

BusConnects Dublin Core Bus Corridor Projects

Corridor 15 – Blackrock to Merrion

Emerging Preferred Route – Public Consultation Report 2018/2019

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Contents

	Page
1	Executive Summary 1
1.1	Objective of the Scheme 1
1.2	Purpose of the Non-Statutory Public Consultation 1
1.3	Public Consultation Process for BusConnects 2
1.4	Information Provided in Public Consultation 4
1.5	Submissions Received 5
1.6	Principal Issues Raised 5
2	Introduction 7
3	Approach to Assessing the Submission 8
4	Analysis of Issues Raised by Section 9
5	Profile of Those Making Submissions: 12
6	Themes Raised in the Submissions 12
7	Summary of The Main Issues Raised 13

Appendices

Appendix A

Summary of Issues Raised by Route Section

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Objective of the Scheme

The aim of BusConnects is to transform Dublin's bus system, with the Core Bus Corridor project providing 230kms of dedicated bus lanes and 200km of cycle lanes on sixteen of the busiest bus corridors in and out of the city centre. This project is fundamental to addressing the congestion issues in the Dublin region with the population due to grow by 25% by 2040, bringing it to almost 1.55m.

This report focuses on the Core Bus Corridor which runs from Blackrock to Merrion.

1.2 Purpose of the Non-Statutory Public Consultation

The statement below sets out the purpose of the public consultation, as presented on the BusConnects website:

The National Transport Authority has today announced details of the third phase of the BusConnects Core Bus Corridor project with the unveiling of the final six of the sixteen routes that are earmarked for development.

The aim of BusConnects is to transform Dublin's bus system, with the Core Bus Corridor project providing 230kms of dedicated bus lanes and 200kms of cycle lanes on sixteen of the busiest bus corridors in and out of the city centre. This project is fundamental to addressing the congestion issues in the Dublin region with the population due to grow by 25% by 2040, bringing it to almost 1.55m.

Bus services provide the main form of public transport across Dublin with 67% of public transport journeys each day made by bus. The level of commuting to work by bicycle has also increased by 43% since 2011 and the need for better and safer cycling facilities will be provided through the rollout of the Core Bus Corridor project.

The first phase of the public consultations commenced in November 2018 with the second phase started in January 2019. The latest public consultation for phase three is commencing today on the Emerging Preferred Routes for the following six corridors:

- *Ballymun to the City Centre (Option A & B)*
- *Finglas to Phibsborough*
- *Bray to the City Centre*
- *UCD Ballsbridge to the City Centre*
- *Blackrock to Merrion*
- *Ringsend to the City Centre*

All property owners potentially affected by today's announcement have been notified by post with one-to-one meetings being offered in the coming weeks with those potentially impacted. The public consultation will run until the 30th April 2019.

On the six corridors announced today, annual passenger growth in Dublin Bus services has increased by 18% in the period 2015 to 2018. However, the millions of passenger journeys taking place on each of these corridors are facing increasing congestion with delays being frequently experienced by commuters.

In launching the public consultation, Anne Graham, CEO of the NTA said:

“Today marks the launch of the last in a three-step process of public consultation with the details of the Emerging Preferred Routes being unveiled for the final six Core Bus Corridors.

In recent days, the NTA has notified the up to 390 property owners along the final six routes who may be potentially affected by the Emerging Preferred Routes and offered one-to-one meetings to discuss the proposals and listen directly to their feedback. We would also encourage property owners to engage in the consultation process that is underway until the 30th April so we can look at the issues they wish to see addressed.

Throughout the development of this project, we are committed to deepening engagement with communities along each of the sixteen routes and the up to 1,470 property owners potentially impacted by the project. That is why we have been holding public information events in recent weeks and will hold similar such events for phase 3 in the next two months.

It has been encouraging to see the high level of engagement that we have witnessed as part of the consultation process. Through feedback and observations, we have already suggested a number of solutions including an alternative layout at Santry on the Swords to City Centre route.

At the NTA, we are eager to hear the concerns of all those potentially impacted and ensure they are updated at every step of the project. The Community Forums rolled out in recent weeks allow a continuous two-way dialogue with community leaders, residents' associations, special interest groups and public representatives. The dates of the forums for phase three corridors will be finalised very shortly.

With the city due to grow by 25% and congestion one of the most significant challenges facing the Dublin region, the BusConnects Core Bus Corridor project is needed now more than ever. Through the development of continuous bus priority and segregated cycle lanes we can meet the growing demand for fast, reliable, punctual and convenient bus journeys in and out of the city centre, and safe cycling facilities for the growing numbers of cyclists.”

1.3 Public Consultation Process for BusConnects

Consultation on the BusConnects Core Bus Corridor Project took place on a phased basis and ran until the 31st May 2019. The first phase of consultation occurred from 14th November 2018 to 29th March 2019.

The second phase ran from 23rd January 2019 to the 30th April 2019 and the final phase ran from 26th February 2019 until the 31st May 2019. The emerging preferred routes within each phase have been listed below;

Phase 1: 14th November 2018 to 29th March 2019

1. Clongriffin to City Centre;
2. Swords to City Centre;
5. Blanchardstown to City Centre; and
6. Lucan to City Centre.

Phase 2: 23rd January 2019 to 30th April 2019

7. Liffey Valley to City Centre;
8. Clondalkin to Drimnagh;
9. Greenhills to City Centre;
10. Tallaght to Terenure;
11. Kimmage to City Centre; and
12. Rathfarnham to City Centre.

Phase 3: 26th February 2019 to 31st May 2019

3. Ballymun to City Centre;
4. Finglas to Phibsborough;
13. Bray to City Centre;
14. UCD Ballsbridge to City Centre;
15. **Blackrock to Merrion;** and
16. Ringsend to City Centre.

Each of the emerging preferred routes can be seen in Figure 1 with the Blackrock to Merrion route designated as Core Bus Corridor 15.

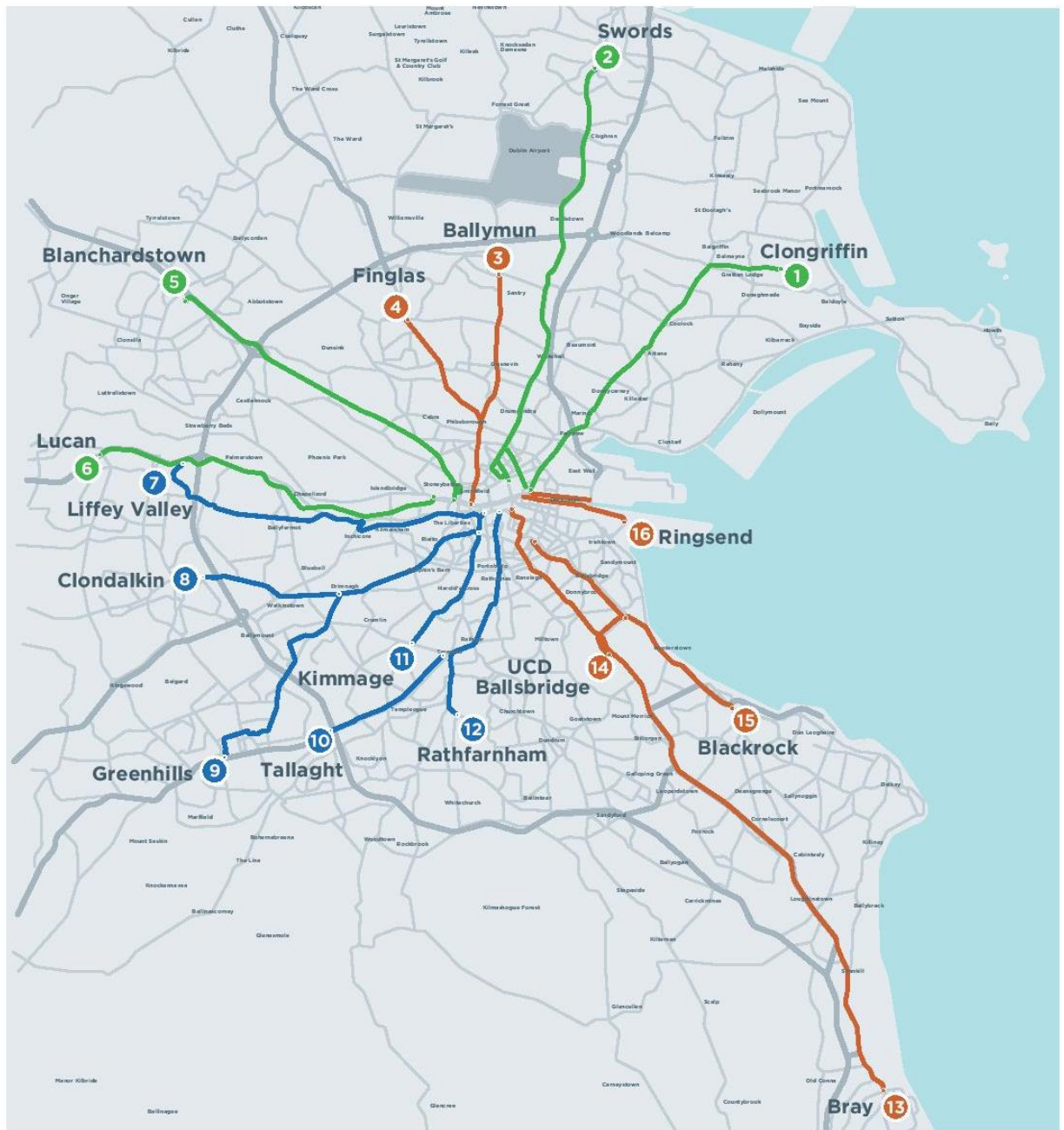


Figure 1: Radial Core Bus Corridors Emerging Preferred Routes.

1.4 Information Provided in Public Consultation

The Public Consultation document provided information about the work that has been carried out as part of the BusConnects Core Bus Corridor Study. Additional information was provided on the official BusConnects website:

<https://www.busconnects.ie/initiatives/core-bus-corridor-project/>

The additional supporting information on the website included:

- Appendix A – Multi Criteria Analysis Tables
- Dún Laoghaire to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Options Study, Executive Summary
- Dún Laoghaire to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Options Study, Drawings
- Dún Laoghaire to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Options Study

1.5 Submissions Received

There were **84** submissions received for the Blackrock to Merrion Core Bus Corridor. These submissions ranged from personal submissions sent in by residents, landowners and local representatives, to detailed proposals from various associations and private sector businesses. In addition to the submissions received, notes taken by the NTA during conversations at public consultation sessions as well as meeting notes are included in a summary of issues raised in this report.

1.6 Principal Issues Raised

The submissions received, cover a wide spectrum of views. The majority of the submissions raised concerns about the scheme, or elements therein. A number of the submissions were positively supportive of the scheme while many expressed qualified support. Some submissions identified positives within the scheme, while challenging other elements of the overall scheme.

The issues raised included:

- 1) Loss of Parking;
- 2) Inadequacies in Consultation Process;
- 3) Traffic Issues Associated with Proposed Traffic Management Measures;
- 4) Removal of Trees;
- 5) The Potential Impact on Protected Structures;
- 6) Pedestrian Safety;
- 7) Rationalisation of Bus Service;
- 8) Vehicular access to Property;
- 9) Devaluation of Property;
- 10) Cyclist Safety / Inadequate Provision for Cyclists;
- 11) Cyclist Segregation;
- 12) Loss of Access to Local Amenities;
- 13) Increased Air and Noise Pollution;
- 14) Proposed Land Acquisition;
- 15) Integration with Sutton to Sandycove Promenade Scheme;

16) Duration of bus-lane operation;

17) Project Splitting.

2 Introduction

Consultation on the Blackrock to Merrion Core Bus Corridor Emerging Preferred Route ran for a period of three months, between the 26th February 2019 and 31st May 2019.

Every property owner potentially affected by the proposals was notified by post on the week commencing 25 February 2019 and a one-to-one meeting was offered in each case.

Public Information Events were held at the following locations:

- Clayton Burlington Hotel, Wednesday 27 March 2019
- Gresham Hotel, Wednesday 24 April 2019

A Community Forum Event was held at the following location:

- Clayton Burlington Hotel, Tuesday 16 April 2019
- Clayton Burlington Hotel, Wednesday 18th September 2019

Copies of the Core Bus Corridor Emerging Preferred Route Brochure were available to the public at the Public Information Events, could be sent by post on request, or for pickup at NTA Office reception, and the Brochure was available for downloading from the Authority's website. Relevant background technical reports were also available for downloading from the Authority's website.

The public were invited to make written submissions relating to the content of the Blackrock to Merrion Core Bus Corridor Core Bus Corridor Emerging Preferred Route. Submissions could be made by post; by email; or by hand-delivery directly in the reception of the Authority's offices.

3 Approach to Assessing the Submission

The review of the submissions commenced in June 2019 once the consultation period for all three phases had closed. The NTA received 84 no. submissions for the Blackrock to Merrion emerging preferred route, from 26th February 2019 to 31st May 2019. Most entries were digital (email), however, some paper bound entries were posted to the NTA.

All submissions were entered into a database. Of the total submissions, 1 no. file was corrupted, and therefore indecipherable, 2 no. submissions were direct duplications, while 1 no. submission was unrelated to the proposals. Therefore, a total of 80 no. submissions were assessed.

No petitions with multiple signatures were received.

4 Analysis of Issues Raised by Section

The Core Bus Corridor was divided into four sections, and the issues raised in each submission was entered and categorised in the database by geographical section, by issue type and comment type. The four sections included;

- Section 1: Nutley Lane to Strand Road
- Section 2: Strand Road to Booterstown Avenue
- Section 3: Booterstown Avenue to Mount Merrion Avenue
- Section 4: Mount Merrion Avenue to Newtownpark Avenue

In addition to the four sections, submissions were also categorised as ‘The Entire Scheme’ where the submission referred to multiple areas, or the scheme as a whole.

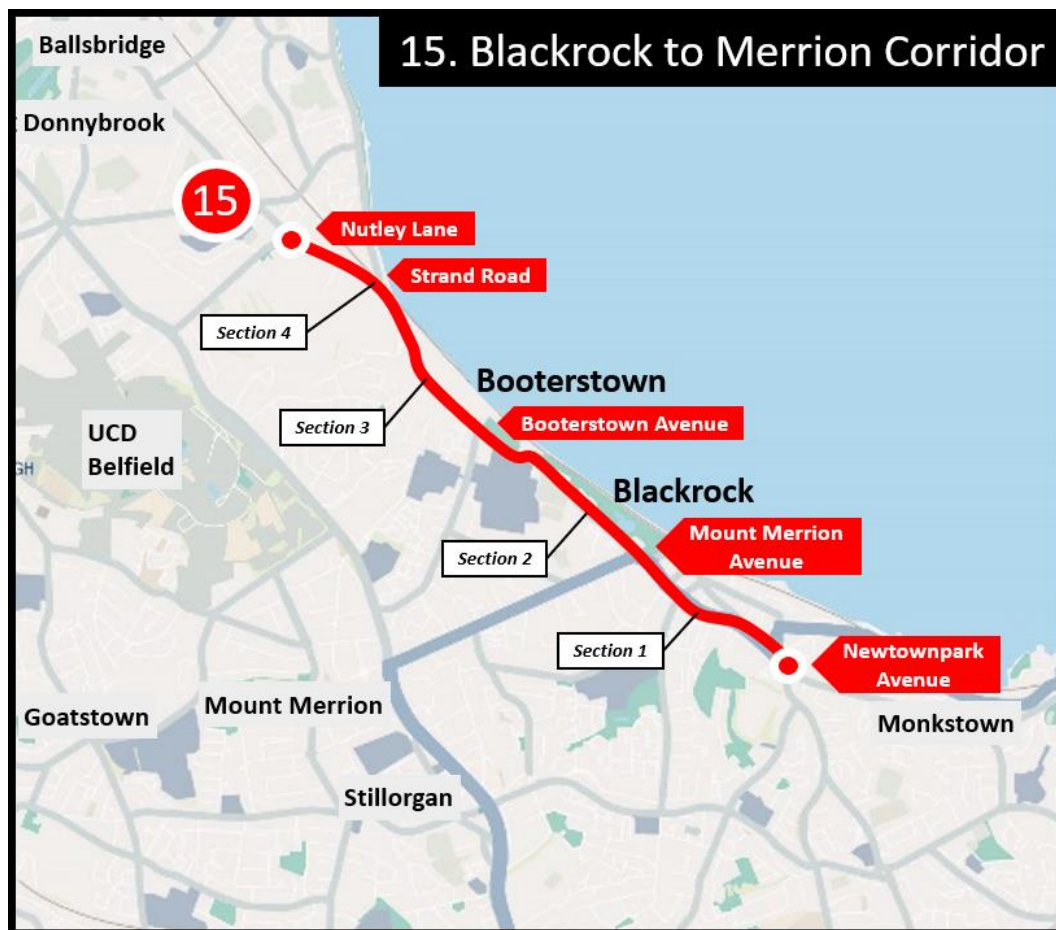


Figure 2: Blackrock to Merrion Corridor Map

The section attracting the most comments was the ‘Entire Scheme’ with the majority of submissions logged under this heading being related to multiple sections. The ‘Entire Scheme’ accounted for 57.5% of submissions received. Section 3 ‘Booterstown Avenue to Mount Merrion Avenue’ accounted for 18.75% of submissions. Section 2 ‘Strand Road to Booterstown Avenue’ accounted for

13.75% of submissions. Section 1 ‘Nutley Lane to Strand Road’ accounted for 10% of submissions. Finally, there was no submissions related specifically to Section 4 ‘Mount Merrion Avenue to Newtownpark Avenue’. The distribution of submissions, across the various sections of the scheme can be seen below in **Table 1** and **Table 2**

Table 1: Distribution of Submissions per Section of the Blackrock to Merrion Core Bus Corridor.

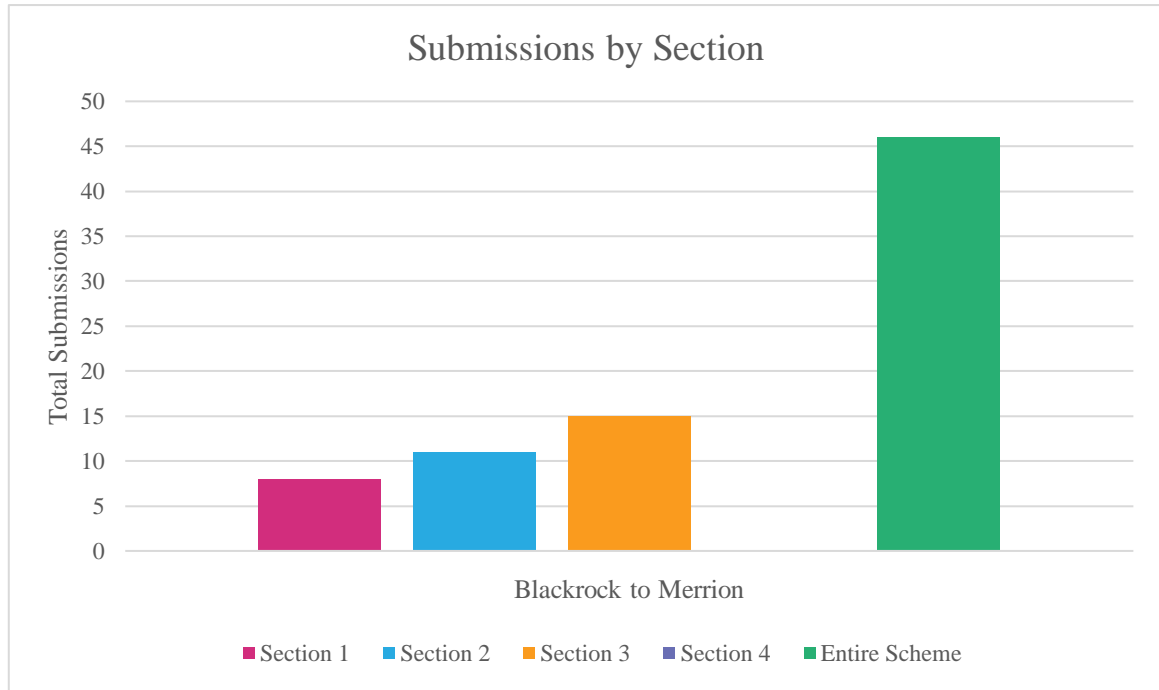


Table 2: Number of Submissions per Section of the Blanchardstown to City Centre Core Bus Corridor.

Section	Number of Comments	Percentage
1: Nutley Lane to Strand Road	8	10%
2: Strand Road to Booterstown Avenue	11	13.75%
3: Booterstown Avenue to Mount Merrion Avenue	15	18.75%
4: Mount Merrion Avenue to Newtownpark Avenue	0	0%
The Entire Scheme	46	57.5%
Total Assessed	80	100%

5 Profile of Those Making Submissions:

Of the submissions received:

- 92% were from residents of the study area who were not directly impacted by the scheme and typically referred to local matters;
- 8% other.

6 Themes Raised in the Submissions

All 80 of the submissions received by the NTA were reviewed and the issues raised were categorised, summarised and analysed. The submissions were categorised into a total of eight main themes during this review process.

Theme	Frequency of Comments
Accessibility/ Traffic Impact	9 comments
Integration / Bus Network	5 comments
Land Acquisition	25 comments
Safety	31 comments
Environmental Issues	25 comments
Social Impact	20 comments
Economy / Impact on Local Business	5 comments
Heritage	8 comments

Appendix A provides an in-depth listing of the various issues raised in each section.

7 Summary of The Main Issues Raised

This report identifies the key issues raised in the public consultation process. The Authority will seek to establish the validity of the concerns, the potential consequences for the project, and how best to address the issues and /or mitigate the negative impact.

While a variety of matters were raised in the submissions, the key issues relating to the project are as follows:

- 1) Loss of Parking;
- 2) Inadequacies in Consultation Process;
- 3) Traffic Issues Associated with Proposed Traffic Management Measures;
- 4) Removal of Trees;
- 5) The Potential Impact on Protected Structures;
- 6) Pedestrian Safety;
- 7) Rationalisation of Bus Service;
- 8) Vehicular access to Property;
- 9) Devaluation of Property;
- 10) Cyclist Safety / Inadequate Provision for Cyclists;
- 11) Cyclist Segregation;
- 12) Loss of Access to Local Amenities;
- 13) Increased Air and Noise Pollution;
- 14) Proposed Land Acquisition;
- 15) Integration with Sutton to Sandycove Promenade Scheme;
- 16) Duration of bus-lane operation;
- 17) Project Splitting.

The nature of the issue, and the proposed NTA response to it, is covered in the following sections.

Issue 1: Loss of Parking

Concerns were raised over the potential loss of public and private parking spaces, as a result of proposed road widening and the associated potential land acquisition.

Most of these concerns were raised by local residents who were directly impacted by the possible acquisition of land.

- Some residents advised that the acquisition of land would directly impact the number of vehicles their driveway could accommodate.
- It was also suggested that a potential reduction in public and private parking in the area might impact and discourage guests from visiting these areas which would have a knock-on effect on the resident's standard of living.
- In addition, concerns were raised that there may not be sufficient public parking. This was suggested to be along Strand Road and Booterstown Avenue.

NTA response to Issue 1

Based on the submissions received, the impact on public parking and loading has been reviewed, with alternative options considered where feasible to minimise and/or mitigate any impact on local business owners, residents and community members.

The current scheme proposal has reduced the impact on parking when compared to the Emerging Preferred Route published in February 2019. For example, west of Merrion Gates, 6 no. spaces previously identified to be removed, will now be retained under the PRO proposals, while east of Merrion Gates 9 no. new spaces are included within the PRO proposal.

Where potential land acquisition is envisaged, the NTA 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 take required for this scheme can only be determined at detailed design level, and its justification will be presented as part of a Compulsory Purchase Order, should such be required.

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 the NTA during the preparation of a planning application for the scheme. These impacts will be taken into account by An Bord Pleanála in its assessment of the scheme.

Issue 2: Inadequacies in Consultation Process

Concern and disappointment was raised in relation to the public consultation process undertaken. The principal issue was:

- Perceived lack of precise detail (such as extent of land being acquired and which specific trees being removed or retained) being relayed to landowners whose property might be affected by the proposals.

NTA Response to Issue 2

As part of this non-statutory public consultation this CBC received 80 submissions, while overall 13,000 submissions were received. On this CBC, in relation to the non-statutory public consultation there have been two Community Forums, and a significant number of both one to one meetings and meetings with residents groups during the development of the PRO.

Following this design development, a further round of non-statutory public consultation will be carried out to present these revised designs to the public. In tandem with this, representatives of local bodies will be regularly updated at Community Forum presentations. Finally, the statutory public consultation process will be followed as part of the preparation of a planning application for the scheme.

Issue 3: Traffic Issues Associated with Proposed Traffic Management Measures

Residents were concerned that the proposed traffic management plans could cause increased levels of traffic on residential roads as well as creating congestion elsewhere on the road network. The main items raised under this topic were:

- Possible increase in traffic along Rock Road, where at the moment, the bus lane only restarts after the Elm Park Development. This allows for one traffic lane for those queuing to turn right through the Merrion Gates and the other traffic to flow until the road widens. It is suggested that starting this bus lane sooner may result in traffic being backed up trying to get into the city centre;
- Possible increase in traffic along various residential roads, caused by traffic finding alternative routes into and out of the city. Some residents were concerned that these residential roads were not built for elevated traffic levels. Concerns were raised over the safety for residents on these residential roads as well as the potential impact on their quality of life;
- There were also concerns raised of the potential impact this may have on traffic flows on other residential lanes and streets outside of this particular scheme. It was suggested that this should be taken into account;
- The justification of increasing vehicular traffic on the route was questioned;
- The capacity of Dublin city centre streets to accommodate any additional traffic generated by the proposal was questioned;
- A suggestion was made that DART stations along the corridor be serviced by local, small buses, providing bus connectivity to the DART line.
- A suggestion to provide additional parking spaces at DART stations to facilitate Park and Ride was made.
- Suggestions to introduce a congestion charge for the city centre were made in multiple submissions;
- Finally, the well-established streetscape of Merrion Road was suggested as simply not being designed to facilitate expansion to incorporate extra traffic lanes, as proposed.

NTA Response to Issue 3

As part of the next stage of the project a substantial transport and traffic modelling exercise will be undertaken to more accurately understand the implications of the proposals at both a city-wide scale as well as at individual junctions. Once these implications are more precisely defined, they will inform the next stage of design, with appropriate treatment provided to ensure that the objectives of the scheme are fulfilled while catering for the needs of all road users. The impacts of the scheme on the surrounding road network, outside of the main CBC route, will also be assessed as part of this exercise, with appropriate treatment and or mitigation measures, including turn bans, provided where necessary.

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 the NTA during the preparation of a planning application for the scheme. These impacts will be taken into account by An Bord Pleanála in its assessment of the scheme.

Issue 4: Removal of Trees

A number of submissions expressed an objection to the potential removal of mature trees along the scheme. In particular the following items were raised:

- Residents were concerned that the potential removal of trees could negatively impact local biodiversity, reducing habitats and sources of food for birds and insects, and causing further divisions between local habitats.
- Local communities were also concerned that the loss of trees on Merrion Road might impact on the sense of place and community.
- It was suggested that trees within the curtilage of Blackrock College are Category A and Category B trees and concerns were raised with regard to the impact on these trees.
- It was suggested that the potential impact on trees currently located within private property along Merrion Road, which may be impacted by potential land acquisition, has not been identified.
- The local community expressed disappointed with the perceived lack of precise information available on the removal of trees along the bus corridor, such as which trees would be removed, would the trees be replaced etc.
- A number of submissions suggested that the removal of mature trees along this route could not be justified to facilitate this scheme.

NTA Response to Issue 4

A number of sections along the route have also been assessed and amended as part of the design development, and a key outcome of many of these design interventions is the proposed retention of a significant number of existing trees. Within the PRO, along with general retention of trees where possible, amendments have been made on certain key sections referred to in the submissions as follows:

- Between Merrion Gates and Nutley Lane where 10 no. trees on the northern (Church) side of the road are proposed to be retained
- The land acquisition required within the Willow Park and Blackrock College lands has been significantly reduced in the Preferred Route Option (PRO) thus reducing the impact on the trees in this area.

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 the NTA during the preparation of a planning application for the scheme.

Issue 5: The Potential Impact on Protected structures

Several submissions suggested the presence of protected structures along the corridor and many expressed concerns regarding the impact the proposed scheme could have on these protected structures. These submissions included the following:

- Residents along the Merrion Road suggested that some of the properties along this route are protected structures, they felt that the front gardens are an integral part of the overall aspect of these structures.
- It was suggested that a number of properties on the route are protected structures or contain protected structures.
- Many residents expressed disappointment that potential land acquisition might result in the removal of historical wrought railings, ironworks and mature hedging in the curtilage of these protected structures.
- It was suggested that the protection afforded to school gates, referenced above, should be extended to include railings associated with the gates.

NTA Response to Issue 5

In total, the PRO proposals have reduced the number of properties impacted from approximately 51 properties down to 18 properties when compared to the EPR. Of these properties no longer impacted, 5 of them located on Merrion Road are listed on the Record of Protected Structures.

Where potential land acquisition is envisaged, the NTA 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 take required for this scheme can only be determined at detailed design level, and its justification will be presented as part of a Compulsory Purchase Order, should such be required.

The potential impact of the scheme on Heritage items will be detailed as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process which will be carried out by the NTA during the preparation of a planning application for the scheme. These impacts will be taken into account by An Bord Pleanála in their assessment of the scheme

Issue 6: Pedestrian Safety

Local residents, in the vicinity of Booterstown Avenue to Mount Merrion Avenue in particular, expressed concerns for the safety of vulnerable pedestrians (elderly, children, wheelchair users, buggy users) accessing St. Mary's Boys National School, due to the proposal of a cycle lane. Residents expressed concerns that the extra lane could make the distance travelled to cross the road greater and could thus impact on pedestrian safety.

In addition, between Nutley Lane and Strand Road, concerns were raised that the proposed footpath reduction could be a health and safety issue for school-goers and other vulnerable pedestrians in the area.

NTA response to Issue 6

Following a review of the submissions received and further analysis of the design a number of specific interventions have been made to further improve the pedestrian provision within the PRO.

The Booterstown Avenue, Merrion Gates, and Mount Merrion Avenue junctions in particular have been reviewed and with the design standards applied, the current preferred design offers a safe environment for pedestrian and cyclist crossing movements.

The final designs will be rigorously assessed against all relevant design standards. In particular, vulnerable road user safety will be assessed through a Road User Audit, Road Safety Audit and Disability Audit of the scheme.

Issue 7: Rationalisation of Bus Services

A submission highlighted the perceived inconvenience that the proposed alteration of bus services might cause. Disappointment was raised that bus commuters may have to take a number of buses instead of one bus journey. This was raised with particular reference to the no. 4 bus serving Rowanbyrn, Blackrock.

NTA response to Issue 7

The issues highlighted above relate to the BusConnects Bus Network Redesign which is subject to a separate public consultation process.

Issue 8: Vehicular access to Property

Residents were concerned that the proposals might impact motorists entering or exiting their property. They are concerned that any potential reduction of front garden space may make it impossible to make a three-point turn within some front gardens / driveways along Merrion Road.

It was suggested that the setting back of boundary walls may compromise the safety of residents entering and exiting their properties.

NTA response to Issue 8

The impact on property boundaries has been assessed further in terms of how it may affect access arrangements to properties. In total, the PRO proposals have reduced the number of properties impacted from approximately 51 properties down to 18 properties when compared to the EPR. Of these properties no longer impacted, 5 of them located on Merrion Road.

Where potential land acquisition is envisaged, the NTA 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 take required for this scheme can only be determined at detailed design level, and its justification will be presented as part of a Compulsory Purchase Order, should such be required.

The potential impact of the scheme on Heritage items will be detailed as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process which will be carried out by the NTA during the preparation of a planning application for the scheme. These impacts will be taken into account by An Bord Pleanála in their assessment of the scheme

Issue 9: Devaluation of Property

A submission highlighted concerns with the perceived impact the proposed scheme is currently having on the local property market. It was suggested that prospective buyers of properties are demanding discounts on property prices as a result of the proposed scheme.

NTA Response to Issue 9

In total, the PRO proposals have reduced the number of properties impacted from approximately 51 properties down to 18 properties when compared to the EPR.

Where potential land acquisition is envisaged, the NTA 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. Should Compulsory Purchase Order be required, this process will fairly assess 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 the NTA during the preparation of a planning application for the scheme. These impacts will be taken into account by An Bord Pleanála in their assessment of the scheme.

Issue 10: Cyclist Safety / Inadequate Provision for Cyclists

Concerns were raised for cyclist safety at several locations. Some suggested alterations to the cycle facilities included:

- All left slip turn lanes should be removed;
- The median between Blackrock and Booterstown could be removed and the space reallocated to cyclists;
- Providing only 2m wide cycle lanes may inhibit future growth in cycling;
- Car doors opening across the cycle lanes in the vicinity of St. Mary's School was highlighted as a concern;
- Areas where the cycle lane was 'sandwiched' between the general traffic lane and bus lane was highlighted as a concern;
- Many submissions expressed concerns that the proposed cycle lanes were unsafe and requested that the lanes were segregated further;
- Several submissions expressed concerns of interactions between cyclists and buses and suggested that cycle lanes should bypass the bus stops;
- Concerns were also raised about the two-way cycle track along the Rock Road, on which it was suggested that it should have cyclists cycling on the left, not the right. In addition, it was suggested that contraflow cycling at night

may cause difficulties for cyclists as a result of glare from vehicular headlights.

NTA Response to Issue 10

Following a review of the submissions received and further analysis of the design a number of specific interventions have been made to further improve the cycle provision within the Preferred Route Option (PRO).

Along the section at St. Mary's School the arrangement has been reviewed and amended and it is considered that the buffer provided between the parking and the cycle lane is sufficient to separate the cycle track from car doors opening. The arrangement of the two-way cycle track has been reviewed along its length and the direction of travel of cyclists has been reversed, with cyclists now cycling on the left. In addition, junction layouts have been adjusted to provide additional segregation between cyclists and vehicles.

The final designs will be rigorously assessed against all relevant design standards. In particular cyclist safety will be assessed through a Road User Audit and Road Safety Audit of the scheme.

Issue 11: Cyclist Segregation

Many submissions raised concerns regarding the lack of segregation of cycle facilities. Multiple submissions, while generally supportive of the scheme, requested that all cycle lanes be segregated as much as possible, in particular, approaching and through junctions and passing bus stops.

Separate traffic signals for cycle lanes through junction were also requested.

NTA Response to Issue 11

Following a review of the submissions received and further analysis of the design a number of specific interventions have been made to further improve the cycle provision within the Preferred Route Option (PRO). Cycle facilities have been designed as segregated cycle tracks where possible, as well as the junction design details being reviewed to increase protection of cyclists on approach to and through junctions.

The final designs will be rigorously assessed against all relevant design standards. In particular cyclist safety will be assessed through a Road User Audit and Road Safety Audit of the scheme.

Issue 12: Loss of Access to Local Amenities

Residents were concerned that pedestrians may find it difficult to access local amenities (such as St. Mary's School) due to perceived unsafe conditions such as potential increased traffic speeds, traffic volumes and reduced footpath widths. It was suggested that these factors, combined with narrower footpaths generally, could also deter pedestrians from accessing areas by foot.

In addition, it was requested that access to Blackrock Park be addressed by the scheme. In particular, access to fit a trishaw was requested.

NTA Response to Issue 12

As part of the next stage of the project a substantial transport and traffic modelling exercise will be undertaken to more accurately understand the implications of the proposals at both a city-wide scale as well as at individual junctions. Once these implications are more precisely defined, they will inform the next stage of design, with appropriate treatment provided to ensure that the objectives of the scheme are fulfilled while catering for the needs of all road users. The impacts of the scheme on the surrounding road network, outside of the main CBC route, will also be assessed as part of this exercise, with appropriate treatment and or mitigation measures, including turn bans, provided where necessary.

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 the NTA during the preparation of a planning application for the scheme. These impacts will be taken into account by An Bord Pleanála in its assessment of the scheme.

Issue 13: Increased Air and Noise Pollution

Concerns were raised that an extra lane of traffic could lead to increased traffic levels along the Bus Corridor. The possible increased traffic levels could result in increased air pollution, in the form of nitrogen emissions from car exhausts of non-electric vehicles. The removal of trees could exacerbate the issue, as it was suggested the natural vegetation currently absorbs toxins released from car exhausts.

Residents raised concerns that possible increased traffic levels could result in higher levels of noise pollution. It was suggested that road widening, moving traffic lanes closer to residential properties, together with the potential removal of trees and boundary vegetation along the bus corridor could possibly increase noise levels further, due to the trees and vegetation currently acting as a natural sound barrier.

Additional concerns that increased noise levels could impact the sleep quality and daily activities of residents was also raised.

NTA Response to Issue 13

The road alignment proposals along the entire route have been reviewed further as part of the design development, to ensure the potential land acquisition and the impact on existing trees has been minimised.

In total, the PRO proposals have reduced the number of properties impacted from approximately 51 properties down to 18 properties when compared to the EPR.

In addition, a number of sections along the route have amended as part of the PRO design development, and a key outcome of many of these design interventions is the proposed retention of a significant number of existing trees.

The NTA will be upgrading 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, approximately 500 buses, will be converted to low emission vehicles, with full conversion completed by 2030.

The potential impact of the scheme in relation to Noise impacts will be detailed as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process which will be carried out by the NTA during the preparation of a planning application for the scheme. This assessment will include for noise generated during the construction phase as well as the operational phase of the project. These impacts will be taken into account by An Bord Pleanála in their assessment of the scheme.

Issue 14: Proposed Land Acquisition

Some residents or owners whose properties will potentially be directly impacted by the proposed scheme raised concerns over the necessity to acquire their land and identified the impacts this land acquisition could have on their quality of life (including loss of private amenity, loss of car parking and devaluation of property).

An issue which was raised in numerous submissions was the request to consider a slight re-alignment of the scheme along Rock Road, specifically the area that borders the bird sanctuary. It was suggested that there is a strip of publicly owned land between the bird sanctuary and the road boundary which it is suggested does not part of the sanctuary. If this re-alignment were taken into consideration it is suggested that it may result in no land acquisition being necessary opposite the sanctuary.

It was further suggested that the strip of land might be used for a path or cycle lane rather than having to acquire lands on Rock Road.

It was further suggested that relocating cycle facilities along the coast would reduce the requirement for land acquisition along the scheme.

Multiple submissions requested that the scheme alignment be adjusted to reduce or remove the need for land acquisition at their property.

NTA Response to Issue 14

The road alignment proposals along the entire route have been reviewed further as part of the design development, to ensure any land acquisition proposed is necessary to achieve the objectives of the BusConnects scheme and that the locations and extent of land acquisition has been minimised. Examples of this include:

- A number of residential properties along Merrion Road between Nutley Lane and Merrion Gates where the required land acquisition is either reduced or removed altogether (in the case of 5 of these which are on the Record of Protected Structures, there is now no land acquisition currently proposed).
- Along the Rock Road land acquisition is no longer required on the in-bound side of the road between St. Helen's Road and Booterstown Avenue.

- Along the Rock Road land acquisition is no longer required on the in-bound side of the road between Willow Terrace to Bellevue Avenue.

- The land acquisition required within the Willow Park and Blackrock College lands has been significantly reduced.

- The land acquisition required within Blackrock Clinic lands has also been reduced.

In total, the PRO proposals have reduced the number of properties impacted from approximately 51 properties down to 18 properties when compared to the EPR.

Where potential land acquisition is envisaged, the NTA 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 take required for this scheme can only be determined at detailed design level, and its justification will be presented as part of a Compulsory Purchase Order, should such be required.

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 the NTA during the preparation of a planning application for the scheme. These impacts will be taken into account by An Bord Pleanála in its assessment of the scheme.

Issue 15: Integration with Sutton to Sandycove Promenade Scheme

Several submissions raised the issue in which they felt it beneficial to combine the BusConnects scheme with the S2S Sutton to Sandycove walk and cycleway between Merrion Gates and Blackrock. Many submissions emphasised the need for a more joined up approach between the schemes and requested that the proposed cycling facilities be located along the coast, which could potentially pose the opportunity to provide an entirely safe, traffic-free route from the heart of Dun Laoghaire into the centre of Dublin. Many submissions felt that this would not only be a safer approach as it increases segregation, but it would also create an attractive amenity for public use.

It was further suggested that by providing a coastal cycling route, it could negate the need for cycle facilities along this scheme therefore reducing the need for land acquisition.

Some submissions suggested that failure to combine the S2S scheme with the BusConnects scheme in the assessment and design stages, could leave the BusConnects process open to challenge on the grounds of failure to follow the legislation requiring promoters to take account of related projects.

NTA Response to Issue 15

In relation to cycle network integration, Route 15 forms part of the Primary Cycle Route 13 within the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan – with Primary Routes described therein as “Main cycle arteries that cross the urban area and carry most cycle traffic”. Route 13 provides direct connectivity to/from the N5 East Coast Trail.

There are many opportunities for alternative cycle routes away from the BusConnects corridor, however it is considered that while these offer benefits to cyclists and are used by cyclists, they do not negate the need to provide dedicated cycle facilities on the Primary Cycle Route forming the BusConnects Route 15.

Issue 16: Duration of Bus Lane Operation

Submissions queried the proposed hours of operation of the bus lanes along the scheme. A number of submissions queried if it is proposed that these bus lanes will operate 24 hours per day or only during specific hours. Many submissions suggested that 24-hour bus lanes may not be necessary.

NTA Response to Issue 16

As part of the next stage of the project a substantial transport and traffic modelling exercise will be undertaken to more accurately understand the implications of the proposals at both a city-wide scale as well as on local road networks and at individual junctions. This exercise will help inform a more detailed assessment of the appropriate hours of operation of the proposed and existing bus lanes through the BusConnects scheme.

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 the NTA during the preparation of a planning application for the scheme. These impacts will be taken into account by An Bord Pleanála in its assessment of the scheme.

Issue 17: Project Splitting

A submission suggested that the proposal includes infrastructure for the future delivery of a proposed new roadway to the east of Our Lady Queen of Peace Church, which was proposed under a different scheme, through the provision of right turn lane along Merrion Road. The submission suggests that this could be regarded as project splitting. This submission was also concerned that the potential land acquisition was proposed to facilitate a scheme being proposed by others.

NTA Response to Issue 17

It is not intended to deliver infrastructure not necessary for the BusConnects scheme. Notwithstanding the above, the arrangement at this location has been reviewed and amended, with the result being a reduction in proposed land acquisition within the current preferred route option.

Appendix A

Summary of Issues Raised by Route Section

Section 1: Nutley Lane to Strand Road

The main comments observed within Section 1 include;

- Concerns were raised about trees being removed along this section of the bus corridor. In the event of tree removal, some residents requested that trees were replanted.
- Residents were concerned that removal of all or part of the front gardens where the property was a protected structure, could potentially amount to a direct challenge to their protected status.
- Residents expressed concerns about the perceived destruction of the residential character and environment of homeowners along this section of the route
- Residents also raised concerns about the proposed removal of historic railings and mature hedging along the route which may lead to a reduction in privacy in homes and could also decrease the noise buffer leading to increased noise pollution.
- Concern were raised over the potential land acquisition and the possible impact this would have on the residents.
- A concern was expressed that the perceived provision of a right turn lane to a future potential road would be considered as project splitting.



Figure 3: Section 1 Nutley Lane to Strand Road

Section 2: Strand Road to Booterstown Avenue

The main comments observed within Section 2 were;

- Concern over the potential land acquisition and the impact this would have on the residents;
- Concerns were raised about trees being potentially removed along this section of the bus corridor;
- It was suggested that there are a number of protected structures along this section;
- Concerns raised over the removal of phantom/ghost island and the potential loss of access to Grotto Place;
- Concerns raised about St. Mary's Boys National School on Grotto Avenue where there are plans for a footpath, a cycle lane and then car parking, next to the bus lane. Residents in the area felt that this could be potentially dangerous for parents dropping their children to school, i.e. opening their car doors onto a cycle lane to get to the footpath;
- Concerns were raised with regard to the safety of the two-way cycle facility along this section;
- Suggestions were made that cycle facilities along this section should be relocated onto the coastline.

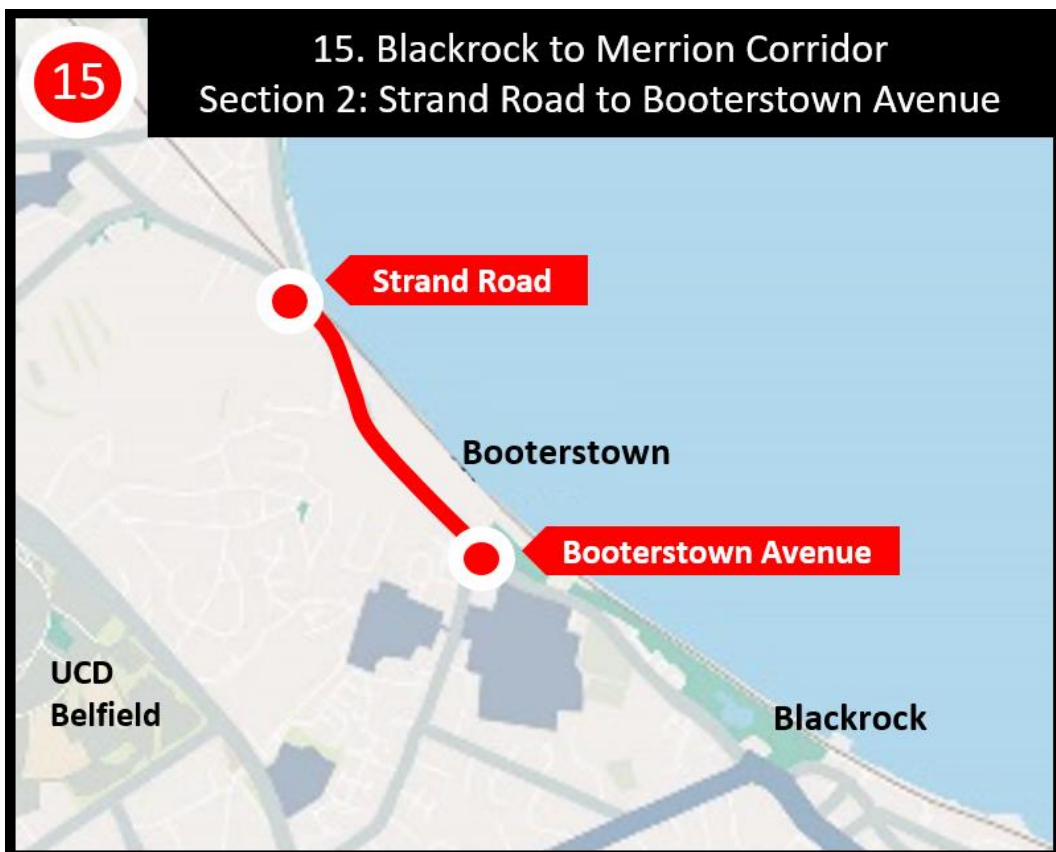


Figure 4: Section 2 Strand Road to Booterstown Avenue

Section 3: Booterstown Avenue to Mount Merrion Avenue

The main comments observed within Section 3 include;

- Concerns were raised about trees being potentially removed along this section of the bus corridor;
- Concerns about street character being undermined by potential land acquisition (gates, railings, walls and trees);
- Residents suggested use of the land strip along the bird sanctuary as a walking path or cycle lane which could prevent the need to acquire gardens along the Rock Road;
- Residents expressed dissatisfaction with potential destruction of a mature residential streetscape due to potential land acquisition and tree felling;
- Suggested that cycle facilities integrate with the Sutton to Sandycove project & Irish Rail's coastal protection project between Merrion Gates and Blackrock;
- It was suggested that the Blackrock College Gates, Willow Park School Gates as well as the gates accessing Willow Terrace are all protected structures;
- Concerns expressed over the impact on parkland character and protected trees with a significant number of protected Category A and Category B Trees which are suggested to be an intrinsic component of the character of the parkland setting and are vulnerable to the threat of destruction.



Figure 5: Section 3 Booterstown Avenue to Mount Merrion Avenue

Section 4: Mount Merrion Avenue to Newtownpark Avenue

There was no submission noted specifically related to this area.

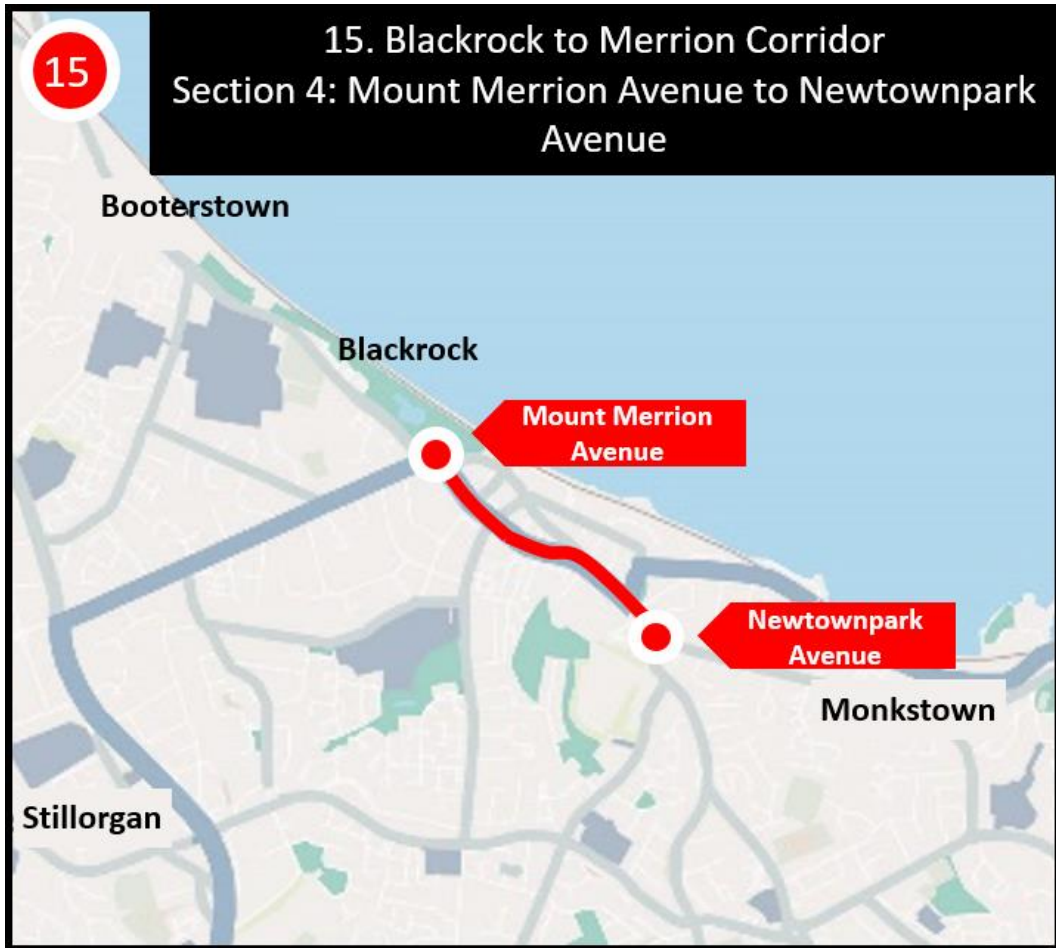


Figure 6: Section 4 Mount Merrion Avenue to Newtownpark Avenue

Entire Scheme

The main comments observed include;

- Suggestions of the benefit in combining the Bus Connects scheme with the S2S Sutton to Sandycove walk and cycleway between Merrion Gates and Blackrock. Submissions emphasised the need for a more joined up approach between the schemes which it was suggested could potentially pose the opportunity to provide an entirely safe traffic-free route from the heart of Dún Laoghaire into the centre of Dublin;
- Although the project includes plans for bus and cycling modes of transport, concerns were raised that there was little integration across other modes of transport in Dublin such as Luas, Commuter rail, DART, park and ride facilities, Dublin Bikes, Bleeper Bikes etc.;
- Concerns were raised that the cycle lanes are not currently safe for users at some points along the scheme, due to cyclists being ‘sandwiched’ between the car lane and bus lane. The need for cyclists to cross over lanes of traffic was also raised as a concern, as was the tapering off of cycle lanes at various junctions. It was suggested that cyclist priority was lost at junctions. Segregation of cycle facilities was requested in multiple submissions;
- Residents requested that a universal design approach was implemented in order to ensure the concerns of people with disabilities are central to the scheme;
- Submissions suggested increasing park and ride facilities;
- Other suggestions included an underground metro, underground tunnel for public transport etc.;
- Some submissions contested the need for the scheme. These residents felt that the current system worked perfectly, and the proposals were unnecessary;
- Various other submissions were in support of the scheme and were happy to see cyclists and pedestrians being prioritised;
- Many submissions requested the need for more emphasis on street use hierarchy of Pedestrians, Cyclists, Public Transport, and Cars in that order.



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