

APPENDIX H: BUSCONNECTS GALWAY: DUBLIN ROAD 2nd NON-STATUTORY PUBLIC CONSULTATION REPORT

Client:

Galway City Council

Project:

BusConnects Galway: Dublin Road

Report:

2nd Non-Statutory Public Consultation Submissions Report



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SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The R338 Dublin Road, Galway is one of the primary arterial routes into Galway City Centre. It runs from east of Moneenageisha Junction to Doughiska Road Junction as shown in Figure 1-1 below.

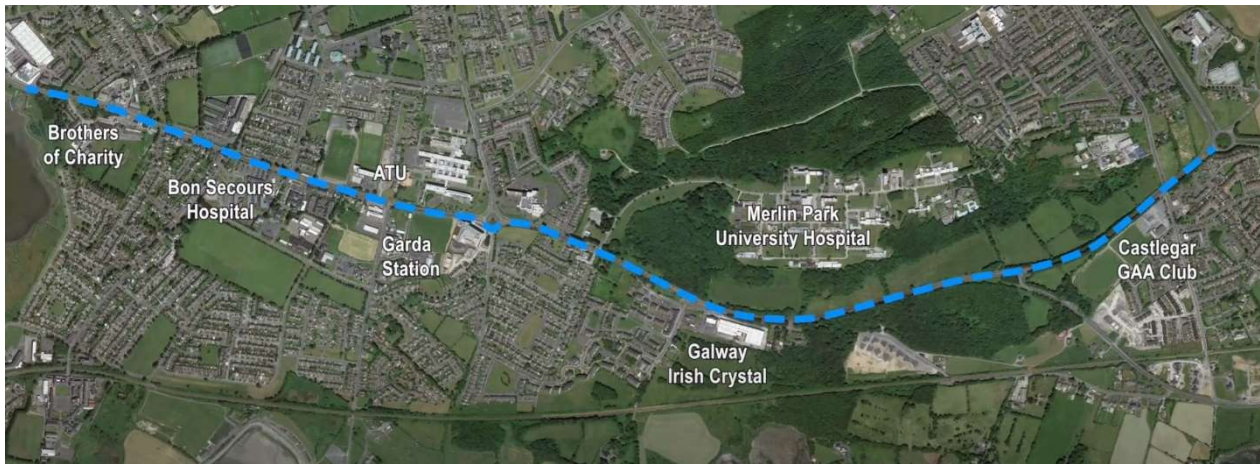


Figure 1-1 – Scheme Location Map

This project is identified in the Galway Transport Strategy 2016 (GTS) which outlines proposals for public transport infrastructure and cycle infrastructure within Galway City. Specific proposals for the R338 Dublin Road include the provision of bus lanes along the full length of the road, provision of cycling facilities, and improvements and upgrades to footpaths and pedestrian crossings. This project aims to enhance bus lane provision on this corridor, remove current delays on the bus network in the relevant locations and enable the bus to provide a faster alternative to car traffic along these routes, making bus transport a more attractive alternative. It would also make the overall bus system more efficient, faster bus journeys means that more people can be moved with the same level of vehicle and driver resources.

In 2022, Galway City Council (GCC) appointed Barry Transportation as the Engineering Led Multi-Disciplinary Design Consultancy to progress the planning and design for the BusConnects Galway: Dublin Road project. Barry Transportation has been commissioned to deliver the planning and development of the scheme through Phases 1/2 to 4 of the National Transport Authority (NTA) Project Approval Guidelines encompassing Scope & Purpose, Concept Development and Option Selection, Preliminary Design and Statutory Processes.

As part of Phase 2 (Concept Development and Option Selection) Barry Transportation will support the 2nd Non-Statutory Public Consultation – Emerging Preferred Route.

This project was originally managed by TII and their Consultant. They progressed the project through to the Emerging Preferred Route (EPR). The EPR was subject to a Non-Statutory Public Consultation (NSPC). This 1st Non statutory public consultation ran for a period of 12 weeks (8th October 2020 to 7th January 2021). This consultation was held fully online as were all meetings due to COVID restrictions in place at the time.

Due to changes in the Public Spending Code, revised NTA Project Approval Guidelines and proposed revised layouts along Bus Corridors (NTA Preliminary Design Guidance Booklet for BusConnects Core Bus Corridor_2021-05-05), the Strategic Assessment Report was redrafted and the scheme was subject to a revised Concept Development and Option Selection phase including a 2nd Non-Statutory Public Consultation.

1.2 Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to document and summarise the outcome of the 2nd NSPC process which was carried out to inform the general public and local stakeholders of the proposed plans for BusConnects: Dublin Road and to invite participation in and feedback on the proposed scheme.

It presents a summary of views expressed by the public and interested parties received during the NSPC. It reflects the opinions of the public and interested parties and not those of GCC, Barry Transportation or the NTA.

SECTION 2 NON-STATUTORY PUBLIC CONSULTATION

2.1 Consultation Plan

The NSPC was informed by the Consultation Plan for the project which was prepared in advance. Although non-statutory consultations have no legal status, NTA and GCC have chosen to carry out the consultation to seek views from those likely to be interested in or affected by the proposals, which can then be taken into consideration in the decision-making process and the design going forward. This NSPC is the second formal and coordinated public and stakeholder consultation on the project.

2.2 Briefing to Elected Representatives

In advance of the public consultation, a briefing to elected members of Galway City Council was held on Wednesday 11th January 2023. The purpose of the briefing was to present and discuss the Emerging Preferred Option. It included maps and drawings of the proposed Emerging Preferred Option, along with an outline timeline for the subsequent stage of project development. It allowed representatives the opportunity to become familiar with the proposed project and to ask questions and give feedback.

2.3 Timing & Duration

The public consultation commenced on Friday 13th January 2023 and had a duration of four weeks. The resultant end date was 10th February 2023.

2.4 Project Website and Virtual Room

The Project Website and Virtual Room were launched on Friday 13th January 2023. The website, which can be accessed at <https://www.bcgdublinroad.ie/>, gave an introduction to the project and a description of the non-statutory consultation process in both English and Irish. It also provided a link to the Virtual Room and to websites for GCC, NTA, the National Planning Framework and Barry Transportation.

The virtual room (available at <https://www.innovision.ie/bcgdublinroad>) contained a series of information displays similar to what would be presented in a conventional public consultation setting including:

- A welcome note / introduction
- The project brochure in both English and Irish
- The Scheme Objectives
- An Aerial Overview (fly through) of the Emerging Preferred Route
- Emerging Preferred Route drawings
- Next steps
- An online feedback facility
- Downloadable feedback forms in both English and Irish
- A Contact Us page
- A Book an Online Meeting facility



Figure 2-1 – Virtual Room

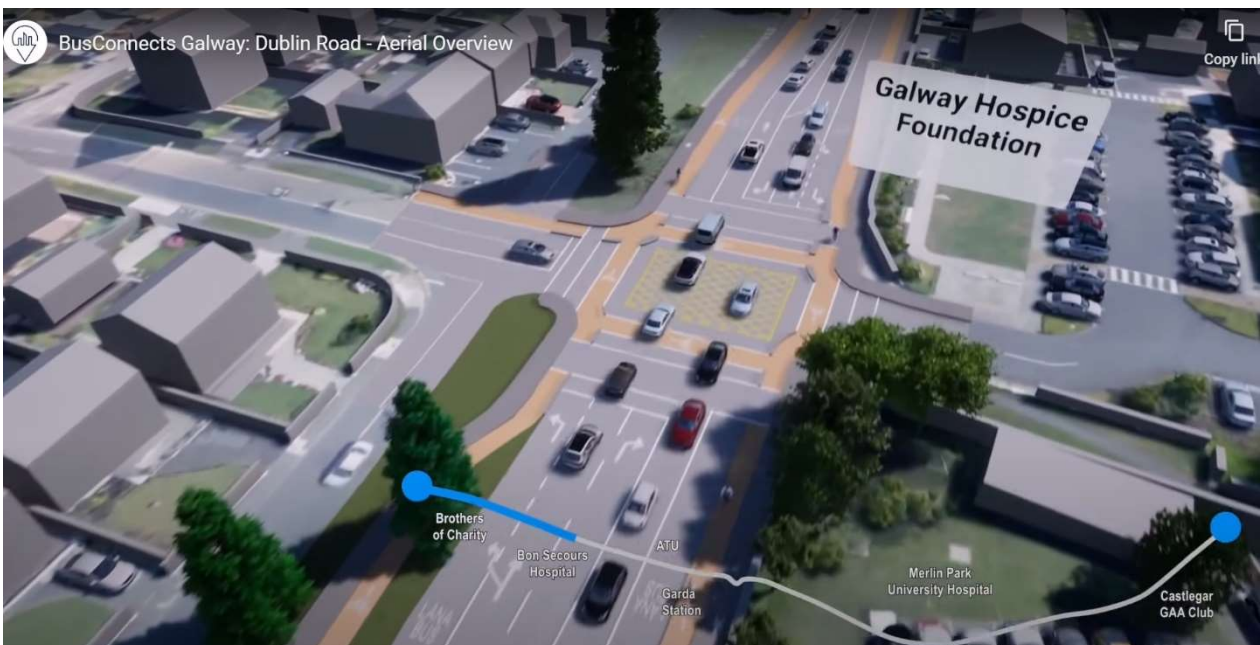


Figure 2-2 – Still from Aerial Overview Video

2.5 Project Brochure and Posters

A 24-page brochure in both English and Irish was prepared for the public consultation which included information on the scheme objectives, the option selection process, photomontages and drawings of the Emerging Preferred Route. Some 750 copies of the brochure were printed (700 English and 50 Irish). A poster was also prepared and copies of it were erected at bus stops and local venues.

On the 11th January 2023, a registered letter was sent out to potentially affected landowners with a copy of the brochure attached.

A brochure drop was also carried out to approximately 400 homes and businesses in close proximity to the scheme. This ensured that the consultation was accessible to non-internet users and those who do not regularly follow local news.



2.6 Newspaper Advertising

Advertisements were placed in the Galway Advertiser on Thursday 12th January 2023. A copy of this advertisement is provided in Appendix 1.

2.7 In Person Consultation

An open public event was held in Renmore Community Centre on Monday 23rd January 2023. The Aerial Overview video was played on screen on a loop. A1 drawings showing the Emerging Preferred Route were displayed and GCC and Barry Transportation representatives were available on the day to explain the scheme and answer any questions that the public had.

2.8 Stakeholder Meetings

GCC and Barry Transportation arranged meetings with Stakeholders both in person and online. The meetings involved discussion on the Stakeholder concerns using drawings and on screen tools. Attendees were also encouraged to follow up with written submissions through the formal NSPC channels. These Stakeholder Meetings were held with the following groups / individuals:

- Galway Cycling Campaign
- Woodhaven Residents
- Duggan's Convenience Store
- Connacht Hotel
- Flannery's Hotel
- Mór Action
- Lorraine Lally representing vulnerable road users
- Eoin Ryan - cyclist
- DPL Ltd.
- ATU Galway City
- Friends of Merlin Woods
- John Furey – landowner
- Ronan Finn - landowner
- Kia Renmore
- Caseys Londis

2.9 Virtual Room Web Traffic Report

Detailed information on the uptake of the Virtual Room by the public is contained in the Web Traffic Report in Appendix 2.

The most popular time for visits occurred between the launch (13th January) and January 20th. There was a decline thereafter, with spikes in visits occurring on January 23rd, February 6th, and February 10th. Each of these dates recorded more than 50 visits. High level results from the Web Traffic Report are as follows:

- 1,665 was the total number of visitors to the exhibition during this period.
- 26 minutes was the average session length.
- 92% of the visitors to the site were from Ireland.

2.10 Data Collection and Feedback

A Stakeholder Consultation Register was set up and maintained throughout the consultation period to record feedback, submissions and stakeholder meetings.

SECTION 3 SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

3.1 Breakdown of Submissions

For the purpose of this report stakeholders are defined as groups, organizations and individuals identified as having a specific interest in the project.

103 stakeholder responses were received in total. A small portion of these issued more than one submission or submitted using more than one of the available avenues. Once multiple responses were consolidated into one coded submission, the number of submissions totalled to 91.

This section is a compilation of the issues raised from the collated stakeholder feedback. Of the 91 submissions:

- 13 no. submissions were received either via email to the dedicated email address for the project (info@bcgdublinroad.ie) or to Galway City Council.
- 66 no. submissions were received via the Online Submission Form
- 12 no meetings / phone calls /voicemails were received on the dedicated phone line for the project or by face to face meetings.

3.2 Online Feedback

On the online feedback form stakeholders were asked to answer questions about their current usage of the bus service and cycling / pedestrian infrastructure. They were also asked to estimate how much they would use the bus service cycling / pedestrian infrastructure as part of the proposed scheme. The results are summarised below.

3.2.1 Current Bus Usage

The majority of responses demonstrated that the bus service isn't being used as much as it should with only 31% of respondents using it weekly and 34% using it on a rare occasion as shown in Figure 3-1 below. Respondents explained that with no shelter people are standing in the rain waiting for a bus which is pushing them away from public transport and into privately owned vehicles. The percentage of people who use the bus daily is approximately the same as those who never use the bus.

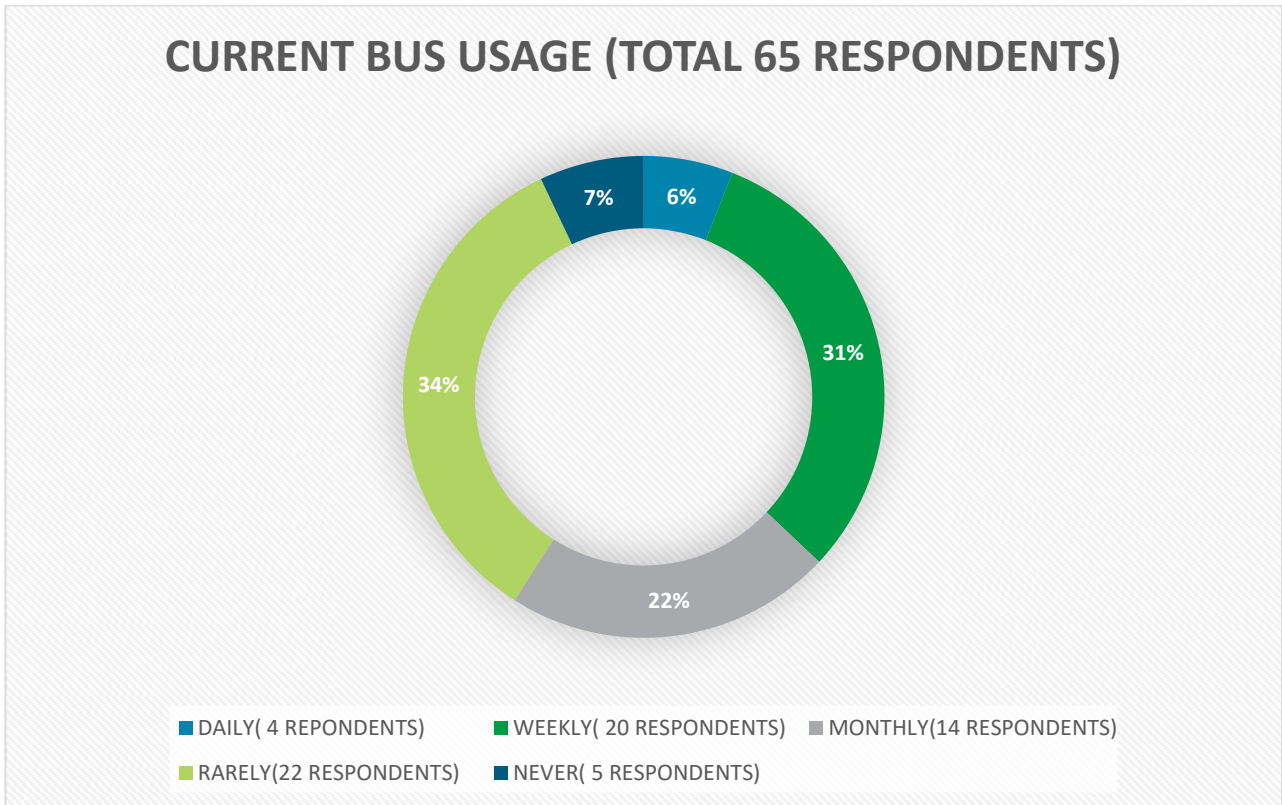
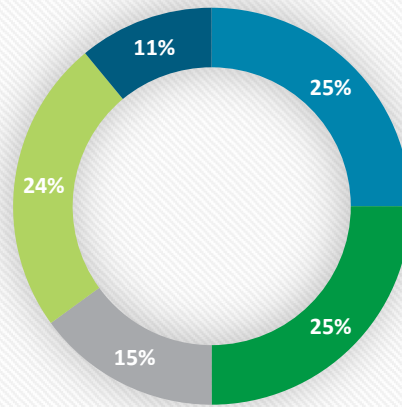


Figure 3-1 – Current Bus Usage

3.2.2 Current Cycle/Pedestrian Infrastructure Usage

The current usage of the cycle and pedestrian infrastructure is good with 25% of respondents using it daily and the same amount using it weekly. With 24% only using the facilities rarely there is room for improvement and one of the main concerns with the current infrastructure is safety with some respondents taking detours around some quieter roads due to safety concerns but increasing their travel time in doing so. The data for the current cycle/pedestrian infrastructure is displayed in Figure 3-2 below.

CURRENT CYCLE/PEDESTRIAN USAGE (TOTAL 63 RESPONDENTS)



■ DAILY (16 RESPONDENTS) ■ WEEKLY (16 RESPONDENTS) ■ MONTHLY(9 RESPONDENTS)
■ RARELY(15 RESPONDENTS) ■ NEVER(7 RESPONDENTS)

Figure 3-2 – Current Cycle/Pedestrian Infrastructure Usage

3.2.3 Proposed Bus Service Usage.

There is a large increase in the people who expect to take the bus after the infrastructure is improved. 40% of respondents expect to take the bus weekly after the improvements and an increase of 8% of people who will decide to use it daily as opposed to the current service. The data of the proposed bus service usage is displayed below in Figure 3-3.

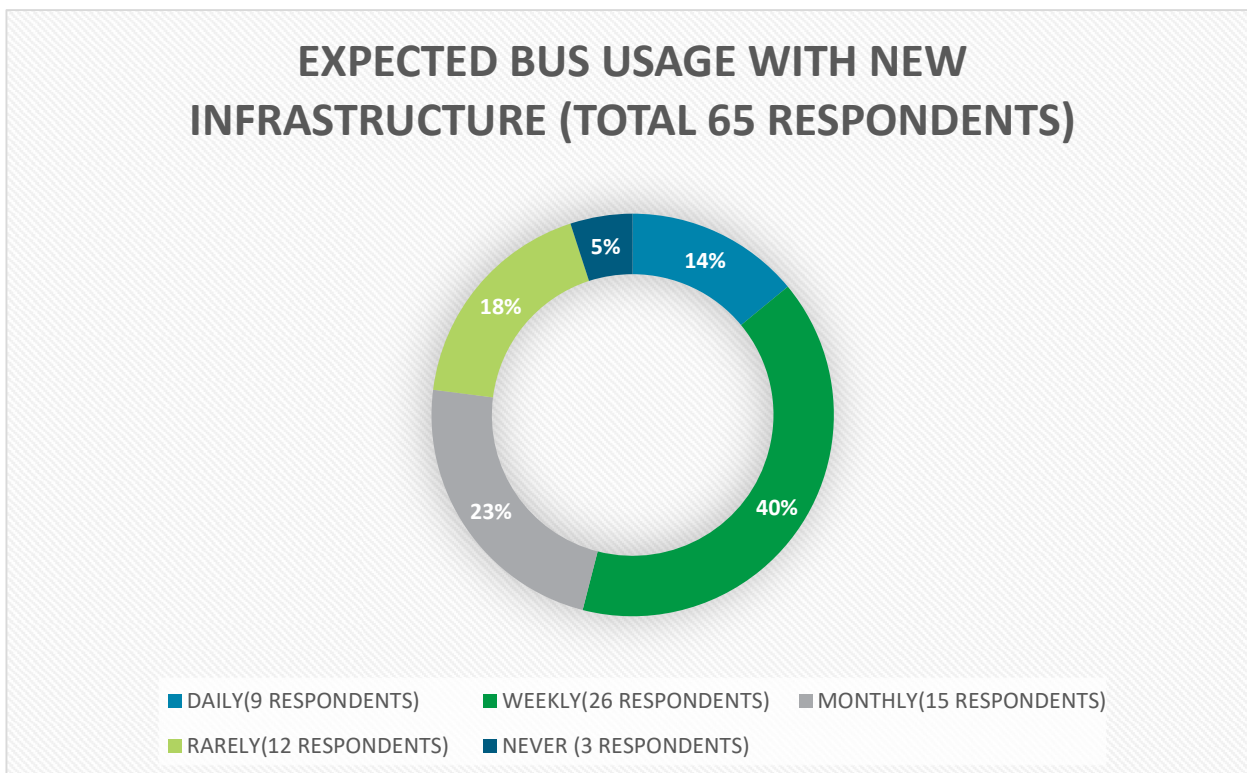


Figure 3-3 – Proposed Bus Service Usage

3.2.4 Proposed Cycle/Pedestrian Infrastructure Usage

The submissions received shows a substantial increase in the number of stakeholders who would plan to use the improved cycle and pedestrian network when completed. 40% of respondents would use the infrastructure weekly with 36% planning to use it daily. The figure below shows the overall response from stakeholders.

EXPECTED CYCLE/PEDESTRIAN USAGE WITH NEW INFRASTRUCTURE(63 RESPONDENTS)

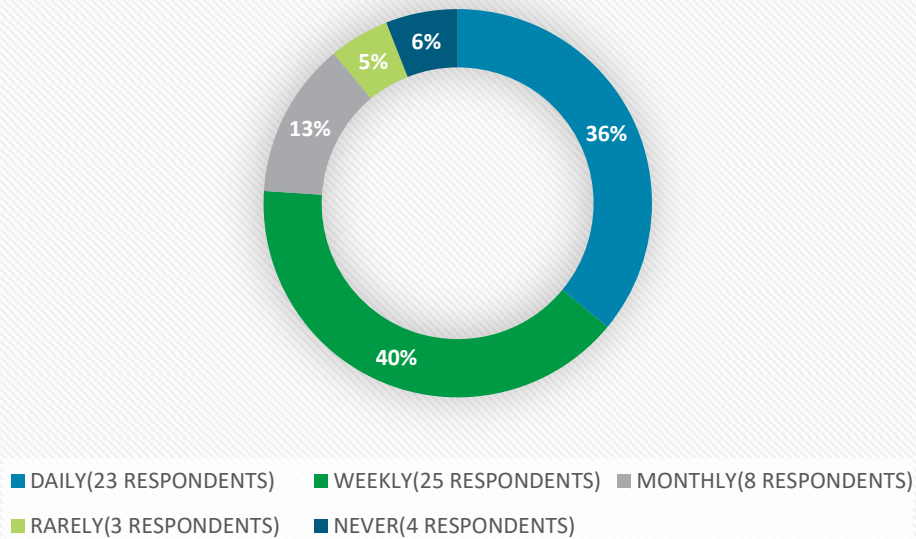


Figure 3-4 – Proposed Cycle/Pedestrian Infrastructure Usage

Table 3-1 Transport Usage Current and Expected

	Current Bus Usage	Expected Bus Usage with New Infrastructure	Difference	Current Cycle/Pedestrian Usage	Expected Cycle/Pedestrian Usage with New Infrastructure	Difference
Daily	4	9	+5	16	23	+7
Weekly	20	26	+6	16	25	+9
Monthly	14	15	+1	9	8	-1
Rarely	22	12	-10	15	3	-12
Never	5	3	-2	7	4	-3

Above is a table showcasing the number of people who answered in relation to their transport usage and if the new Infrastructure for buses and Cycle /Pedestrian would make them use public transport and active travel more frequently. Some of the respondents didn't give answers to one or two of the questions resulting in the categories not being totally equal.

3.3 Overarching Feedback

In general, stakeholders acknowledged and supported the need for improvements along the Dublin Road in terms of amenity value, traffic congestion and improvement of bus services. Allowance for bus and cycle/pedestrian infrastructure was broadly welcomed to decrease dependence on cars thus reducing traffic, fuel consumption, cost, and emissions.

3.3.1 Positive Feedback

79 respondents (86% of overall 91 respondents) expressed positivity for the scheme and understood the need for the changes. 32 of these 79 respondents supported the scheme in full while the remaining 47 support the scheme but would like some changes. The aspects of the scheme with the most positive responses was to the segregation of the cyclists/pedestrians from the live traffic, and also there was a good response to the improved junction arrangements.

Prioritising public transport and active travel is a strong area of support for the scheme. Making Galway a more sustainable city by moving from private vehicles to a more environmentally friendly way of travel is very well supported by respondents.

This feedback is graphically illustrated in Figure 3-1 below.

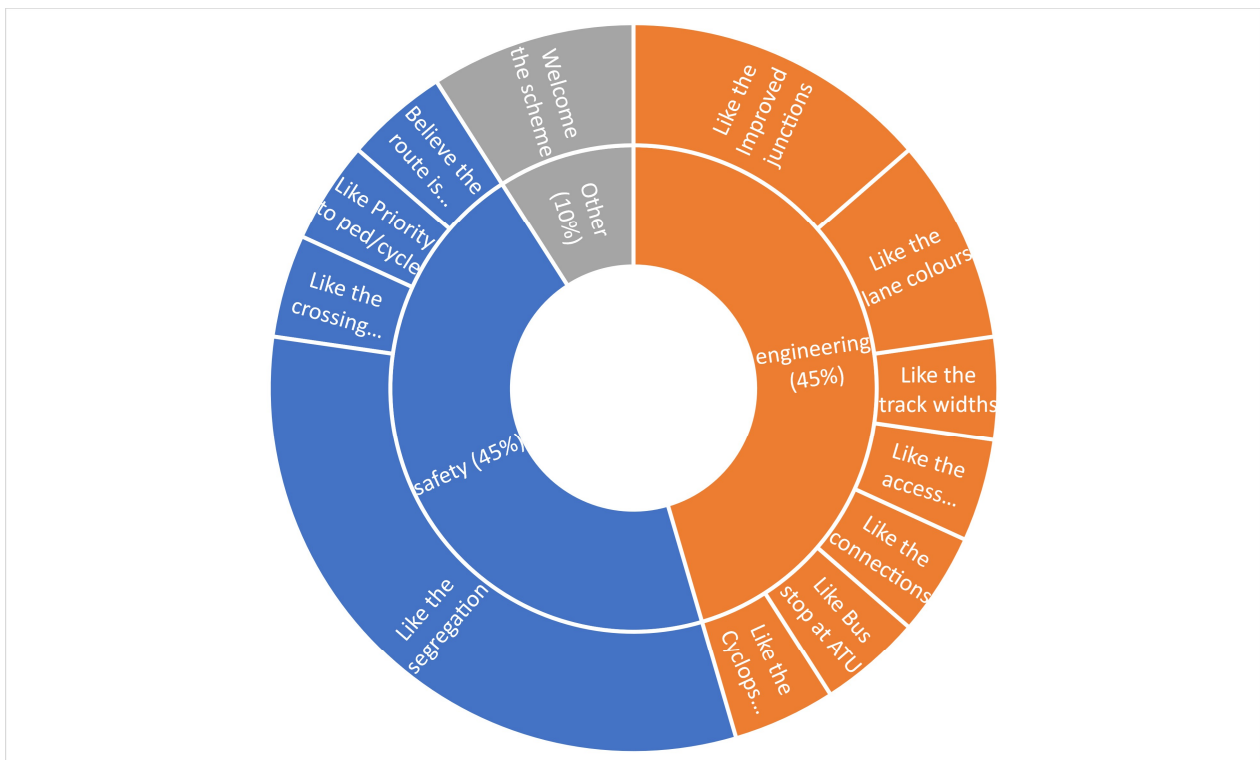


Figure 3-5 – Positive Feedback Breakdown

3.3.2 Key Issues Raised

177 separate issues were raised in total by the respondents. 69% of these were on the engineering aspects of the scheme. 17% were in relation to safety and 14% were in relation to the environmental elements of the scheme.

Respondents raised concerns with the engineering arrangement of the scheme the most of which concerned the lane widths (15%) that are proposed and the junction/signalling arrangements (14%).

The most safety concerns raised were regarding signalling phasing at junctions (5%). Respondents were also concerned with the crossings for cyclists and pedestrians (3%).

Environmental concerns raised include loss of green space and hedges (3%), concerns for the impact to Annex 1 habitats at Meadowlands (5%).

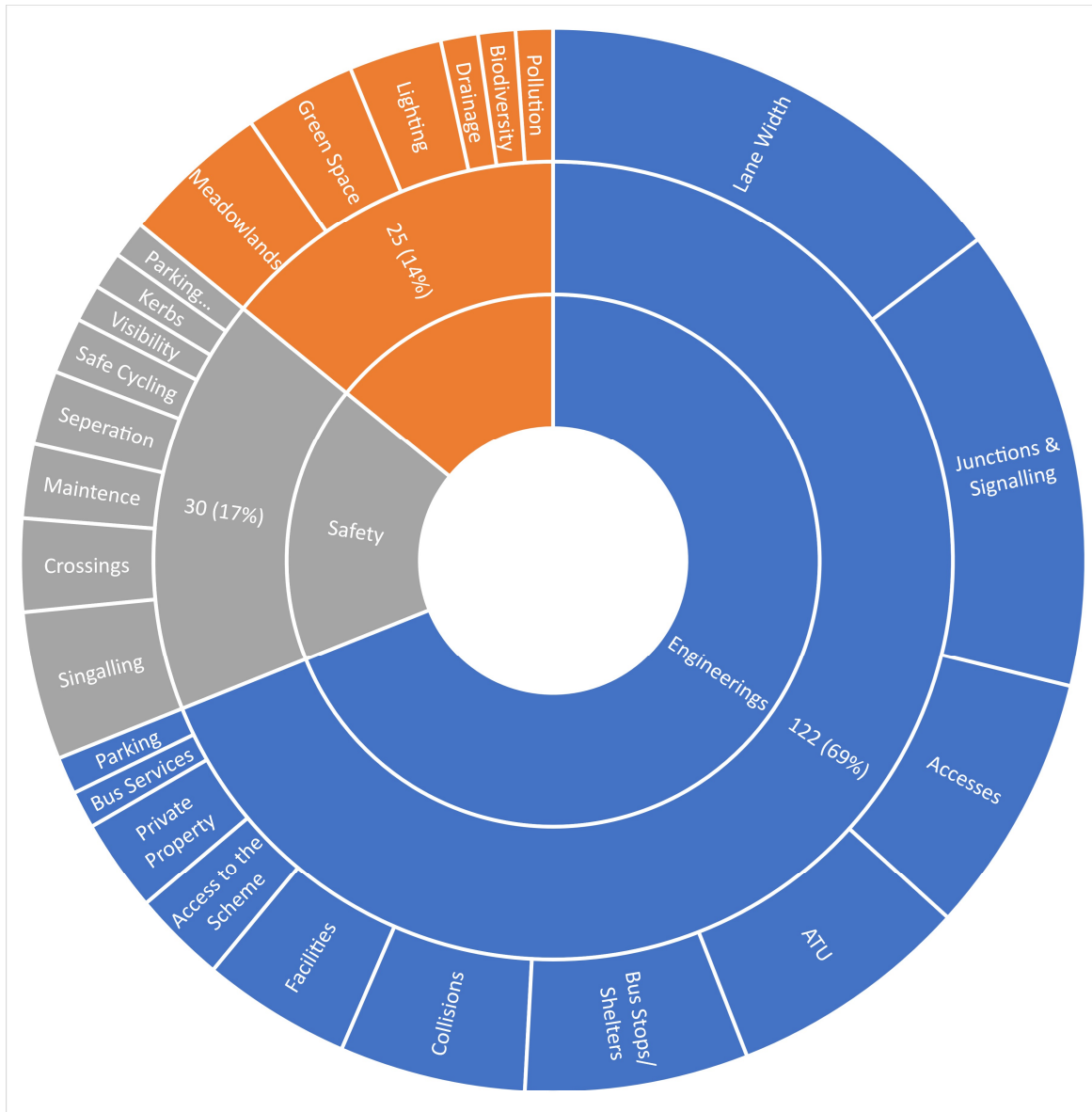


Figure 3-6 – Key Issues Raised

3.3.3 Feedback from Stakeholders.

Feedback and main concerns of the resident groups, businesses and other organisations are discussed below.

Woodhaven Merlin Park Residents Association – respondents expressed concerns for the safety of residents entering and exiting the estate using the proposed arrangement. The loss of existing stone wall and subsequent vandalism and social behaviour that would be a consequence of the removal was raised. The respondent was also concerned with visibility issues due to location of trees at the access and suggested that these be moved. Other issues raised were the safety of residents crossing the road to a bus stop, loss of green space and amenity area, the noise, vibration and air pollution from passing vehicles, and potential congestion due to junction types. The respondent also highlighted that the former Corrib Great Southern Hotel site will be used for 400 plus residential units and commercial development and should be considered in the design.

Flannery Hotel – Impact to boundary

Friends of Merlin Woods – The main focus was the protection of the Annex 1 habitat at Meadowlands. The respondent requested that consideration be given to limiting access to the meadowlands, appropriate fencing and planting species, management of surface water runoff, suitability of lighting in relation to bats, moths and owls, protection of habitats during construction, provide information signage, and inclusion of mammal crossings.

The Irish Cycling Advocacy Network – the ICAN recommended consideration for right turn cycle movements at Michael Collins Road, Belmont Access, Murrough/Merlin Park Lane, Rosshill Road junctions and to provide physical protection from the traffic lanes. The ICAN also suggested a review of the Coast Road junction proposals and Merlin Park Hospital access road. A review of the suitability of the shared footpath to the east of the Coast junction and consideration of widening that footway to cater for expected increases in cycle traffic to and from the adjacent developments was also raised.

An Taisce – The respondent highlighted that the ATU bus stop serves both city bus services and non-stop intercity/ commuter buses and one set down space would not cater for this and suggested that three should be provided. The respondent requested that bus stops elsewhere be set back from the bus lanes and the length of bus set down be reconsidered to cater for multiple buses.

The respondent highlighted that preserving the existing trees on both sides of the road between Doughiska Road and the entrance to Merlin Park Hospital is important in terms of conserving biodiversity.

The respondent requested that a connection to Athlone to Galway Greenway and Martin Roundabout project be provided with an incoming bus lane to the proposed incoming new bus lane starting at Doughiska Road should be considered. An Taisce requested that construction methods to be used at Merlin Park South Woods and Merlin Park Meadows should consider the ecological importance of the site.

The respondent highlighted that there is an established mammal link between Unclin and Antin Woods and the South Woods and requested that there should be access pipes/underpasses under the Dublin Road for mammals plus a high-level access wire for Red Squirrels on poles between trees on both sides of the Dublin Road. The respondent highlighted that the Skerritt Roundabout at ATU contains large numbers of Pyramid Orchids and Bee Orchids. An Taisce requested that all of these orchids should be identified and relocated to an appropriate alternative location before construction work on the Skerritt Roundabout begins. An Taisce requested that there should be no plans made to facilitate a new road entrance to Merlin Park Hospital at the Murrough Drive/ Eddies Takeaway traffic lights. They requested that bus shelters be set back from the path with shelters for people waiting there from the wind and rain.

Roselyn Carroll – The respondent submitted layouts with suggestions and comments. The respondent suggested longer bus stops, accessible toucan buttons at traffic lights, waiting areas at bus stops, increased width of cycle tracks at junctions, inclusion of transport hubs with toilet facilities, consideration for merging of cyclists at junctions, raised footpaths and cycle tracks at junctions, removal of kissing gates, wider cycle tracks for passing turning and waiting, signal sequencing, audio at signal junctions, parking enforcement and increased radii at junctions.

Galway City Community Network – The GCCN requested consideration for additional bus spaces at ATU to avoid obstruction of the traffic. The respondent requested that a 30kph speed limit be employed at ATU and at Belmont as this is used as a route to school. The GCCN highlighted that preserving the existing trees on both sides of the road between Doughiska Road and the entrance to Merlin Park Hospital is important in terms of conserving biodiversity. The respondent requested a connection to the emerging preferred route for Athlone to Galway Greenway Project through a cycle path on the coast road and a connection to the Martin Roundabout Project by continuing the outgoing bus lane to the new traffic lights at the Martin Roundabout. The GCCN highlighted the very high ecological importance of the South Meadows and South Woods.

Galway Cycling Campaign – The GCC requested consideration to increase width of cycle tracks throughout the scheme. The respondent requested that the use of ‘Cyclops’ or ‘Dutch’ type junctions be used. The GCC raised a number of queries about signalling and signal phasing of some of the proposed

junctions. The respondent requested the consideration for the use of forgiving kerbs and use of raised separator kerbs near roadway and the use of 'ground-up' lighting.

The GCC suggested shared cycle-scheme stations with cycle parking and shelter be considered especially at ATU. The GCC recommended a design is chosen for the request buttons at toucan crossings to be sufficiently set back from the crossing to be safely used by users of non-standard cycles, without the need to dismount or alternatively the use of induction loops at designated waiting areas.

The improvement to the capacity of the set-down and pick-up areas for buses and coaches outside ATU Galway was also requested. GCC provided a suggestion for cycle tracks at the junction with Coast Road and the R338. GCC also suggested a shared path from Rosshill Road to Lurgan Park for a number of approved and constructed residential developments. The respondent suggested to remove the Kissing gates and barriers to Wellpark Grove and at ATU Galway.

The GCC suggested connectivity to Merlin Park Hospital by widening the entrance/exit to Merlin Park Hospital to provide for a cycle-track running through the hospital grounds adjacent to the road or to provide a separate walking and cycling entrance/exit to the hospital immediately to the east of the vehicular entrance and aligned with any pedestrian/toucan crossing from the south of the junction. Physical prevention of illegal car-parking and raised crossings at signalised junctions was requested.

3.3.4 Suggestions Raised for Alternative Design

General suggestions for the whole scheme include providing additional width on the cycleways where possible, especially at junctions due to turning, waiting and stacking. A lot of respondents raised the point that there is an existing traffic problem at ATU due to multiple buses setting down at the same time, and suggest that the number of the bus set down spaces be increased to three at this location and further consideration at all other bus stop locations. The Cycling Organisations suggested that junctions should be 'Cyclops' or 'Dutch' arrangement and wanted further detail of the signal sequencing and signal type at junctions that will be employed. There was a suggestion to include a park and ride facility at Dangan and the Headford Road. The inclusion of an overpass or underpass crossing solution at ATU was also raised by several respondents due to the amount of people who will use it. Suggestions for specific locations and design items are discussed below.

R338 Dublin Road

- Extend footway/cycleway facility to MPUH
- Provide physical separation between cycleways and traffic lanes
- Use one way road system
- Use forgiving kerbs
- Use raised crossings at junctions
- Provide new entrance at Furey lands
- Provide cycle facilities and bus lane connection to the Martin Roundabout

Skerrit Junction

- Widen footways and cycle facilities on all arms.
- Keep the existing roundabout arrangement to avoid further congestion.
- Signalise existing roundabout
- Provide transport Station

Renmore Road Junction

- Bring cycleway to the north.
- Extend a no parking line back to opposite Bon Secour Hospital junction
- Widen cycle facilities.
- Set back stop line further

Belmont Junction

- Change to a Cyclops type junction with direct link to ATU campus
- Widen cycle facilities.
- Provide 30kph speed limit

Woodhaven Junction

- Inclusion of mini roundabout with Geata na Mara with combined entry/exit, the entrance to Merlin Gate estate to be moved to opposite the Woodhaven estate and a roundabout created,
- Add roundabout at Galway Crystal.
- Remove trees and keep the cycleway route in line.
- Signalised junction between Geata Na Mara and Woodhaven
- Keep existing wall or replace wall with new wall of same height
- Check if future development at former Corrib Great Southern site is facilitated within current proposals

Merlin Park Lane

- Change to a Cyclops type junction
- Extend bus stop island through traffic lights and move cycleway to the north of the footway
- Dedicated access for MPUH as per development plan
- Secure boundary to be provided at MPUH
- Provide additional 0.5m separation at Merlin Park Hospital and Meadow fields. Inclusion of walking route linking Merlin Park Hospital and Coast Road junction
- Widen cycle facilities by reducing central ghost island.
- Improve connection for cyclists to MPUH

Coast Road Junction

- Additional cycle lane at junction to avoid crossing of the road twice so there are cycle lanes at all sides of the junction.
- Suggestion for an additional off road cycle track separated from the Dublin Road to go through the existing green area and join the cycleway on the Dublin Road
- Change to a Cyclops type junction
- Remove paved areas at radius
- Provide slip access for cyclists to left turn
- Increase radii for cyclists

Doughiska Road Junction

- Provide an additional cycle lane on westbound side between Doughiska Road and Coast Road.
- Preserve the existing trees on both sides of the road between Doughiska Road and the entrance to Merlin Park Hospital
- Use a Cyclops type junction

Ballyloughane Road junction

- Widen cycle facilities.

Rosshill Road Junction

- Make junction signalised,
- Widen cycle facilities by reducing central ghost island.

Glenina Heights

- Provide a second yellow box to the end of Michael Collins Road
- Retain more green area
- Potential Parking Provision to be included across from junction with e-charging hub for bikes and cars

Michael Collins Road Junction

- Left turning slip for cyclists to Michael Collins Road
- Slip left access to Dublin Road
- Improved merging to ATU from cycle tracks
- Widen cycle tracks
- Increase radii for cyclists

Douglas Road Junction

- Increase radii for cyclists
- Use Cyclops type junction
- Protection to cyclists to be provide

ATU/GMIT

- Extend bus stops
- Provide overpass or underpass crossing of the R338
- Provide a transport hub
- Provide 30kph speed limit
- Remove kissing gates

Cycle Tracks widening

- Between Rosshill Rd and Merlin Park Lane,
- West of Merlin Park Hospital entrance,
- East of Skerritt junction,
- At Glenina Heights in the grass verge east of the bus stop,
- West and approaching Connacht Hotel,
- At Wellpark Grove east of the bus stop in the grass verge,
- Outside Brother of Charity in grass verge.

Bus Stops

- Increase bus parking lengths to accommodate more buses with three spaces at ATU.
- Provide shelter with toilets and increased waiting area to avoid encroachment onto cycle lanes
- Consideration to the orientation of the bus shelter to prevailing winds
- Set back bus stops from bus lanes,
- Provide guard rails for waiting passengers.

SECTION 4 Summary and Conclusions

A second Non-Statutory Public Consultation (NSPC) for BusConnects Galway – Dublin Road took place between Friday the 13th of January 2023 to the 10th of February 2023. The current general arrangement proposals between the Moneenageisha Junction and the Doughiska Road junction was displayed.

The consultation process gave an opportunity to all stakeholders to provide feedback on the current general arrangement proposals. The consultation process was carried out online using a dedicated website and virtual room. The scheme was also advertised in local newspapers and was displayed at bus shelters. A registered letter with accompanying brochure was posted to all landowners directly impacted by the scheme. Brochure drops were also carried out at properties in close proximity of the scheme. Briefings were held for elected representatives, and online meetings were held with stakeholders and interested parties.

A total of 91 submissions were received from the various platforms. of which 13 no. submissions were received via email, 66 no. submissions were received via the online submission form and 12. no were received through phone calls/voicemails using the dedicated phone line for the project.

The majority of feedback was positive with 86% expressing their overall support for the scheme. The positive feedback concentrated on the merits of the segregation of the cyclists/pedestrians from the live traffic, and also there was a good response to the proposed junction improvements.

Respondents raised 177 distinct issues relating to the proposals displayed. 69% of these were related to the engineering aspects of the scheme of which the most of these were regarding the lane widths and the junction/signalling arrangements. 17% of the issues raised were in relation to safety and 14% were in relation to the environmental elements of the scheme.