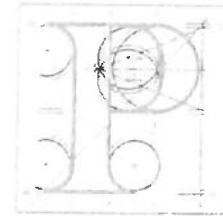


Our Case Number: ABP-321776-25



An
Bord
Pleanála

Gluas Light Rail Galway Team
c/o Brendan Holland
Holland's
4/6 Williamsgate Street
Galway City
H91 WK76

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 accept this letter as a receipt for the fee of €50 that you have paid.

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.

Teil
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Yours faithfully,



Lauren Griffin
Executive Officer
Direct Line: 01-8737244

HA02A

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64 Marlborough Street
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An Bord Pleanála**Case Reference: HA61.321776****Location: R338 Dublin Road, Galway city.****Description: BusConnects Galway: Dublin Road Development****Case Type: LA Road Development – Application****Applicant: Galway City Council**

Future proofing of BusConnects infrastructure to accommodate future light rail.**Background**

Members of the Gluas Light Rail for Galway team, chaired by Brendan Holland, has campaigned tirelessly for Light Rail as part of an integrated, sustainable transport system for the Galway Metropolitan Area for two decades.

Catherine Connolly, TD, collected 24,000 signatures on a public petition for a Feasibility Study on Light Rail for Galway in 2018.

The GLUAS team threw its full weight behind the campaign for a feasibility study. In April 2021, Minister Eamon Ryan committed to a feasibility study. In October 2022, it was announced that the National Transport Authority (NTA) would engage consultants to undertake a feasibility study as part of the overall Galway Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (GMATS) to succeed the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS), 2016.

The NTA engaged AtkinsRéalis to undertake a feasibility study and the GLUAS team had several meetings with representatives of the NTA and AtkinsRéalis during 2023 and 2024, during which there was active and positive engagement.

The GLUAS team warmly welcomed the very positive findings of the ‘Galway Light Rail Transit Feasibility Study Report’, prepared by AtkinsRéalis, and published by the National Transport Authority on 30 October 2024. Among the findings were:

- There is a strong axis of east-west travel demand with the potential to shift to public transport.
- There are no critical technical constraints to the future development of a light rail corridor through the city.
- It would link the major Medical, Educational, Industrial, Commercial and Leisure clusters with Public Transport.
- The initial focus would be on the corridor from Knochacarra to Roscam, with potential longer-term for onward connection to Parkmore via the proposed major residential area of Ardaun.

- Two P+R sites have been identified, one to the west of the Cappagh Road and another north of Roscam.
- With the availability of Light Rail Transit and the introduction of policies to support the Climate Action Plan:
 - The car mode share in the Galway Metropolitan Area is forecast to decrease from an estimated 60.2% in 2023 to 38.75% in 2043, resulting in a reduction of 35.7% in car journeys,
 - The Public Transport Mode Share in the Galway Metropolitan Area is forecast to increase from 7.3% in 2023 to 19.3% in 2043, and
 - There is the potential to achieve almost 44,000 daily boardings, equivalent to 13 million passenger per year.
- The estimated annual operating cost would be around €20 million. At 13 million passengers per year, revenue would be close to €20 million.
- The estimated Capital Cost is in the range €1.23 to €1.34 billion, €83 to €91 million/Km.

The GLUAS team is aware that the average inflation adjusted cost of Light Rail in 13 countries in Europe ranges from €18 million/Km to €45 million/Km, the cheapest being in Germany and Finland. The median cost in those 13 countries is €30.8m per Km.

The GLUAS team favours rechargeable battery-powered trams which would not need overhead power lines, eliminating visual clutter and the associated cost.

The GLUAS team is watching with interest the development of a novel track bed, which can be prefabricated off site, which can be dropped into a channel in the road surface only 300mm deep. It would mean the underground utilities would not have to be moved thus avoiding a significant cost.

LUAS Cork Emerging Preferred Route Public Consultation

The Public Consultation on the Emerging Preferred Route for the LUAS Cork was launched on the 14 April 2025. TII and the NTA invited the public to participate in the consultation.

Launching the public consultation, An Taoiseach Micheál Martin said: *“The announcement today of the Emerging Preferred Route for Luas Cork is a significant step in an infrastructure project that will be transformational for Cork city.”*

The GLUAS team agrees wholeheartedly with An Taoiseach’s description of the project as being *“transformational for Cork city”*. The GLUAS team has maintained for several years that a Light Rail system would be transformational for Galway and enable the

achievement of the 2040 population target in the National Planning Framework. In addition, it would deliver significant environmental, economic and social benefits including improvements in public health and wellbeing.

The following table offers a comparison between the Luas Cork Emerging Preferred Route and the Ligh Rail system considered in the Galway LRT Feasibility Study.

Project	Length in Km	Passengers per Annum	Passengers per Km
Luas Cork Emerging Preferred Corridor	18	16 million	888,889
NTA Galway LRT Feasibility Study	14	13 million	928,571

The GLUAS team submission on the BusConnects Galway Dublin Road development

The GLUAS team respectfully requests that, in considering this application for permission for the Dublin Road BusConnects scheme, An Bord Pleanála ensures that the recommendation in relation to giving active consideration to the future proofing of the new bus infrastructure to enable future conversion to LRT operations included in section 8.2 Next Steps of the Feasibility Study Report, reproduced below, is fully respected.

“8.2. Next Steps

This report has demonstrated that LRT, in time, could be considered as a viable transport option for Galway City, with a potential capacity requirement towards the end of the strategy timeline. In the intermediate period, consideration should be given to progressive public transport upgrades, with active consideration of future-proofing of new bus infrastructure to enable future conversion to LRT operations.”

On behalf of the GLUAS Light Rail for Galway team.

Brendan Mulligan

Member of the GLUAS Team

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