# Merrion Row Consultation

## Background

Dublin City Council (DCC) has received a proposal from businesses on Merrion Row, Dublin 2 to pedestrianise Merrion Row, removing all vehicles after a certain time and converting the road space to primarily facilitating outdoor dining, in order to enable hospitality businesses on the street to reopen with outdoor dining whenever the Government public health restrictions allow.

DCC are currently assessing this proposal and liaising with the National Transport Authority (NTA), as well as having regard to the City Council motion passed on the 12/04/2021 at the City Council meeting.

## Assessment

At this time the NTA has advised that the removal of buses from Merrion Row is not feasible from an operational point of view and they have requested that one lane be kept open. The option therefore that DCC is considering is how to maximise space for outdoor use while ensuring this requirement is met.

At present traffic on Merrion Row is comprised of vehicles from Kildare Street and those from Stephen’s Green East. The number of vehicles from Kildare Street make up approximately 25% of the overall traffic on Merrion Row and so by redirecting the traffic from Stephen’s Green East, a 75% reduction in traffic volumes would be achieved in Merrion Row. This reduction in traffic volumes would allow the traffic lanes in Merrion Row to be reduced from three lanes to one lane and thus increase the space available for outdoor dining and make the space far more usable.

It is proposed that traffic which currently turns right from Stephen’s Green East to Merrion Row would instead turn right at Hume Street and travel through Ely Place towards the Merrion Sq/Merrion Row/Baggot Street junction.

Traffic on Hume Street and the section of Ely Place from Hume Street to Merrion Row would be reversed in direction. Traffic on the section of Ely Place from Hume Street, south towards Leeson Street and Royal Hibernian Academy, which is two way at present, will remain as is. Access to this same section of Ely Place and the Royal Hibernian Academy will be via Stephen’s Green East and egress will be via the Merrion Row, Baggot Street and Merrion Street Upper junction.

## Overview of changes

### Merrion Row

* One lane for traffic from Kildare St centered on the existing carriageway
* Bus stop to remain
* Temporary buildouts on both sides of Merrion Row (similar to South Anne St. and Drury St.) will be installed with planters. Existing bollards, unnecessary street clutter and signage will be removed.
* Loading to take place from Ely Place
* Existing footpaths to remain with a minimum 2 metre clear area for pedestrian access.

### Hume Street

* Two lanes of traffic to travel west to east (currently east to west)
* Disabled spaces to be retained
* Parking to be retained. Perpendicular parking may be changed to parallel parking
* Bike parking to be retained
* No changes to existing footpaths

### Ely Place

* Two lanes of traffic to travel south to north (currently north to south) between Hume Street and Merrion Row
* Two way traffic maintained on Ely Place between Hume Street and RHA Gallery (Royal Hibernian Academy)
* Disabled spaces to be retained
* Parking to be retained
* No changes to existing footpaths

### Traffic which currently uses Hume Street

* 44 route to Enniskerry will now use Pemboke Street and Leeson Street.
* Car park traffic for the Grafton Street area will now use Pembroke Street and Leeson Street to access the car parks in this area.

## Proposed stages for Merrion Row:

1 – Public Consultation to gather feedback on these proposals from businesses and residents on Hume St, Ely Place, Merrion Row, and the general public. Open from 16th April – 30h April

2 – Following the public consultation if there is support for this proposal a trial will be undertaken over a weekend in May to determine if the new traffic arrangement is feasible. This will be a trial of reducing Merrion Row to one lane and reversing the traffic flow on Hume St and Ely Place

3 – The weekend trial will be assessed and if a success the necessary civil works (new traffic signals, road markings and the build outs) will be installed. DCC would seek to install this before outdoor dining commencements. This arrangement will run as a trial during the summer

4 – The arrangement will reviewed after the summer and a decision on whether to maintain this arrangement will be undertaken.

5- As part of Bus Connects almost all bus routes will be removed from Merrion Row by early 2024. This may create the opportunity for full pedestrianisation of Merrion Row.