterprises such as The Connacht Hotel.

While the Development Plan promotes a shift toward sustainable transport and compact urban growth, it also explicitly recognises the need to safeguard and enhance access to economic drivers. The Bus Connects Dublin Road proposals, particularly in the area surrounding The Connacht Hotel, present serious conflict with several of the Development Plan's core strategic goals, especially where they relate to accessibility, economic resilience, and tourism support.

Chapter 1 of the Galway City Development Plan 2023 – 2029 sets out the vision to:

"Enable Galway to become a city of scale as envisaged in the NPF and a regional driver of development that can contribute to economic growth through the provision of balanced and sustainable economic opportunities for development, innovation and investment across all employment sectors and allow the role of the City and Metropolitan Area to harness the strengths and maximise the economic development for the whole Northern and Western Region."

The proposed removal of key access infrastructure and disruption to operations at The Connacht Hotel contradicts this vision. Rather than enabling balanced economic opportunity, the scheme, without mitigation, risks weakening a high-performing local business that contributes directly to regional tourism, employment, and investment.

Policy 1.4 of the Core Strategy of the Development Plan further states:

"Collaborate with government departments, agencies and key stakeholders to assist in the delivery of enabling infrastructure, amenities and community facilities to facilitate compact growth, sustainable neighbourhoods and place making."

Despite being one of the most directly affected commercial stakeholders along the corridor, CH&HG was not consulted prior to publication of the scheme. This lack of engagement contradicts both the letter and spirit of Policy 1.4, undermining the inclusive, collaborative approach necessary for the delivery of well-integrated infrastructure.

Chapter 4 of the Development Plan deals directly with sustainable mobility and transport, a theme central to the Bus Connects scheme. Objective 4.1 provides the overarching framework:

"Develop a compact city, where sustainable land use and transportation are integrated and where there is choice and accessibility to a range of transport modes, with increasing support for a shift to more sustainable modes in line with national aims on climate action and where safety and ease of movement is provided to and within the City and onward to the wider area of the MASP, County Galway and the Northern and Western Region."

While the Bus Connects scheme aligns with the modal shift ambitions of this objective, it fails to uphold the principles of choice, accessibility, and ease of movement for those who must rely on private vehicles or coaches, such as hotel guests, tour operators, families, and those with mobility issues. The proposed access restrictions and undefined construction timelines undermine safety, efficiency, and predictability for a site that functions 365 days a year and accommodates thousands of guests.

For example, on Friday evenings, approximately up to 1,200 guests avail of the hotel's services at any given time, and the proposed Bus Connects scheme would have a substantial impact on the hotel's day-to-day operations. The removal of the existing right turning lane, to accommodate bus lanes, would have significant implications for traffic flow and safety on Dublin Road given the capacity of our client's facility.

The same objective within the Development Plan commits to:

"Support the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) and the associated implementation programme which will deliver a high-quality public transport network, provide and encourage the use of other sustainable modes of transport, and facilitate the efficient movement of private vehicles and freight."

The current scheme compromises the efficient movement of private vehicles, which remains essential for the hotel's operation. Buses and bikes cannot substitute the need for direct vehicle access in all cases, and the hotel's logistics, from linen deliveries to tour coach drop-offs, cannot realistically shift modes.

Objective 4.2 of the Development Plan adds:

"Support and facilitate the integration of land use and transportation in order to facilitate compact city growth, supported by sustainable modes of transport that will encourage economic well-being and ensure the movement of people and goods in a manner that is sustainable, safe and provides ease of access for all, enhances quality of life and supports a reduction in transport related greenhouse gas emissions."

Again, the intention is clear, but the approach must be balanced. The disruption to direct access for coaches, staff, suppliers, and guests does not align with the goals of facilitating economic well-being or ensuring ease of access for all.

Objective 4.6 of the Development Plan states:

"Implement improvements on the general road network, including new links and junction revisions where needed in the interest of safety and convenience for all users."

In the current proposal, the narrowing of access points, removal of the right-turn lane, removal of parking, and construction works adjacent to the only hotel entrance compromise safety, convenience, and continuity for multiple user groups, including guests with limited mobility who require door-to-door vehicular access. This is an essential operational requirement for any modern hospitality provider.

Chapter 6 of the Development Plan sets out the economic development framework. Objective 6.1 commits to:

“Support and facilitate the role of Galway as a Regional City and driver of sustainable economic growth for the whole Northern and Western Region through the provision of balanced and sustainable economic and employment opportunities for development, enterprise, innovation and investment across all employment sectors...”

and to

“Maintain and enhance the attractiveness of the city and the quality of life it supports in order to sustain investment, quality employment opportunities and to attract and retain an appropriately skilled workforce.”

The Connacht Hotel plays a central role in Galway's visitor economy and is a major local employer. Disruption to access, particularly without defined timeframes or alternative arrangements, places both short-term trade and long-term investment potential at risk, running counter to the objectives of economic resilience and market stability especially post-COVID recovery.

Objective 6.8 of the Development Plan goes further in recognising tourism as a strategic pillar:

“Recognise the significant contribution that national and international tourism makes to the local economy and the vitality of the city and facilitate, in partnership with Fáilte Ireland and key stakeholders, the sustainable development of associated infrastructure...”

and

“Work in partnership with Fáilte Ireland and key stakeholders to support the hospitality sector and promote tourism related facilities including a sustainable range of tourism accommodation.”

The Connacht Hotel is precisely the type of facility envisaged under this objective. By removing direct vehicular access and making it more difficult for tour groups and families to reach the site, the current proposal risks undermining Galway's position as a welcoming and accessible destination on the Wild Atlantic Way. This is contrary to both the Development Plan and wider regional tourism strategies.

Finally, Objective 8.8 of the Development Plan reaffirms the city's commitment to inclusive infrastructure:

“Prioritise the safe movement of people on streets and create a high-quality environment through design promoting connectivity, accessibility and the principles of universal design.”

The current proposal does not support universal access. Guests arriving with luggage, mobility aids, or requiring assistance will face barriers that did not previously exist. Inclusive design should not reduce options for those dependent on private transport.

Taken collectively, these policies reflect a Development Plan that seeks to balance sustainable transport with economic vitality, accessibility, and stakeholder collaboration. In its current form, the Bus Connects Dublin Road Scheme fails to achieve that balance.

The Connacht Hotel's operational requirements, and its broader role within Galway's economic and tourism frameworks, have not been adequately accounted for in the design process. CH&HG respectfully submits that these omissions must be addressed to ensure consistency with the City's adopted planning policy framework.

Principal Transport, Traffic, Access and Amenity Concerns on the Proposed Bus Connects Scheme

The CH&HG principal technical and access concerns are set out in detail in the accompanying engineering assessment prepared by Gerard Hannify, Consultant Civil Engineer. Mr. Hannify is an experienced professional with a long-standing practice in Galway and a strong background in transportation and infrastructure projects, particularly those affecting the tourism and hospitality sectors.

The key concerns arising from this report, which should be read in conjunction with this submission, are summarised below:

- The Connacht Hotel occupies a self-contained site on Dublin Road comprising a large multi-storey hotel building, a single-storey annex accommodating the main public entrance, and a substantial surface-level car park between the hotel and the road. Crucially, the site has only one vehicular and pedestrian access point, located directly off Dublin Road. This access point is essential to all aspects of hotel operation.
- The proposed scheme involves both temporary and permanent land take along the hotel's frontage under CPO BCGDR-CPO-001-2025. The CPO area encompasses the hotel's sole entrance, which will therefore be directly impacted during construction. No alternative access exists, and none is proposed under the scheme.
- The construction-phase disruption to access is of particular concern and in no way detracts from the significant longer-term impact that the proposed development would bring to our client's long-term operation. During this period, the entrance will be curtailed, directly affecting guest arrivals and departures, staff access, coach movements, and deliveries. The construction timeline is undefined, meaning these so-called "short-term" works could extend for weeks or months. Any such restriction would significantly compromise or, at worst, suspend operations.
- The CPO lands, both temporary and permanent, fully encompass the hotel's existing entrance on Dublin Road, including both pedestrian and vehicular access points. There is no alternative access to the site. This is not a minor constraint; it is an operational red line. Without full access, the hotel cannot function for the reasons set out in the accompanying Gerry Hannify Engineering Assessment.
- A site visit conducted on Tuesday, 8 April 2025 confirmed that the hotel's car park was heavily in use on a standard weekday outside of the tourism high season. This confirms the hotel's dependence on high levels of vehicle access year-round, not just during peak travel periods.
- Car count data gathered by the hotel between 1–21 February 2025 shows vehicle movements during morning and evening peak hours ranging from 272 to 495 vehicles per day. When extrapolated to a 24-hour estimate, this equates to between 354 and 644 vehicle movements daily.

The vast majority (circa 98%) are cars, indicating the hotel's substantial reliance on private transport for patrons and services alike. It is important to note that these traffic flows are significant and could expect to be increased during the traditional holiday periods.

- In relation to parking and signage, it is noted that the CPO lands approach closely the marked car parking bays located along the site's Dublin Road boundary. While it appears that these spaces may not be directly encroached upon, the mapping is tight and ambiguous. Formal clarification is required to confirm that parking capacity will be fully retained. The hotel's prominent roadside sign is partially within the blue CPO zone and again, confirmation of its retention is requested.
- While current Bus Connects plans indicate that existing parking spaces may not be lost, the scheme will restrict the hotel's ability to expand on-site parking in the future, a key requirement for a growing hospitality business. Additionally, the reduced site area would make it significantly more difficult to accommodate future coach or bus parking within the property.
- A review of the CPO map suggests that a temporary access point during construction might be routed through the hotel's surface car park. CH&HG considers this wholly unacceptable, as it would directly displace vital parking spaces. All current bays are in active use and necessary to support daily trade, and any loss would have a material impact on revenue.
- If a new, temporary access route is proposed between the divided 'blue land' parcels shown on the site layout, it would disrupt existing parking circulation and likely reduce total capacity. CH&HG strongly objects to this arrangement and seeks formal assurance that no parking spaces will be sacrificed for temporary access.
- The long-term road layout alterations proposed as part of the scheme also raise serious operational concerns. These include the provision of bus lanes in both directions, segregated cycle tracks, widened footpaths, pedestrian crossings, and a reconfiguration of the road corridor. Of particular concern is the removal of the right-turn lane which currently provides direct access to the hotel for vehicles travelling westbound from the Oranmore direction.
- The elimination of this turning movement will prevent direct entry from the east, forcing vehicles, including coaches, taxis, suppliers, and emergency responders, to undertake detours via potentially congested and unfamiliar routes. This will reduce access efficiency, create logistical complications, and risk deterring visitors unfamiliar with the area. (Figure 1 above shows the route).
- The current turning lane allows vehicles approaching from the east to safely queue without obstructing through-traffic. Its removal will increase the risk of congestion and unsafe turning behaviours, particularly at busy times. CH&HG considers the removal of this facility to be regressive and strongly recommends its retention within the final design.
- This submission identifies that on a busy Friday night with full occupancy of the Hotel and bar and full occupancy of the restaurant and leisure facilities, there could be up to 1,200 people using our client's facilities. In the absence of a right turning lane there will be significant obstruction to traffic coming from the east.

That queuing of traffic may be so substantial that drivers then proceed westwards past the entrance into our client's hotel to turn either at The Huntsman or going further onto Joyce Roundabout (where Sean Mulvoy and Moneenageisha Road meet) and turning there back to the hotel, thereby increasing unnecessary and unsustainable car trips and deterring visits altogether.

- A large proportion of hotel users, including families, tour groups, business travellers, and gym members, arrive by private car or coach, often with luggage or specialist equipment. Public transport is not a viable alternative for many of these customers. The hotel's operations also rely on predictable and efficient access for service vehicles, deliveries, and emergency services.
- The design of the scheme appears to be based on an assumption of a significant modal shift away from private vehicles, which, while desirable in principle, is not currently achievable for a large-scale hospitality business such as The Connacht Hotel. The scheme as proposed does not reflect operational realities and places an unfair burden on an established local employer and service provider, without adequate mitigation.
- While CH&HG supports the sustainability goals of the Bus Connects programme, the scale and configuration of the proposed intervention along Dublin Road will have a direct and detrimental effect on the hotel's capacity to operate efficiently. The combination of permanent turning restrictions, entrance occupation, car parking restrictions and uncertain construction impacts represents a serious risk to business continuity, customer satisfaction, and long-term viability.
- The Connacht Hotel plays a vital role in Galway's tourism sector, providing accommodation, event space, and leisure services to thousands of visitors annually. It supports substantial local employment and is embedded within the city's hospitality infrastructure. It is imperative that major infrastructure improvements such as Bus Connects do not proceed at the expense of key local businesses, especially in the context of post-COVID recovery.

CH&HG remains open and committed to further engagement with Galway City Council, the National Transport Authority, and An Bord Pleanála to explore revised design solutions or mitigation measures that could allow the Bus Connects scheme to proceed while preserving critical access and operational functionality at The Connacht Hotel. The attached engineering assessment provides a robust basis for these concerns and is respectfully submitted for consideration.

Business, Trading and Economic Concerns on the Proposed Bus Connects Scheme

The CH&HG is a major stakeholder in Galway's hospitality and tourism economy, operating one of the city's largest and most prominent hotel facilities. The hotel plays a central role in hosting domestic and international tourists, business travellers, sporting teams, conferences, tour groups, and events year-round. For this reason, ease of access, convenience for vehicles and coaches, and a reliable arrival experience are all critical to the hotel's continued operation and commercial viability.

The current Bus Connects Galway – Dublin Road proposals prioritise public transport and active travel modes. While CH&HG supports the long-term aim of reducing car dependency, the proposed scheme does not adequately reflect the operational realities of businesses that depend on private vehicle and coach access. Even under the National Transport Authority's own modal shift targets, private car use is expected to remain a significant component of travel behaviour for the foreseeable future.

For a hotel catering to families, groups, business clients, and event attendees, many travelling with luggage or specialist equipment, private vehicular access remains a necessity, not a luxury.

The proposed reconfiguration of Dublin Road, including the removal of the existing right-turn lane and the restriction of direct access from Oranmore, will have tangible consequences for customer convenience and operational efficiency. Guests unfamiliar with the area may be deterred by rerouted or more congested travel, while tour operators and business clients, who prioritise predictable logistics, may seek alternative venues. These effects risk diminishing customer satisfaction and reducing future bookings, particularly from high value repeat clients and group organisers.

In addition, the construction phase will require the occupation of land at the hotel's only point of access, posing a direct threat to business continuity. Unlike many commercial premises that benefit from alternative access routes or multiple frontages, The Connacht Hotel relies exclusively on a single-entry point. Any restriction at this location, no matter how temporary, could significantly impact occupancy rates, service provision, and revenue generation.

The hotel's contribution to Galway's economy extends beyond its own operations. It supports hundreds of jobs and generates substantial overnight stays that benefit restaurants, attractions, and transport services throughout the city. Any reduction in the hotel's accessibility or appeal will carry wider knock-on effects across Galway's visitor economy, an economy still in recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and currently facing significant cost pressures.

Moreover, the city's ongoing residential and commercial growth, particularly within key transport corridors, will increase future demand for high-quality, accessible accommodation. The Connacht Hotel is ideally positioned to support this growth. However, the current scheme would undermine the hotel's role in Galway's development, limiting its capacity to meet this future demand and potentially deterring further investment or expansion. Staff access is also at risk. Many employees rely on flexible commuting options. Increased congestion, reduced vehicle access, or prolonged travel times could contribute to staffing challenges, which are already acute within the national hospitality sector. Reduced accessibility risks both staff retention and recruitment.

While CH&HG remains supportive of improved public transport and active travel infrastructure across Galway, this should not come at the cost of long-established, strategically important businesses. The current proposals are, in CH&HG's view, disproportionate and insufficiently responsive to operational realities. Without meaningful modification, the scheme poses serious and lasting risks to trade, investment, employment, and the city's tourism brand.

CH&HG respectfully requests that further consideration be given to design refinements, access protections, and stakeholder engagement to ensure that Galway's transport future evolves in a way that also safeguards the city's economic backbone.

Conclusions

As outlined throughout this submission, The Connacht Hotel and Hospitality Group supports the principle of sustainable transport investment and the enhancement of access and mobility along Dublin Road. However, the Bus Connects Galway – Dublin Road Scheme, in its current form, is excessive in scale and would result in disproportionate and avoidable impacts on a key hospitality business.

The anticipated loss of vehicle accessibility, the removal of critical turning movements, and the occupation of the hotel's only entrance during construction, together with unresolved questions regarding car parking and mapping, present serious operational risks. These changes would significantly affect the hotel's ability to provide a high-quality guest experience, and are likely to discourage future business, undermine customer confidence, and reduce the hotel's competitiveness.

For a facility of this scale, serving international visitors, families, tour operators, and corporate clients, reliable, convenient, and flexible access is not optional, but essential. The absence of practical mitigation measures risks undermining not just the hotel's operations, but also its wider contribution to Galway's economy and employment base.

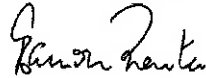
Our client ("CH&HG") remains fully committed to constructive and solution-focused engagement with Galway City Council, the National Transport Authority, and An Bord Pleanála. It is the Group's firm view that the objectives of Bus Connects Galway can be achieved while also safeguarding the operational viability of long-standing and strategically important businesses.

We respectfully request that the concerns raised in this submission, and in the accompanying engineering report prepared by Mr. Gerard Hannify, be given due consideration in the assessment of the proposed scheme.

We look forward to receiving an acknowledgement of this submission and to engaging further in a constructive and solution-oriented manner.

If any additional information or clarification is required, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Eamonn Prenter

Director

Tel: 086 825 6318

Email: eprenter@csrlandplan.ie

CUNNANE STRATTON REYNOLDS

**APPENDIX A: BUS CONNECTS GALWAY – DUBLIN ROAD - ENGINEERING ASSESSMENT –
PREPARED BY GERARD HANNIFFY CONSULTANT CIVIL ENGINEER**

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BusConnects Dublin Road Project

ENGINEERING ASSESSMENT
(Final)

related to

Compulsory Purchase Order BCGDR-CPO-001-2025
BusConnects Galway: Dublin Road Development
Compulsory Purchase Order

FOR

CONNACHT HOTEL
DUBLIN ROAD, GALWAY

DATE: April 15th, 2025

This Report has been written by Finbarr Kelleher BE (Hons) CEng MIEI PEng.
And reviewed by Gerard Hanniffy BE.

Introduction

This Report summarises our Engineering Assessment related to the current (as of the date of this Report) Compulsory Purchase Order BCGDR-CPO-001-2025 (BusConnects Galway: Dublin Road Development Compulsory Purchase Order) (known hereafter in this Report as 'the CPO').

This Report is concerned solely with the property known as 'Connacht Hotel', and located on Dublin Road, Galway (known hereafter in this Report as 'the Hotel').

The Hotel will be directly impacted by the CPO.

This Report summarises the impacts that the CPO will have on the Hotel: these impacts are based on our own assessments, taking account of layout of the Hotel as it exists today, taking account of the site extents contained within the CPO (as they related to the Hotel), taking account of our assessment of the work that will then be undertaken related to the 'BusConnects' project (related to the land which is the subject of the CPO), and taking account of the proposed finished layout of the Hotel (i.e. the layout once the proposed BusConnects project is complete) and the proposed finished layout of the altered Dublin Road (related to the BusConnects project).

Our assessment details both the short term and long term impacts on the Hotel.

This Report contains both drawing(s) and photographs, which are included to assist the reader in their review of the written part of this Report.

Section 1: The Hotel - A Description

Connacht Hotel (aka 'the Hotel') consists of a detached, expansive structure, with bedrooms laid out over multiple storeys, and laid out in the form of hotel 'wings', with a single-storey annex to the south (which contains the main entrance).

Dublin Road entrance to the site is the only vehicular access to the site (i.e. the site does not have the facility to be accessed directly from another public road, or via a private right-of-way from a public road). Similarly, there are two pedestrian access points, again only from Dublin Road (one of these pedestrian access points is shared with the vehicular entrance). Thus, the access points (vehicular and pedestrian) from Dublin Road are critical to the operation of the Hotel.

The Hotel is contained within a clearly defined site, which fronts onto Dublin Road. In fact, the A ground-level parking area is provided within the grounds of the Hotel site between the Hotel building and the site boundary to Dublin Road

A landscaped strip, consisting of lawns, mature trees and mature bushes, with a stone & metal fence boundary treatment (to Dublin Road) makes up the gap between the car park and the public footpath (on Dublin Road). But this landscaped strip also includes a critical element for the hotel: a large sign fronting onto Dublin Road. This is the area that will be directly impacted by the CPO

Photographs of the Hotel and site are reproduced below, and show the Hotel property (Photos 1 to 6).

A Site Layout Plan is shown on the page after the photographs – take note of the red and blue zones, which correspond to the lands that are the subject of the CPO (red = permanent possession, blue = temporary possession). This Site Layout Plan shows the layout of the Hotel

site in far greater detail than is contained in similar plans contained within the CPO, and so can be used to demonstrate to a greater degree the impact of the CPO on the Hotel.



Photo 1: View of Connacht Hotel, viewed from south footpath of Dublin Road, looking in a western direction. Take note of boundary wall (stone), mature trees (within a landscaped strip), and sign (background, left side of photo).



Photo 2: Similar to Photo 1, but viewpoint now moved to the north footpath.



Photo 3: View of Connacht Hotel from south footpath (Dublin Road), looking east. Take note of vehicular entrance to the Hotel (this is the only vehicular entrance).



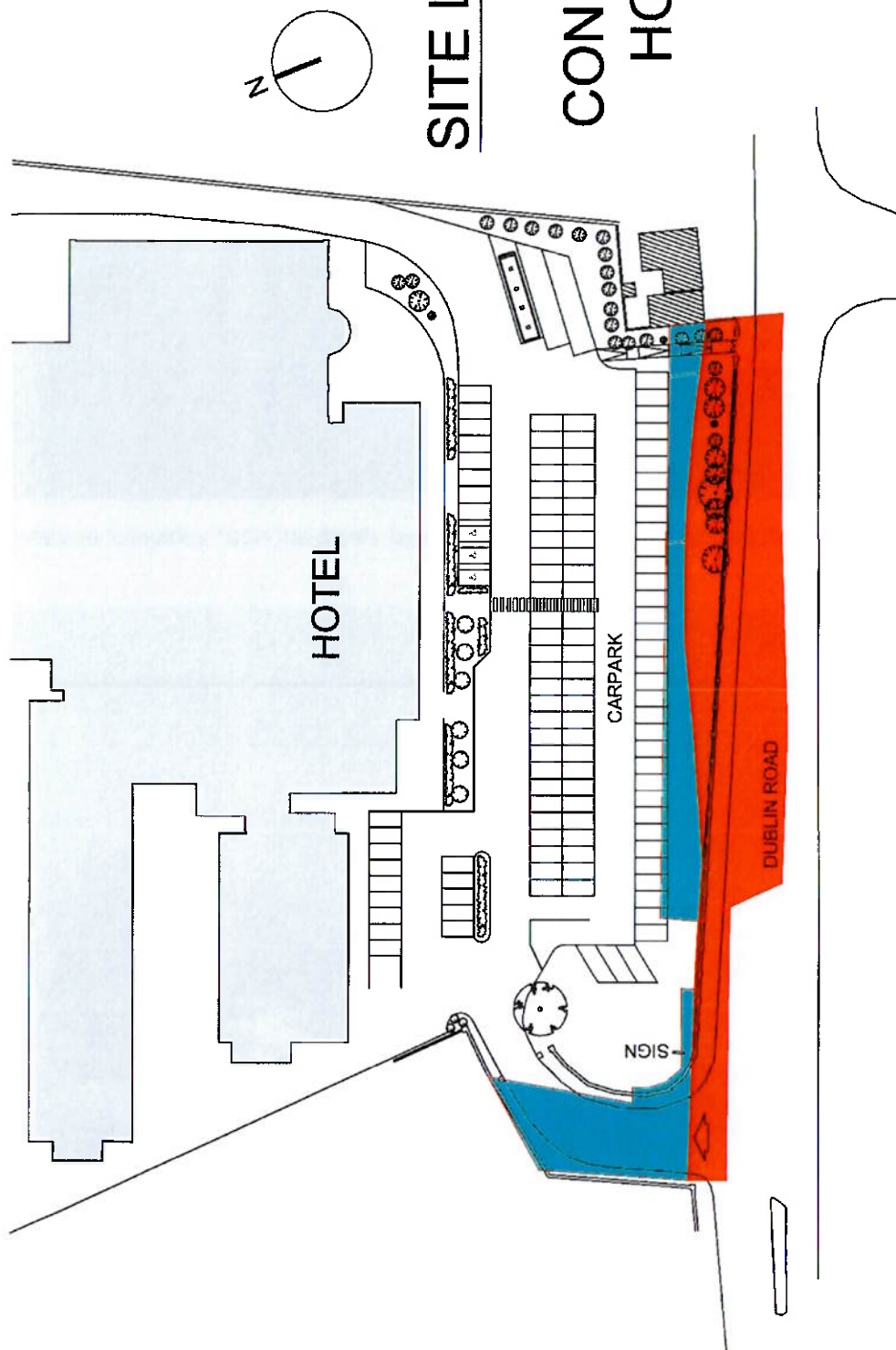
Photo 4: View of landscaped strip between car park & Dublin Road. Take note of mature trees & bushes. The camera viewpoint is beside the pedestrian entrance of the site, looking west.



Photo 5: View of landscaping strip (as per Photo 4) but viewpoint near vehicular entrance, looking east.



Photo 6: View of car park (viewpoint is near eastern boundary of site, looking towards west).



SITE LAYOUT

CONNACHT HOTEL

Part 1: Short Term Impacts

1.1 Access to the Hotel:

Take a look at the Site Layout (previous page) – it will be noted that the CPO lands (both temporary and permanent) cover the entire (existing) Dublin Road entrance to the Hotel. As noted previously, there is a single vehicular, and two pedestrian, access points to the site. Also as alluded to previously, there is no other access point available to the Hotel.

There is no doubt that access to the Hotel will be curtailed by the CPO, and by the works that will be carried out during the construction phase of BusConnects.

THIS IS A MAJOR IMPACT – describing it in any other way is simply not justified.

Without access to the Hotel site, the Hotel will not be able to operate.

With reduced access to the Hotel site, the trade of the Hotel will inevitably be reduced.

What kind, or scale, of impact can be expected?

The Hotel have provided car count data (i.e. the number of vehicles entering, and exiting, the hotel).

The following points should be noted in reading this data:

- The car count data is for a sample period, between February 1st & 21st of this year;
- All vehicle movements into, and out of, the Hotel is via the single Dublin Road access point;
- The car count data includes all types of motorised vehicles: commercial vehicles ("trucks"), coaches, & cars (bikes are excepted);
- The car count data is for morning and evening peak hours only (8am-9am & 4pm-6pm) with the evening peak broken into 2 parts, each 1 hour in duration.

This car count data is provided below:

Date	Day	8am-9am						4pm-5pm						5pm-6pm						Total
		Truck		Coach		Car		Truck		Coach		Car		Truck		Coach		Car		
		in	out	in	out	in	out	in	out	in	out	in	out	in	out	in	out	in	out	
01/02/2025	Saturday	1	1	0	0	29	28	1	1	1	1	120	67	0	0	0	0	87	64	401
02/02/2025	Sunday	0	0	0	0	23	16	1	1	1	1	91	58	0	1	0	0	82	53	328
03/02/2025	Monday	4	4	0	0	26	16	4	0	0	0	58	48	1	2	0	0	61	48	272
04/02/2025	Tuesday	5	6	0	0	58	56	1	2	0	0	44	72	2	0	1	0	52	70	369
05/02/2025	Wednesday	8	6	1	0	71	60	0	1	0	0	62	68	0	0	1	0	83	99	460
06/02/2025	Thursday	5	5	1	0	60	57	0	0	0	0	47	63	0	0	1	0	70	77	386
07/02/2025	Friday	2	1	0	0	66	49	0	1	0	0	56	63	0	0	0	0	70	85	393
08/02/2025	Saturday	2	3	0	1	40	30	0	0	0	0	82	83	0	0	0	0	88	79	388
09/02/2025	Sunday	0	0	0	0	34	14	0	0	1	1	44	66	0	0	0	1	46	60	267
10/02/2025	Monday	2	2	0	0	67	44	0	0	1	0	44	45	1	1	2	2	65	69	345
11/02/2025	Tuesday	1	0	0	1	55	47	0	0	0	0	45	57	0	1	1	0	47	62	317
12/02/2025	Wednesday	4	4	0	0	71	58	0	0	0	0	65	60	0	1	1	0	70	83	417
13/02/2025	Thursday	2	5	0	0	65	52	0	0	0	0	54	66	1	0	2	0	48	69	364
14/02/2025	Friday	4	4	0	1	60	38	0	0	0	0	48	44	0	0	1	0	54	57	311
15/02/2025	Saturday	2	3	0	1	29	20	0	0	0	1	83	81	0	0	1	1	90	82	394
16/02/2025	Sunday	0	0	0	2	21	18	1	0	0	0	69	71	0	1	0	0	51	55	289
17/02/2025	Monday	1	2	0	0	65	49	0	0	0	0	64	69	0	0	0	0	85	78	413
18/02/2025	Tuesday	3	4	1	0	69	59	2	0	0	0	71	60	0	0	0	0	70	72	411
19/02/2025	Wednesday	1	5	0	0	60	61	0	0	0	0	52	94	0	0	1	0	90	87	451
20/02/2025	Thursday	4	5	0	0	75	74	0	0	0	0	61	66	0	0	0	0	79	82	446
21/02/2025	Friday	4	4	0	0	68	55	0	0	0	0	111	75	0	0	0	1	84	93	495

Take note that vehicles for a 24 hour period can only be derived from this data, since the data represents only 3 hours during the day. However, the data still represents a 'lower bound', since the total vehicle count for 24 hours will be larger than the 'Total' figures in this table.

Based on this sample data set, the total number of vehicles entering and exiting the hotel varied from at least 272 (February 3rd, a Monday) to 495 (February 21st, a Friday).

Based on this sample data set, the vast majority of vehicles entering/exiting the hotel is made up of cars (about 98%).

What conclusions can be made from this data?

Firstly, the preponderance of cars indicates that the majority of journeys into (& out of) the hotel is made by patrons of the hotel.

Second, the total number of vehicles crossing the threshold of the hotel (272 to 495, based on peak hours only) represents a not-insignificant number of vehicles making the turn from Dublin Road into the hotel (or the reverse). If we use a factor to convert these 'peak hour periods' to a total 24 hour period (say increase the peak count by 30%), then the count now is in the range 354 to 644 – this is an enormous number of turning movements for a 24 hour period.

It should be remembered that the sample data set is a period of time outside the peak holiday period – the vehicle count numbers stated above will be even higher during the holiday peak.

Reducing, curtailing, impeding, or even preventing, vehicles from entering the Hotel site from Dublin Road will, inevitably, impact negatively on the trade of the Hotel.

Bear in mind that this is a 'short term' impact, and will last for the duration of the construction works related to BusConnects on Dublin Road. But the duration of these construction works is not defined, and this 'short term' impact could be felt for weeks, or even months and will injure the peak holiday season.

1.2 Car Parking & Signage:

1.2.1 Car Parking – Blue & Red Lands

Car parking facilities are a critical component of any Hotel business. Any hotelier will tell you that the majority of patrons will arrive at their hotel by car, or by coach. There is no doubt that this is true for the Connacht Hotel. The car count data (see previous section) is a corroboration of this assertion.

So the loss of any car parking spaces can be detrimental to the Hotel.

Take a look at the Site Layout Plan – you will note that the 'blue' lands of the CPO (i.e. the lands subject to a temporary possession) include a narrow section of a series of existing car parking spaces near the Dublin Road boundary – it is our opinion that the intention of the drafters of the CPO was to take possession of the land up to (but not including) these car parking spaces (the apparent 'overlap' with parking spaces may be due to a discrepancy with mapping).

If this is the case, then the CPO will not impact on the existing number of parking spaces. However our client's ability to provide either additional spaces to facilitate Hotel expansion or to include Bus & Coach parking will be severely curtailed. But we suggest this should be clarified with the drafters of the CPO, via a submission, to ensure that our opinion is indeed accurate.

1.2.2 Car Parking – Temporary Access to Hotel Lands?

A review of the Site Layout shows that the 'blue lands' (i.e. the lands subject to temporary possession) are broken into 2 plots, with an intermediate strip in between.

The blue lands on the western end make up the entire existing vehicular entrance to the Hotel (and remember, as noted previously, that this is the only entrance).

Is it the intention of the designers of the BusConnects project to take possession of the existing Hotel entrance, and then provide a 'temporary' entrance thru the space between the blue lands? (a review of the Site Layout plan, included with this Report, will assist the reader in understanding this question).

If that is the case, then car parking spaces will be impacted, since this temporary access point will pass through the existing car park.

Our opinion is that this option is UNACCEPTABLE. As outlined earlier in this Report, the vehicle movements into, and out of, the Hotel are significant, and every car parking space is required. The loss of any single existing car parking space can impact negatively on the trade of the Hotel.

THIS IS A MAJOR IMPACT – the Hotel must not be forced into accepting an 'alternative restrictive', albeit temporary, access point to their property.

1.2.3 Signage

Additionally, there is a large signage structure beside the entrance to the Connacht Hotel site (see Photo 3) displaying the name of the Hotel.

As per the attached Site Layout, the 'blue' zone straddles this sign, but the majority of the sign is outside the blue zone. As such, our opinion is that this sign could remain in place during the BusConnects works, and continue to serve the Hotel.

Part 2: Long Term Impacts

Loss of Turning Lane

The section of Dublin Road immediately to the front of the Hotel contains a turning lane – this serves vehicles approaching the Hotel from an easterly direction, and permits such vehicles to queue safely, without impeding other traffic, as they wait to cross the on-coming lane, and thus turn into the Hotel property.

The proposed works (related to the BusConnects project) shows no such turning lane.

Accordingly, the proposal is, thus, to remove the turning lane entirely.

Our opinion is that, whereas the BusConnects project is deemed to be a step forward, the proposed removal of the turning lane is, in fact, a step backwards.

This submission identifies that on a busy Friday night with full occupancy of the Hotel and bar and full occupancy of the restaurant and leisure facilities, there could be up to 1,200 people using our client's facilities. In the absence of a right turning lane there will be significant obstruction to traffic coming from the east. That queuing of traffic may be so substantial that drivers then proceed westwards past the entrance into our client's hotel to turn either at The Huntsman or going further onto Joyce Roundabout (where Sean Mulvoy and Moneenageisha Road meet) and turning there back to the hotel, thereby increasing unnecessary and unsustainable car trips and deterring visits altogether.

This turning lane should be retained, and should be incorporated into the BusConnects project.

Our view is that this is IMPERATIVE, and the Hotel should accept no alternative but to leave this turning lane in place.

End of Report