



Blackpool to City Sustainable Transport Corridor

Public Consultation Match 2023

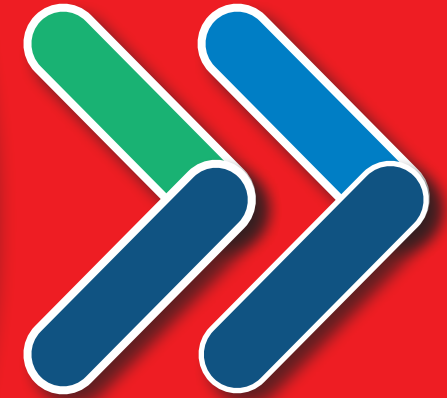


Rialtas
na hÉireann
Government
of Ireland

Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040

**BUS
CONNECTS
CORK**

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FOR A BETTER CITY.



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1. Introduction

1.1 What has happened so far?

Between June 30th 2022 and October 3rd 2022, the National Transport Authority (NTA) undertook the first round of public consultation on initial proposals for the twelve Sustainable Transport Corridors proposed under BusConnects Cork. During this consultation phase almost three thousand submissions were received in total.

All of the submissions were reviewed and considered as part of the ongoing design process for each corridor. In addition, we held six Public Information Events, five Community Forums and hosted numerous meetings with approximately thirty-five residents' groups, business groups and other special interest groups. Based on the submissions made and the constructive meetings with the various stakeholders, we have amended our initial proposals to address some of the issues raised including incorporating suggestions and recommendations for alternative solutions.

We are now publishing those revised proposals, referred to as Preferred Route Options, for the eleven remaining Sustainable Transport Corridors and commencing a second round of public consultation in relation to the plans.

This document is one of a series of eleven information booklets, each dedicated to a single corridor. The document provides a written description of the Preferred Route Option from start to finish with supporting maps and includes information on any revisions and key changes made from the initial Emerging Preferred Route.

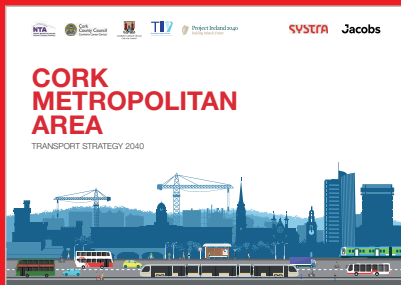
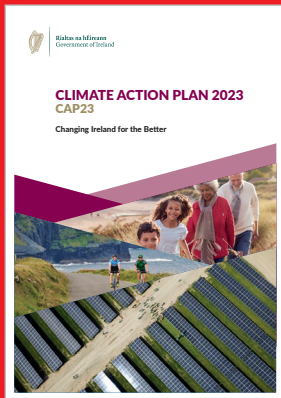
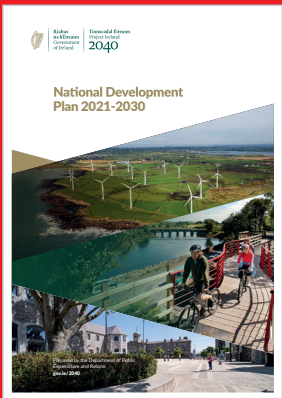
The original brochures detailing each Emerging Preferred Routes, published last year, remain available to view and download on our website www.busconnects.ie. These brochures contain information on the process for impacted property owners, the project timelines and steps required for statutory planning application.

1.2 What is BusConnects?

BusConnects is the National Transport Authority's programme to greatly improve bus services. It is a key part of the Government's policies to improve public transport and address climate change in Cork and other cities. It is included within the following national and regional policies:

- The National Development Plan 2021 - 2030;
- Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy 2040; and
- The Climate Action Plan 2023.

Cork is growing and needs a bus network that works for a developing city. The aim of BusConnects Cork is to deliver an enhanced bus system that is better for the city, its people and the environment. BusConnects Cork is designed to provide a better, more reliable and more efficient bus service for everyone in addition to providing safe cycling facilities along key routes.



BusConnects Cork: At a glance



91km of new bus lane / bus priority

making journeys faster and more reliable

96km of cycle facilities

(one direction)
delivering 48km of the cycle network.



Redesigning the bus network



State-of-the-art ticketing system

Cashless payment system



Simpler fare structure



New Park & Ride sites
in key locations



Transitioning to a new
Zero emissions bus fleet



New bus stops and shelters
with better signage and information

1.3 What are the benefits of this project?



Faster, more reliable journeys

By removing buses from traffic congestion, the punctuality and reliability of the bus system is vastly improved. Journeys are faster and, even more importantly, arrival times are more consistent and dependable.



Building a sustainable city and addressing climate change

Tackling the challenges of climate change is a priority for Ireland and moving more people to public transport is a key component of the solution. The Climate Action Plan 2023 recently published by the Government, sets challenging targets for increasing travel by public transport plus cycling, and reducing the need for car journeys.



Cork's carbon neutral target

Cork has been selected by the European Commission to become one of Europe's first climate neutral cities by 2030 under the EU's Cities Mission Programme. Through enabling more people to use public transport, cycling and walking, the development and delivery of BusConnects Cork will be essential to achieve that climate neutral city ambition.



Accessibility for all

More bus shelters, with seating where possible, new footpaths and better information at bus stops, will make using the fully accessible bus fleet easier for all to use, including the elderly and mobility impaired.



Better cycling facilities

This project will see the provision of much needed cycling facilities around the city region with over 96kms of high quality cycling facilities provided. Segregated cycling along the key corridors of the city will allow the public to have cycling as a real sustainable alternative. The new cycling infrastructure will be of significant benefit to the public, business, tourism, education and retail.



Pedestrians and Urban Realm

Along each route, improvements and enhancements will be made to footpaths, walkways and pedestrian crossings. In addition, there will be investment in local urban realm improvements at key locations, where additional landscaping, pavement treatments and outdoor amenities will be provided.

1.4 Understanding the terminology

1. Sustainable Transport Corridor (STC):

Part of the overall BusConnects Programme is to create eleven Sustainable Transport Corridors (STCs) along existing roads across Cork city, representing key bus and cycling routes. The development of these Sustainable Transport Corridors will enable efficient bus movement along these routes, together with the provision of safe, segregated cycling facilities, where feasible, in addition to accommodating general traffic movement.

The proposed arrangements include removing buses from traffic congestion by developing separate bus lanes along these routes or by using traffic signalling arrangements over short distances. Alternatively, general traffic levels would be reduced by restricting through traffic using bus gates (described later), such that buses will no longer be delayed by traffic congestion.

2. Segregated Cycle Tracks:

A segregated cycle track is a separate section of the road dedicated for cycling only. This space will generally be isolated from other vehicular traffic by a physical kerb. Where it is not physically possible to have segregated cycle lanes/tracks, there will be the option of quiet roads and shared cycling on reduced speed roads for cyclists.

3. Emerging Preferred Route:

The NTA published outline plans for each of the Sustainable Transport Corridors in a non-statutory public consultation process in June 2022. The options were called Emerging Preferred Routes to inform the public of the indicative layout of the roadways with the necessary infrastructure in place, at that stage of the design process. They included indications of potential impacts on gardens and other land

areas, and potential changes to how traffic would operate to facilitate bus priority.

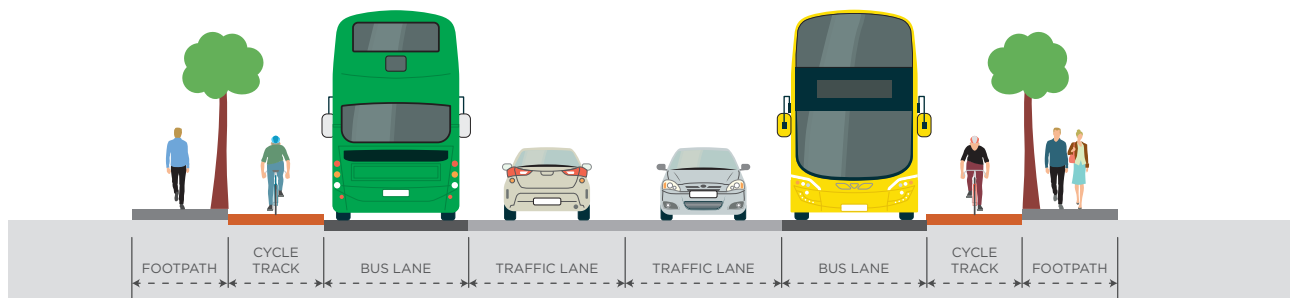
4. Preferred Route Option:

Following consideration of the public submissions about the Emerging Preferred Routes, the Sustainable Transport Corridor proposals have been reviewed and amended. Each of the revised proposals is now referred to as a Preferred Route Option (PRO) and these will be the subject of a second round of non-statutory public consultation.

These are not final scheme proposals as they are subject to further consideration of the feedback from the second round of public consultation and are also to subsequent examination in the context of environmental impact assessment.

5. Bus Gate

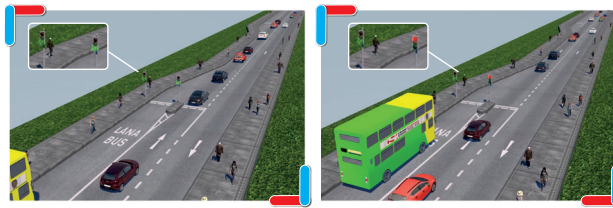
A Bus Gate is a sign-posted short length of stand-alone bus lane. This short length of road is restricted exclusively to buses, taxis and cyclists plus emergency vehicles during the hours of operation of the Bus Gate. It facilitates bus priority by removing general through traffic along the overall road where the bus gate is located. General traffic will be directed by signage to



divert away to other roads before they arrive at the bus gate. Further information on how a Bus Gate would work is detailed in Section 1.5.

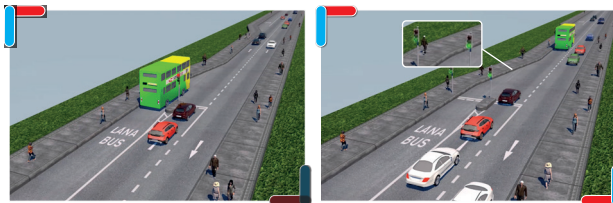
6. Signal Controlled Priority:

Signal Control Priority uses traffic signals to enable buses to get priority ahead of traffic where both buses and traffic are sharing the same lane, but it is only effective for short distances. This arrangement typically arises where a bus lane cannot be continued due to obstructions on the roadway. An example might be where a road has pinch-points where it narrows due to existing buildings or structures that prevent widening of the road to make space for a bus lane.



1. Traffic proceeds as normal.

2. As the bus approaches, the light signal changes to halt general traffic.



3. The bus has priority to proceed.

4. When the bus has cleared the junction, general traffic proceeds.

It works through the use of traffic signal controls (typically at junctions) where the bus lane and general traffic lane must merge ahead and share the road space for a short distance until the bus lane recommences downstream. The general traffic will be stopped at the traffic signal to allow the bus pass through the narrow section first and when the bus has passed the general traffic will then be allowed through the lights.

7. Toucan Crossing:

A Toucan Crossing is a roadway crossing designed to enable both pedestrians and cyclists to cross the road with purposefully designed signal controls.

8. Quiet Street Treatment:

Where roadway widths along a Sustainable Transport Corridor cannot facilitate cyclists in addition to bus facilities, alternative cycle links have been explored along nearby routes. Such offline options may include directing cyclists along streets with minimal general traffic other than car users who live on the street.

They are called Quiet Streets due to the low amount of general traffic and are deemed suitable for cyclists sharing the roadway with

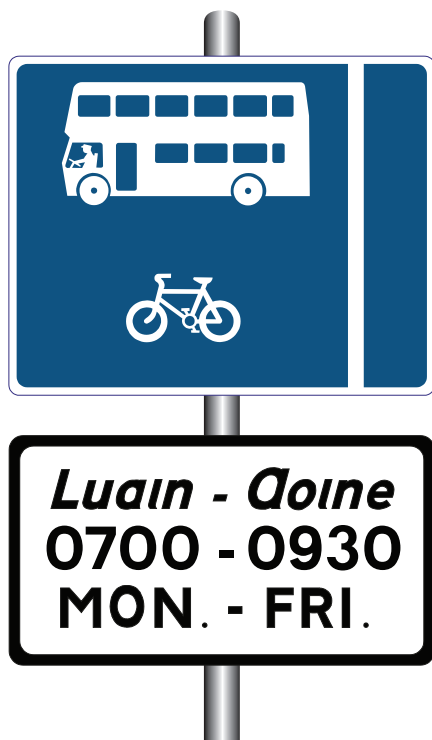
the general traffic without the need to construct segregated cycle tracks or painted cycle lanes. The Quiet Street treatment would involve appropriate advisory signage for both general road users and cyclists.

9. Urban Realm:

Urban realm refers to the everyday street spaces that are used by people to cross, shop, socialise, play, and use for activities such as walking, exercise or commute to/from work. Urban realm encompasses all streets, squares, junctions, and other rights-of-way, whether in residential, commercial or civic use. When well-designed and laid out with care in a community setting, it enhances the every-day lives of residents and those passing through. It typically relates to all open-air parts of the built environment where the public has free access. It would include seating, trees, planting and other aspects to enhance the experience for all.

1.5 Understanding how a Bus Gate would work

As you study the brochures and examine the detail in our Preferred Route Option proposals, you will notice that we are proposing the use of Bus Gates to deliver the desired improvement in bus reliability at various locations across the city.



A Bus Gate is a sign-posted short length of stand-alone bus lane. This short length of road is restricted exclusively to buses, taxis and cyclists plus emergency vehicles during the hours of operation of the Bus Gate. It facilitates bus priority by removing general through traffic along the overall road where the bus gate is located. General traffic will be directed by signage to divert away to other roads before they arrive at the bus gate.

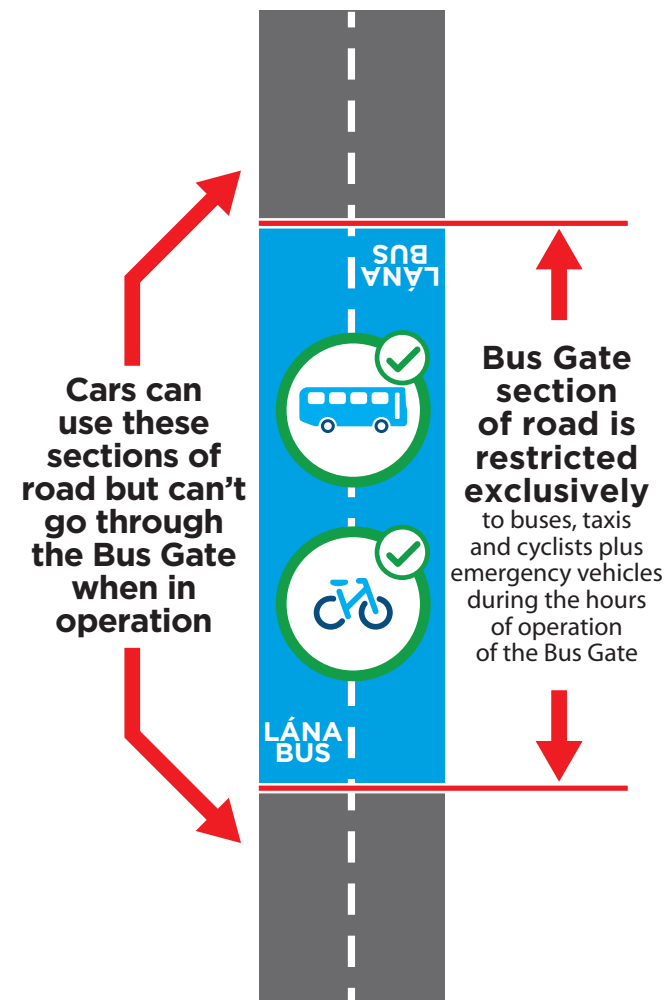
As part of the BusConnects Cork project, one and two-way Bus Gates are currently being considered at various locations along the proposed Sustainable Transport Corridors.

Will Bus Gates be 24-hours?

24-hour Bus Gates are an option in areas where it is considered necessary. However, in most cases 24-hour Bus Gates are not necessary and Bus Gates can be timed to operate only during peak traffic periods when traffic congestion is most significant.

Will there be physical infrastructure at the Bus Gate?

A Bus Gate is simply markings on the road that delineates where a short section of bus lane starts and finishes. It will be sign-posted to



LÁNA BUS

inform drivers that that section of road is restricted exclusively to buses, taxis and cyclists plus emergency vehicles during its operational hours. A sign-post at either end of the bus lane will include the details of the operational hours.

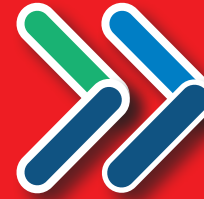
What happens if I am driving towards a Bus Gate during the hours of operation?

Adequate signage will be placed along the route to redirect general traffic away from the bus gate prior to arrival at the bus gate.

How will the Bus Gate affect residents who live near one and wish to use their private car?

This short length of road, as described above, is restricted exclusively to buses, taxis and cyclists plus emergency vehicles during the hours of operation. This means residents who live near to a Bus Gate may, depending on the journey direction, have to seek alternative route options,

similar to other drivers. The Bus Gate restrictions will only apply to the short section of road that is clearly highlighted with road markings and sign-posts. During operational hours, accessing the road beyond the Bus Gate in a private car will still be possible, once you use alternative routing options.



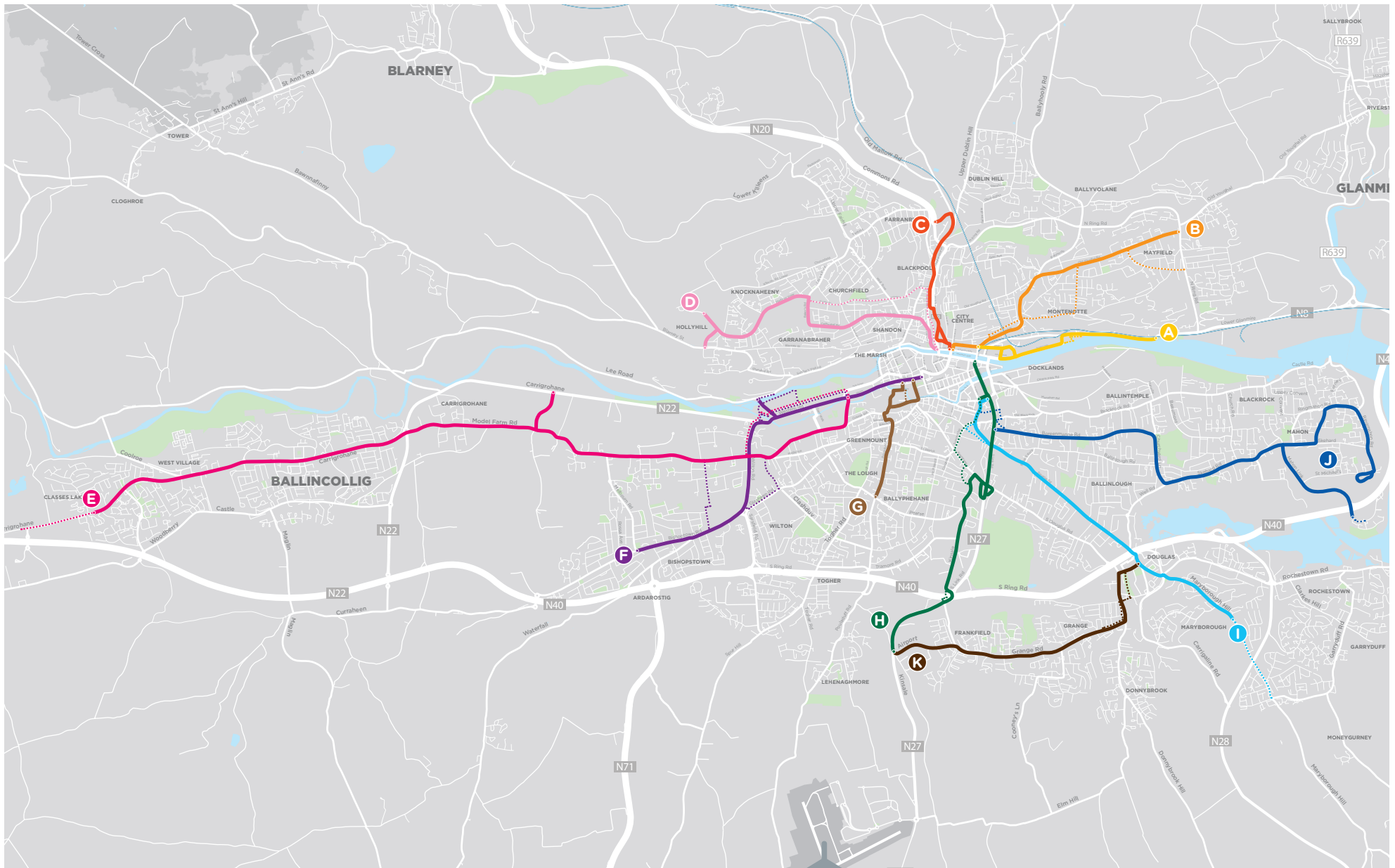
1.6 Sustainable Transport Corridors

- A** Dunkettle to City
- B** Mayfield to City
- C** Blackpool to City
- D** Hollyhill to City
- E** Ballincollig to City
- F** Bishopstown to City
- G** Togher to City
- H** Airport Road to City
- I** Maryborough Hill to City
- J** Mahon to City
- K** Kinsale Road to Douglas

———— Sustainable Transport Corridor

..... Alternative Cycle Facilities





2. Preferred Route Option Description

2.1 Blackpool to City Overview

The Blackpool to City Sustainable Transport Corridor (STC C) commences north of Blackpool Shopping Centre on Brothers Delaney Road. The STC proceeds on Brothers Delaney Road to connect with Blackpool Shopping Centre and Redforge Road. From here the STC proceeds south on Redforge Road, Dublin Street, Thomas Davis Street and Watercourse Road. The STC then proceeds on Cathedral Walk and the N20 south, where it connects into the sustainable transport facilities currently being provided on Leirim Street and Devonshire Street as part of the MacCurtain Street Public Transport Improvement Scheme. It is also proposed that the STC will connect in with proposed cycling facilities on Lower John Street and Knapps Square to offer an alternative quiet street route to the west of the N20.

Priority will be provided for buses using dedicated bus lanes on Popham's Road and

Brothers Delaney Road. Redforge Road, Dublin Street, Thomas Davis Street, Watercourse Road and Cathedral Walk are physically constrained in a number of areas. It is proposed that bus priority will be provided through several different measures such as bus lanes, bus gates and traffic signals. Bus priority on the N20 is to be delivered using bus lanes and traffic signals.

Proposed cycling provision includes dedicated cycle tracks to Blackpool Shopping Centre from the junction of Popham's Road and Commons Road via Brothers Delaney Road.

From here a cycle route is provided in the inbound (towards the city) direction from Brothers Delaney Road via Redforge Road as far as the junction with Madden's buildings. An inbound cycle track is proposed on Watercourse Road between Madden's Buildings and the junction with O'Connell Street. An outbound (towards Blackpool) cycle track is proposed from the junction of Watercourse Road/Madden's Buildings to the pedestrian access to Blackpool Shopping Centre on Thomas Davis Street, adjacent to the Glen Hall Apartments.

Inbound and outbound bus gates are proposed on Watercourse Road between O'Connell Street and Cathedral Walk which allows for a 'quiet street' cycle provision in this area. Two-way cycle tracks are provided along Cathedral Walk and the N20 as far as the junction with Leirim Street. From here the STC will link into the cycling facilities currently being implemented on Leirim Street as part of the MacCurtain Street Public Transport Improvement Scheme.

The proposed corridor also connects to Sustainable Transport Corridor D (STC D) - Hollyhill to City at the intersection of O'Connell Street and Watercourse Road.

The following paragraphs will describe each section of STC C in more detail, identifying the measures proposed so that sustainable transport is prioritised.



2.2 Route Description

2.2.1 Popham’s Road to Redforge Road via Brothers Delaney Road

It is proposed that bus lanes and segregated cycle tracks will be provided for the full length of Brothers Delaney Road.

The Emerging Preferred Route (EPR) proposed one bus lane and one general traffic lane in each direction from the N20 to Blackpool Shopping Centre however the amended proposal includes an additional eastbound traffic lane in this section to reduce the likelihood of queueing along the N20.

Proposed Enhancements to Urban Spaces and Pedestrian/Cycle Environment

Location	Proposed Enhancements
Brothers Delaney Road	Continuous segregated cycle lanes on both sides of the road.
Brothers Delaney Road/N20	Junction upgraded to prioritise pedestrian and cycle friendly design.



2.2.2 Redforge Road to Madden's Buildings/O'Connell Street

Redforge Road, Dublin Street, Thomas Davis Street and Watercourse Road are physically constrained, and it is not possible to provide extensive bus lanes along this section. Traffic management measures are proposed to achieve bus priority.

From the junction of Brothers Delaney Road and Redforge Road to the entrance to Blackpool Shopping Centre on Redforge Street, it is proposed to use a short section of inbound (towards the city) bus lane and bus priority traffic signals. This means that buses will get a "head-start" over cars. An inbound (towards the city) bus gate (short section of bus/cycle-only roadway) is proposed south of the junction of Dublin Street and Spring Lane as far as Common's Road.

Inbound (towards the city) general traffic will be directed onto:

- ▶ Dublin Hill Lower, Redforge Road/Brothers Delaney Road to the N20 or

- ▶ Ballincollie Road to the North Ring Road (adjacent to the Ballyvolane Fire Station).

In the outbound (towards Blackpool) direction buses will share with the general traffic.

Along Redforge Road and Dublin Street to the junction with Spring Lane, it is proposed for cycling to share with general traffic. The proposed inbound (towards the city) bus gate (short section of bus/cycle-only roadway) south of the junction of Dublin Street and Spring Lane will reduce traffic and allow for a quiet street route, where cyclists share with low volumes of general traffic. Alternatively, cyclists can enter/exit Blackpool Shopping Centre via the existing access (located just south of Spring Lane/Dunnes Stores, adjacent to the Glen Hall Apartments).

It is proposed to provide an outbound (towards Blackpool) continuous cycle track along Watercourse Road/Thomas Davis Street from the junction of Madden's Buildings to the existing pedestrian/cyclist access to Blackpool Shopping Centre (located just south of Spring Lane/Dunnes Stores, adjacent to the Glen Hall Apartments).

In the EPR there were no proposed changes to Spring Lane, however in the amended design filtered permeability will be implemented to prevent all through traffic except pedestrians and cyclists



Proposed Enhancements to Urban Spaces and Pedestrian/Cycle Environment

Location	Proposed Enhancements
Dublin Street/ Thomas Davis Street	A traffic calmed environment will provide a safer and more attractive environment for pedestrians and cyclists.
Spring Lane	Filtered permeability will provide a safer and more at-tractive environment for pedestrians and cyclists.
Blackpool Village	Public Realm works including improved and enhanced street spaces and landscaping.

2.2.3 Madden's Buildings/ O'Connell Street to Cathedral Walk

Watercourse Road from Madden's Buildings to Cathedral Walk is physically constrained, and it is not possible to provide extensive bus lanes along this section. Traffic management measures will be provided to achieve bus priority.

At the junction of Watercourse Road and Madden's Buildings, outbound (towards Blackpool) bus priority is proposed through a short section of bus lane, and by using bus priority traffic signals, which means that buses will get a "head-start" over cars. In the inbound (towards the city) direction buses will share with the general traffic.

It is proposed to remove through-traffic from Watercourse Road (between O'Connell Street and Cathedral Walk) using bus gates (short sections of bus/cycle-only roadway). This will limit general traffic to access-only and allows buses to move freely through this section of the STC. Access to Watercourse Road for local

access traffic will be via its junction with O'Connell Street.

Along Watercourse Road (between O'Connell Street and Cathedral Walk) no physical works are proposed except for bus gates (short sections of bus/cycle-only roadway) and bus stop upgrades.

Inbound (towards the city) and outbound (towards Blackpool) through traffic will be directed onto:

- N20.

Between Madden's Building and O'Connell Street an inbound (towards the city) cycle track is proposed. It is proposed that outbound cyclists will share a short section with the bus lane.

The proposed bus gates (short section of bus/cycle-only roadway) on Watercourse Road, between O'Connell Street and Cathedral Walk, will reduce traffic, and allow for a quiet street route, which involves cyclists sharing the traffic lane with low volume general traffic.



Proposed Enhancements to Urban Spaces and Pedestrian/Cycle Environment

Location	Proposed Enhancements
<p>Watercourse Road between O'Connell Street and Cathedral Walk</p>	<p>A traffic calmed environment will provide a safer and more attractive environment for pedestrians and cyclists.</p> <p>New signalised toucan crossings to facilitate easy access to bus stops and generally improved permeability for pedestrians.</p>
<p>Watercourse Road by Madden's Buildings</p>	<p>Junction upgraded to prioritise pedestrian and cycle friendly design.</p>
<p>Watercourse Road/ O'Connell Street</p>	<p>Junction upgraded to prioritise pedestrian and cycle friendly design.</p>

2.2.4 Cathedral Walk to City

A two-way cycle track is proposed on Cathedral Walk between Watercourse Road and the N20. In the inbound (towards the city) direction buses will share with the general traffic. It is proposed to provide an outbound (towards Blackpool) bus gate (short section of bus/cycle-only roadway) on Cathedral Walk between Watercourse Road and the N20.

Along the N20 between Cathedral Walk and Leitrim Street, inbound (towards the city) bus priority is proposed through a short section of bus lane and by using bus priority traffic signals at the junction of the N20 with Leitrim Street, which means that buses will get a 'head-start' over cars.

As part of the MacCurtain Street Public Transport Improvement Scheme, an outbound (towards Blackpool) bus lane is currently being implemented along Devonshire Street.

As part of STC C, an outbound (towards Blackpool) bus lane is proposed on the N20 from its junction with Devonshire Street as far as the junction of N20 and Leitrim Street.

From here, outbound (towards Blackpool) bus priority is proposed through a short section of bus lane and by using bus priority traffic signals at the junction of the N20 with Cathedral Walk, which means that buses will get a 'head-start' over cars.

A two-way cycle track is proposed on the N20 between Cathedral Walk and Leitrim Street. Cycling provision continues along Leitrim Street as part of the MacCurtain Street Public Transport Improvement Scheme.

It is also proposed that STC C will connect in with proposed cycling facilities on Lower John Street and Knapp's Square to offer an alternative quiet street route to the west of the N20.

To facilitate these sustainable transport improvements, it is proposed that land take would be required at the following approximate locations:

- Lands of private properties on Cathedral Walk,
- Blackpool Shopping Centre and
- Lands of private properties along the N20.

The STC will link into the works currently being implemented as part of the MacCurtain Street Public Transport Improvement Scheme.

The indicative extents of this land take are shown on the drawings shown in the Appendix of this brochure



Proposed Enhancements to Urban Spaces and Pedestrian/Cycle Environment

Location	Proposed Enhancements
N20/Cathedral Walk	Junction upgraded to prioritise pedestrian and cycle friendly design.
N20/Leitrim Street	Junction upgraded to prioritise pedestrian and cycle friendly design.

2.3 Key changes from the Published EPR

- ▶ An additional traffic lane has been provided along Brothers Delaney Road from the junction with the N20 to the junction with Blackpool Retail Park.
- ▶ Filtered permeability will be implemented on Spring Lane to prevent all through traffic except pedestrians and cyclists.
- ▶ Public Realm Improvements are proposed for Blackpool Village.

2.4 Key Facts

Approximate number of properties that may be impacted:	4
Approximate number of on-street parking spaces that may be removed:	30
Approximate number of roadside trees that may be removed:	8
Approximate route length:	2.2km
Approximate cycle route length: <i>Inbound - (Segregated Cycle Track 1.0 KM + 0.5 KM Quiet street)</i> <i>Outbound - (Segregated Cycle Track 1.2KM + 0.5 KM Quiet street)</i>	1.5km 1.7km

3. How to take part in the public consultation

This brochure provides details of the proposed Preferred Route Option for this Sustainable Transport Corridor. These proposals are subject to a second round of public consultation and, depending on the public's feedback, subsequent design refinement before a formal statutory application will be made by the NTA to An Bord Pleanála for approval.

3.1 General queries

The project website www.busconnects.ie has a dedicated section for the Sustainable Transport Corridor element of the BusConnects Cork project. All previous emerging preferred route brochures are available on the website. Users can access the site to find out more about the project and download copies of the key documents.

General queries can be directed to:



Freephone
1800 303 653

or by email to
corkstc@busconnects.ie

3.2 How to engage

We are inviting submissions in relation to the Preferred Route Option for the Sustainable Transport Corridor set out in this document. The closing date for submissions is stated on the website.

Written submissions and observations may be made by:



Click on "Public Consultation" section of the Sustainable Transport Corridor page on our website:
<https://consult.nationaltransport.ie>



Post:
Sustainable Transport Corridor Project
NTA Cork Office, Suite 427, 1 Horgan's Quay
Waterfront Square, Cork
T23 PPT8

3.3 What happens next?

Following the second round of public consultation the NTA will finalise the Preferred Route Options for all eleven corridors. The scheme designs will be finalised in tandem with the undertaking of transport and environmental assessments. This is likely to culminate in the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) for the scheme, together with details of land to be acquired, which will be submitted to An Bord Pleanála during 2024-2025 for its consideration and determination. A formal statutory consultation process will be undertaken as part of that process.



3.4 Anticipated Project Timeline

2022

2023

2023-2026

ENGAGEMENT

Consultation on Emerging Preferred Route Q2/Q3

Consultation on Emerging Preferred Route Proposals.

Further Consultation on Preferred Route Q1/Q2

Preparation of Draft Preferred route Q1/Q2. Having taken account of feedback received, publication of Preferred Routes for the Sustainable Transport Corridors - 2 month period of public consultation.

STATUTORY PROCESS

Preparation of Statutory Application

- Optimise Engineering Design
- Prepare Environmental Impact Assessment Report
- Define property requirements and prepare CPO

2024-2025

An Bord Pleanála Applications

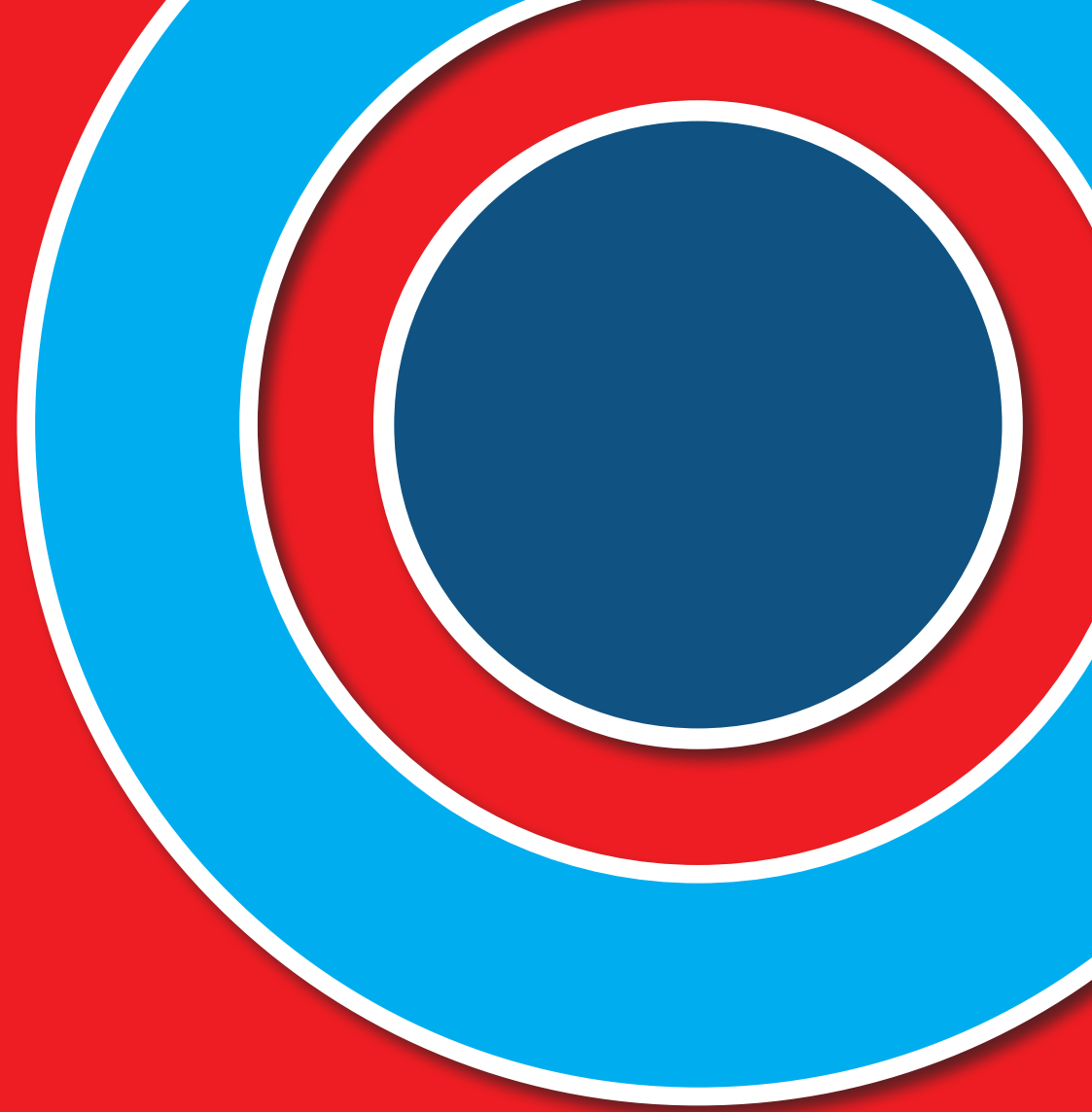
- Submission of Applications to An Bord Pleanála to approve the Proposed Scheme and to confirm the associated CPO
- Statutory Consultation in accordance with the legislative requirements
- An Bord Pleanála deliberations including an Oral Hearing where required
- An Bord Pleanála may:
 1. Approve the Proposed Scheme with or without modifications and subject to whatever environmental conditions it considers appropriate, or refuse to approve the Proposed Scheme; and
 2. confirm the CPO or any part thereof with or without conditions or modifications, or annul the CPO or any part thereof.

2025-2030

ACQUISITION & CONSTRUCTION



Construction Commences on a Phased Basis - Each corridor upgrade will take up to 2 years to complete

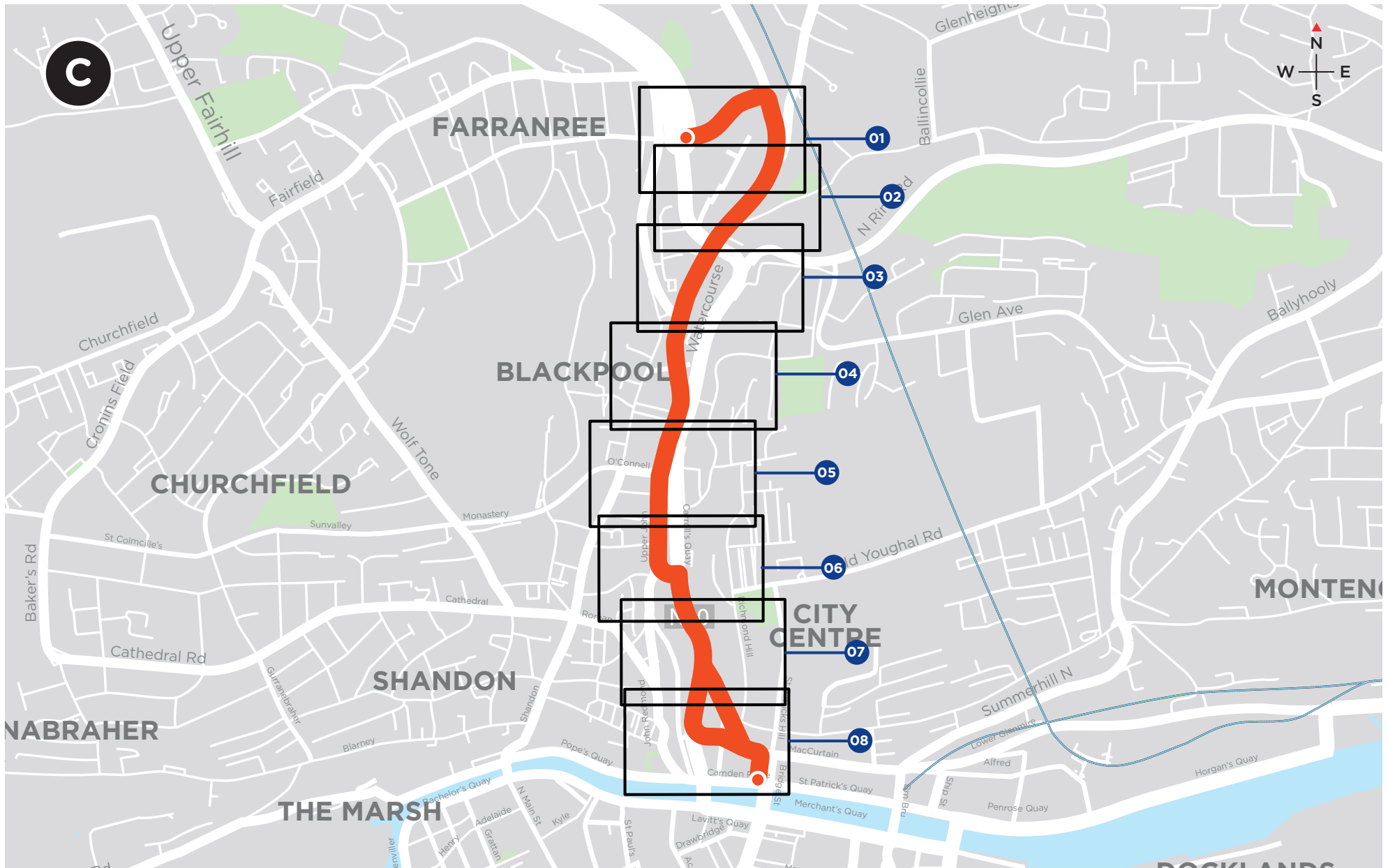


4. Appendices

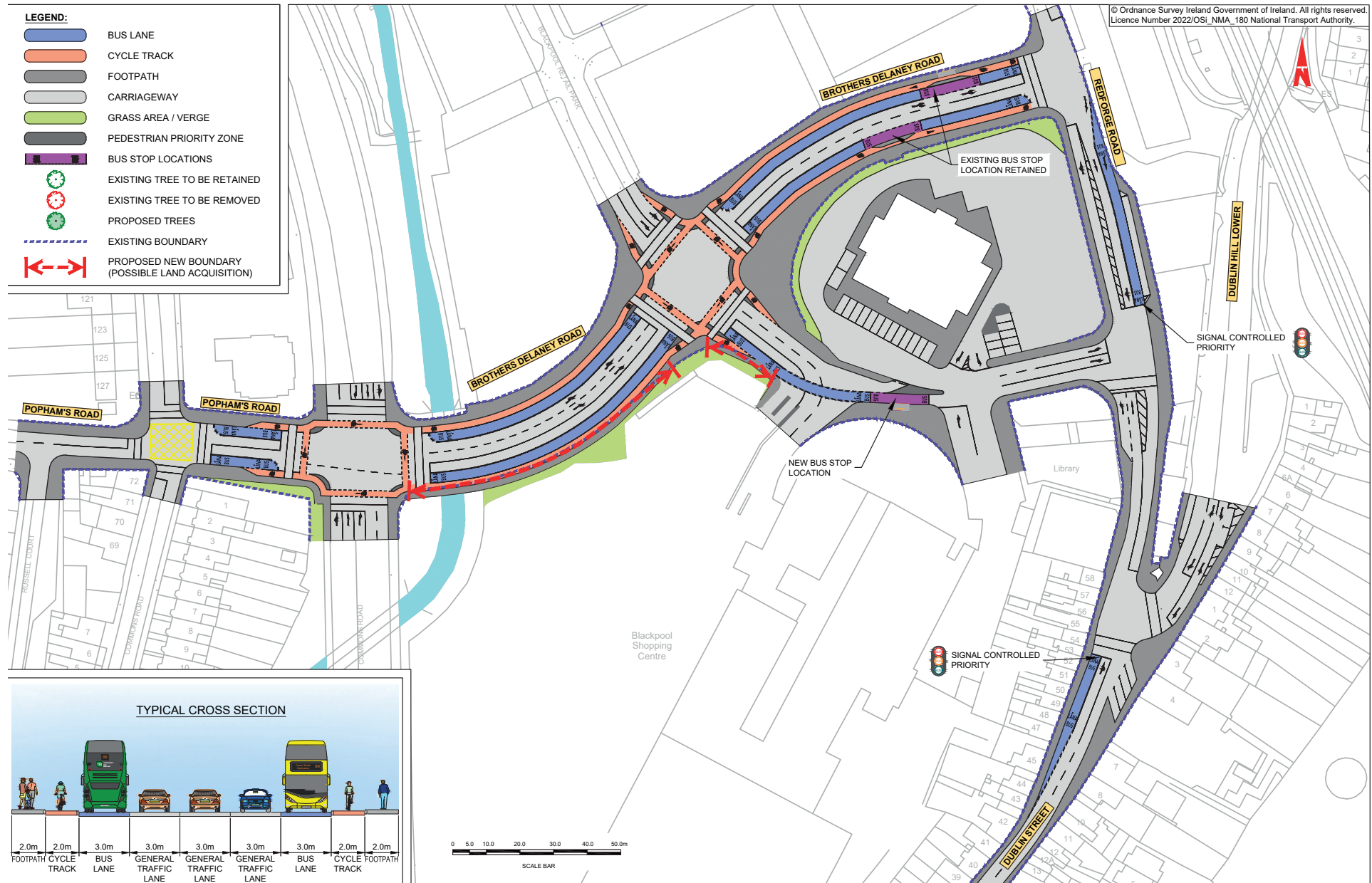
4.1 Index maps

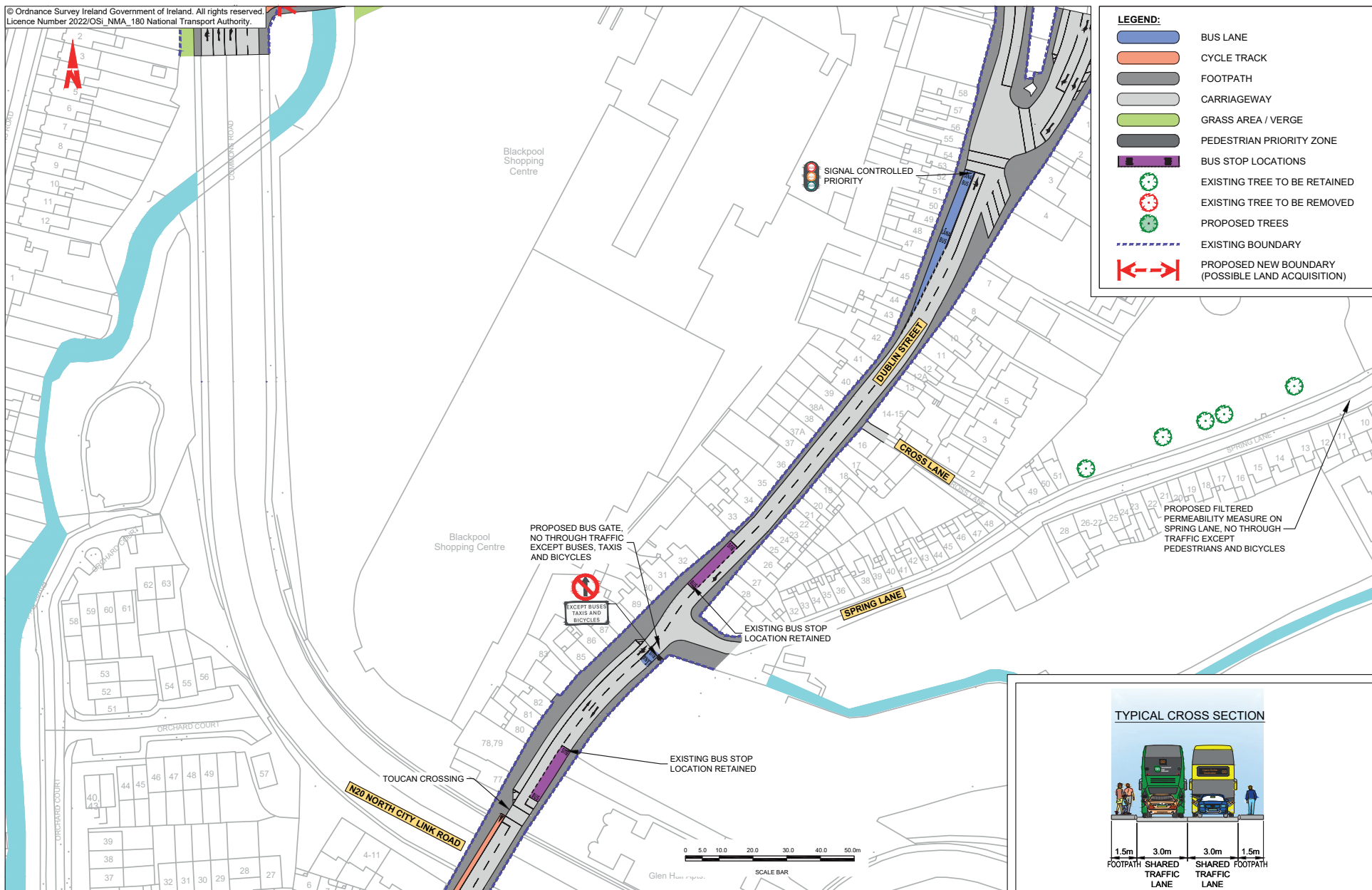
4.2 Route maps

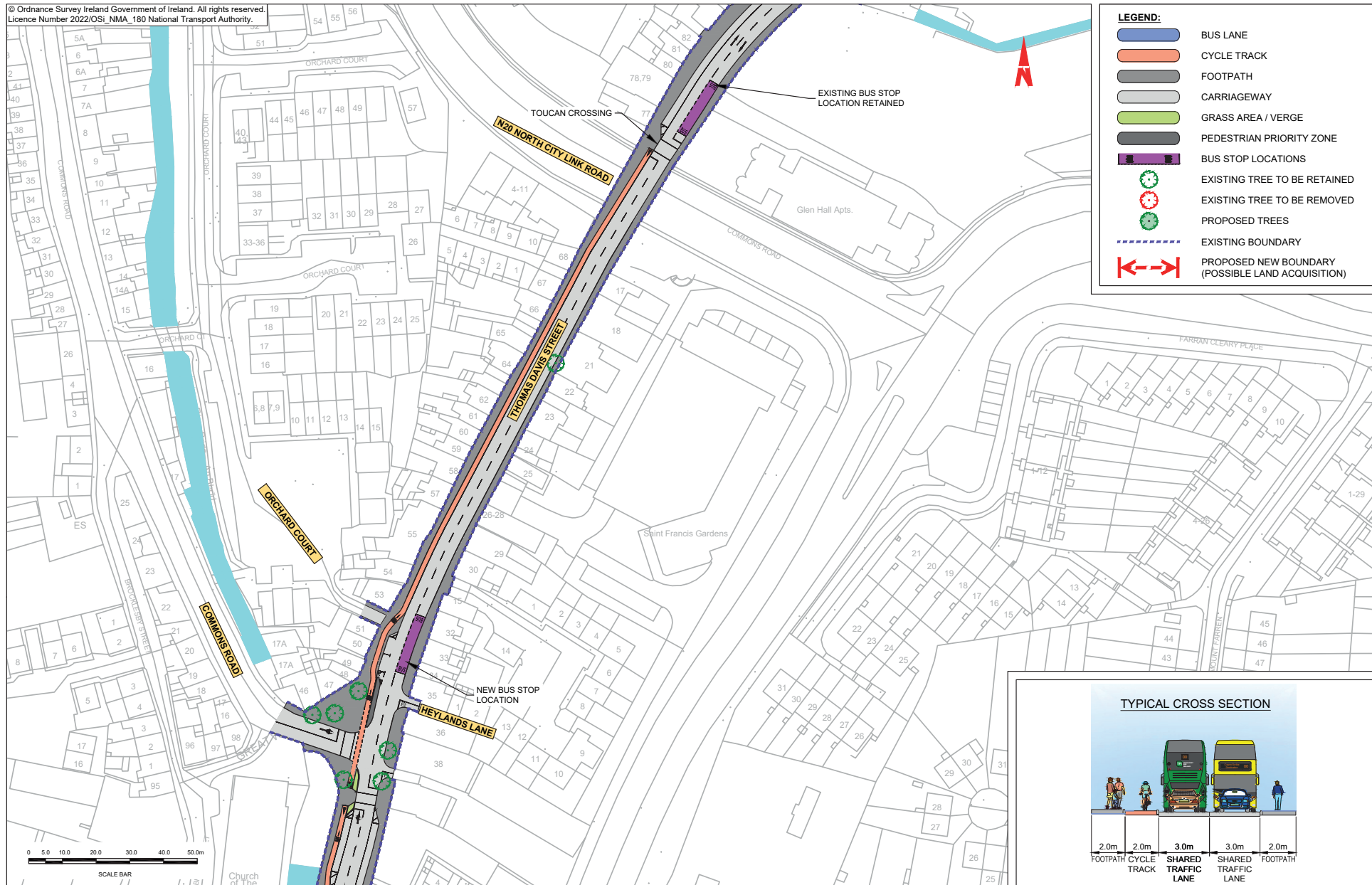
Index Map



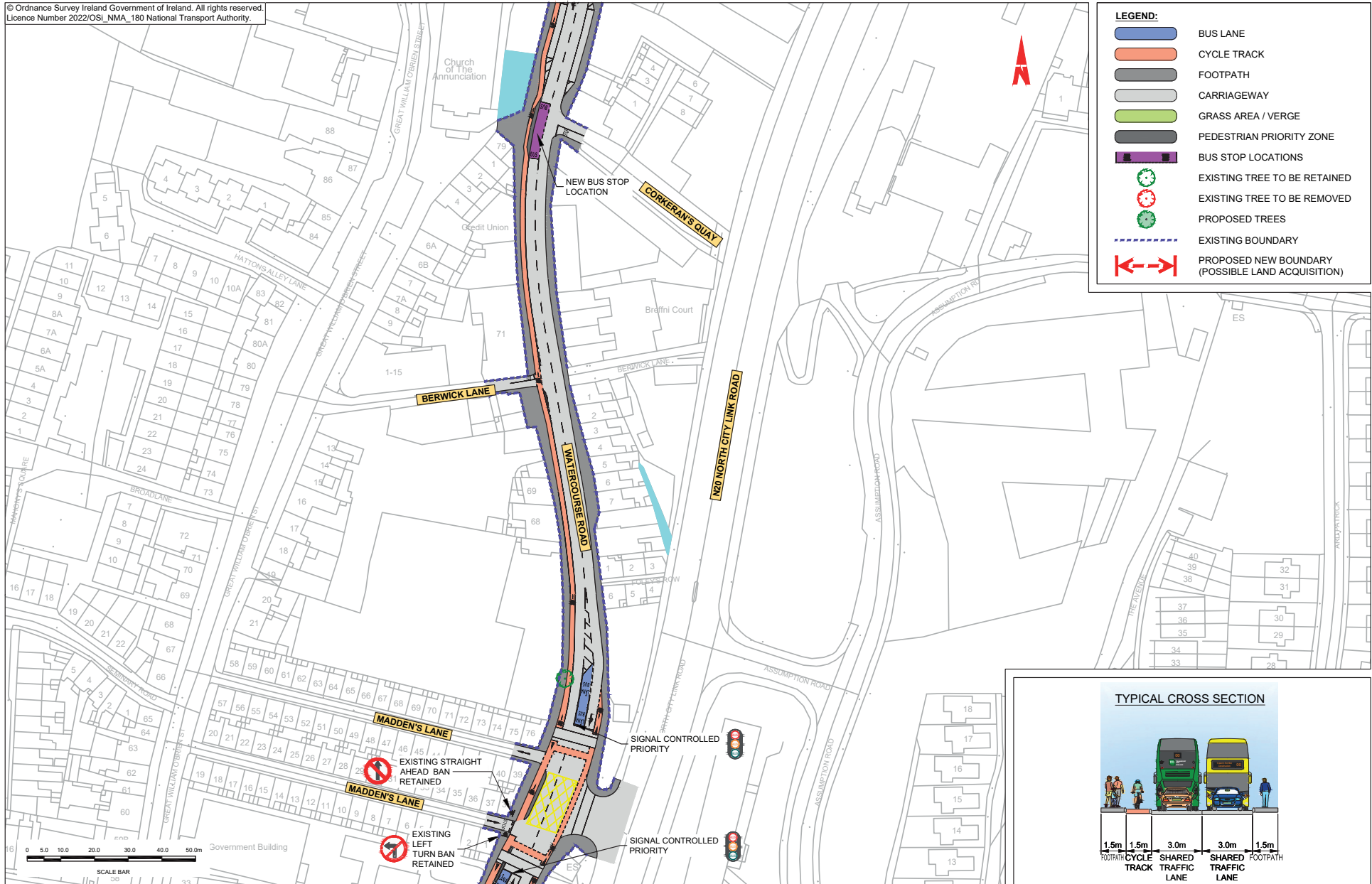
NOTE: The Preferred Route shown on the following drawings is indicative only and is subject to change following consultation and as part of the design development process.



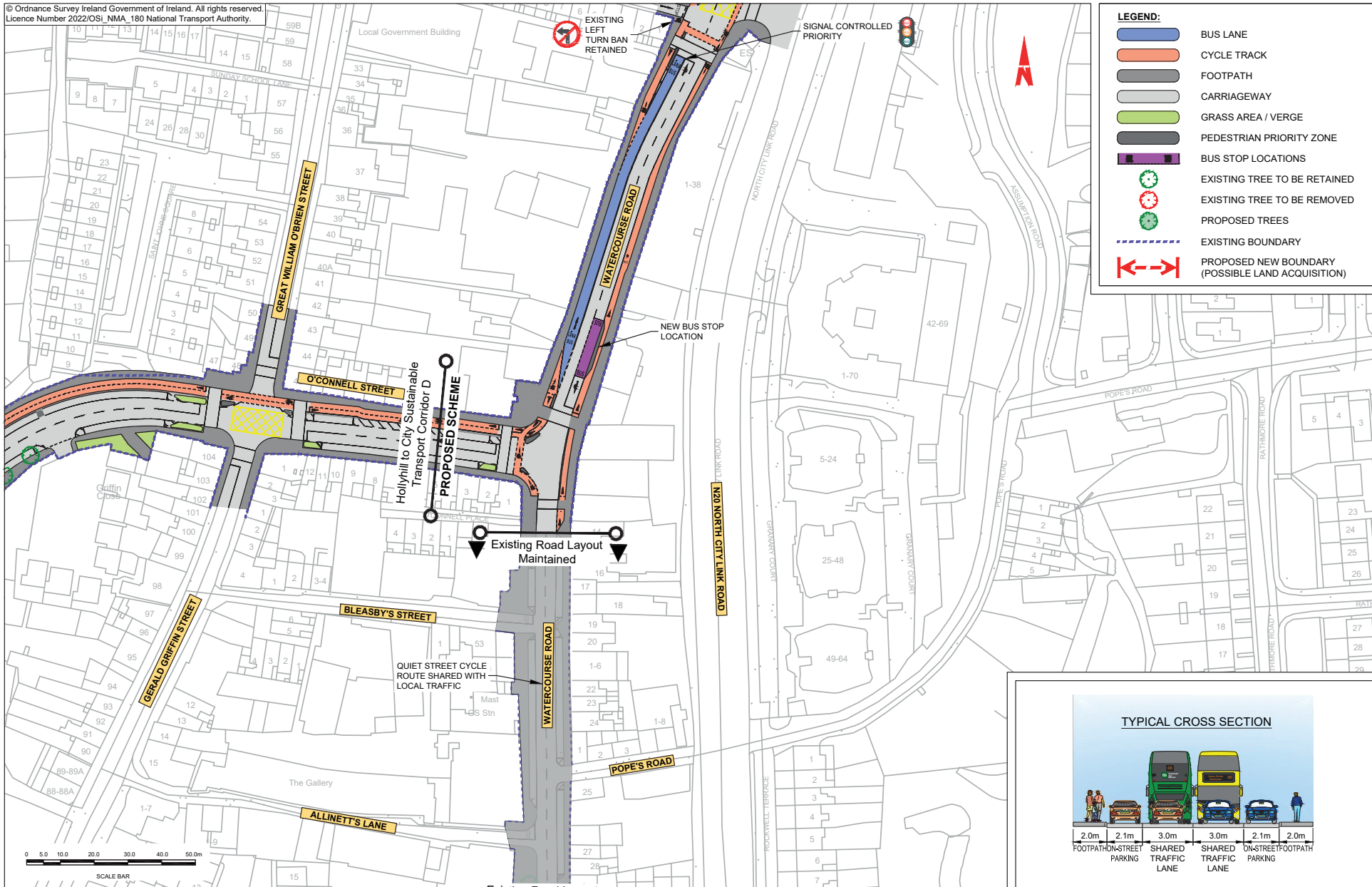


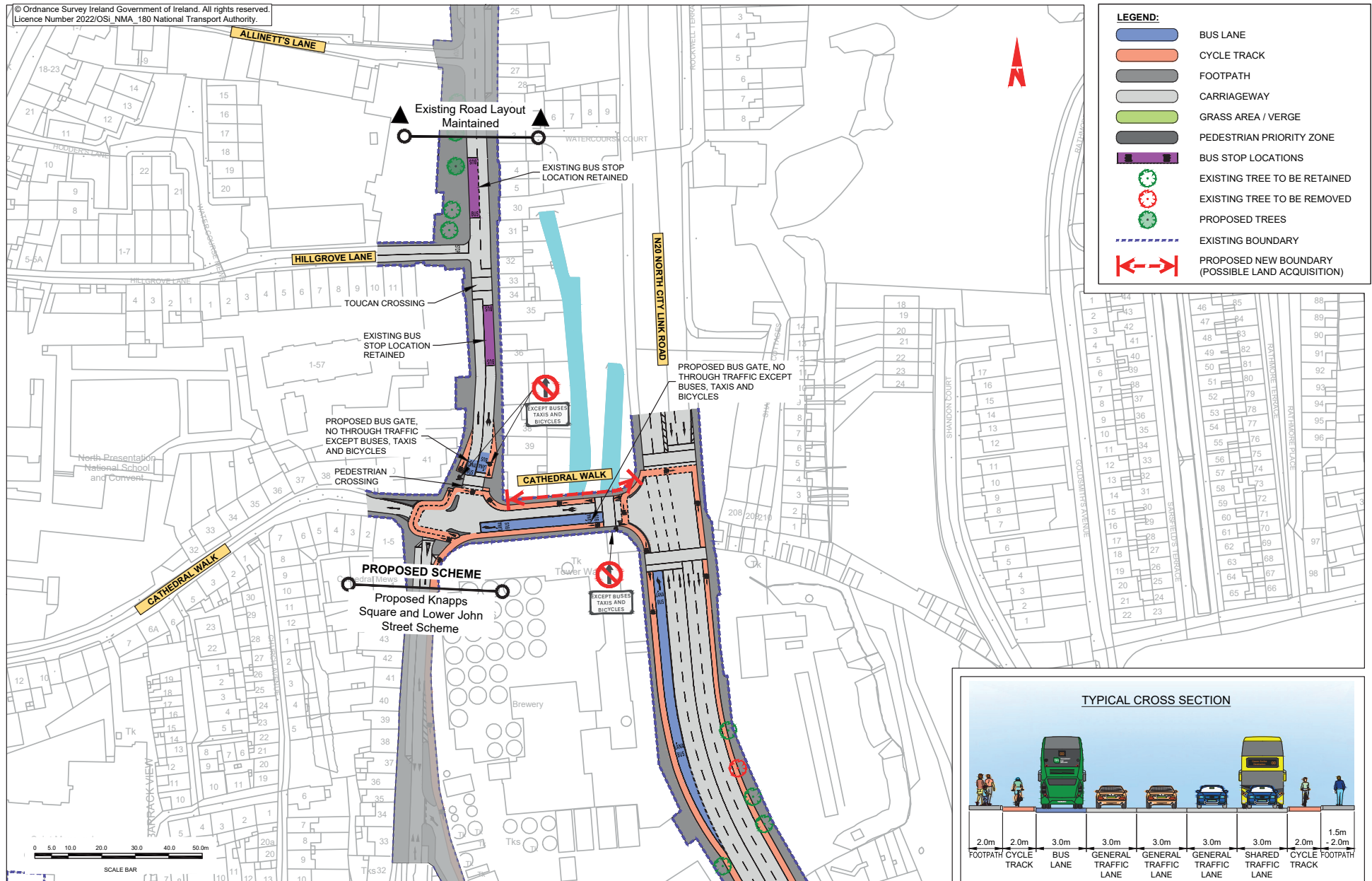


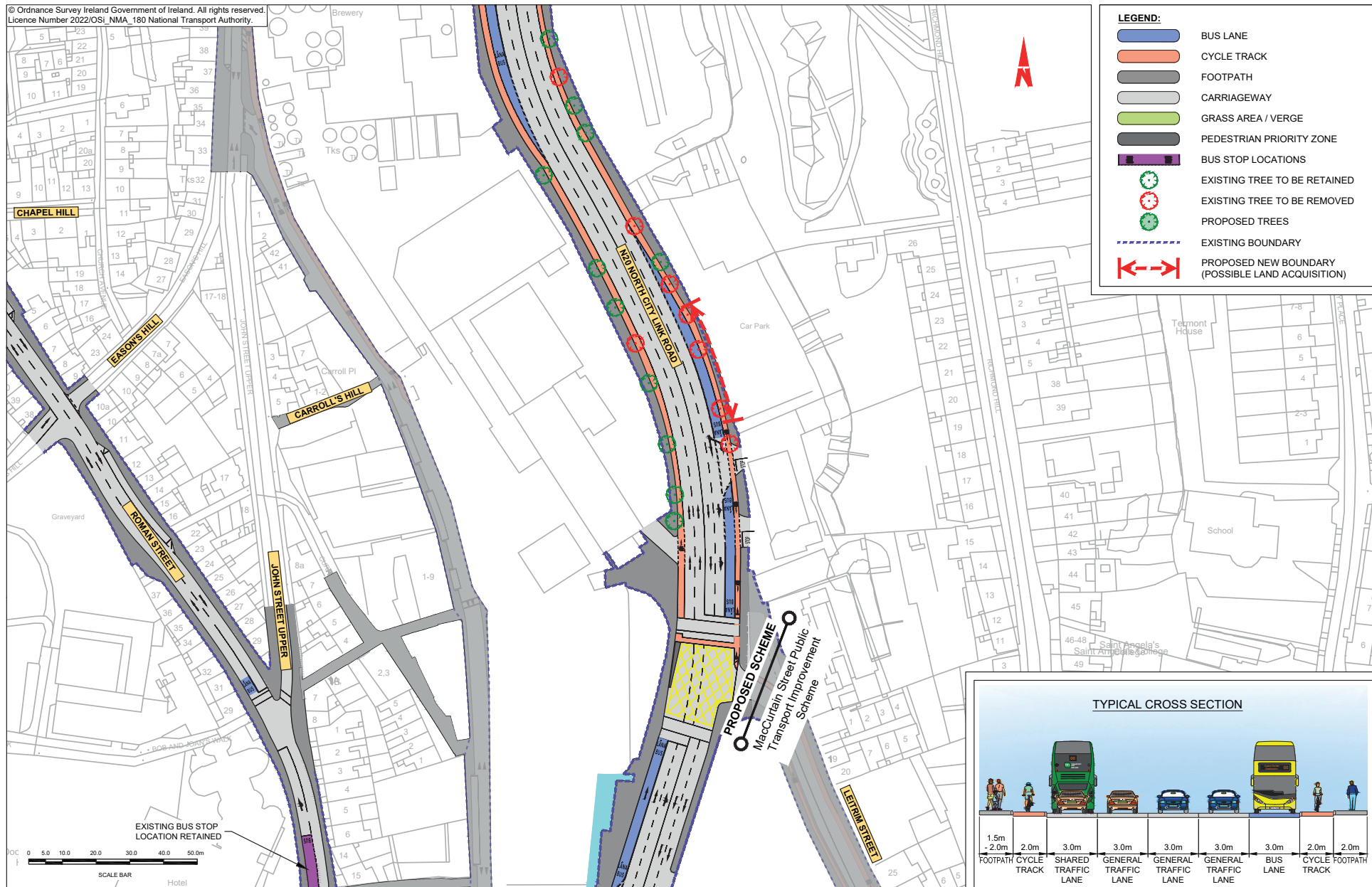
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