

# **DRAFT DUBLIN CITY CENTRE TRANSPORT PLAN 2023**

Dublin City Council  
National Transport Authority  
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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Purpose of this Plan

The purpose of the Dublin City Centre Transport Plan (The “plan”) is to identify and prioritise changes to the current transport arrangements which are necessary to fulfil the vision for the City as a sustainable, dynamic, and inclusive place, as set out in the Dublin City Development Plan (the “Development Plan”).

The plan also facilitates the implementation of the NTA’s Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022-42 (the “Transport Strategy”) by providing a more detailed framework for accommodating significantly higher numbers of people travelling into the City Centre, in particular by rail, bus, cycling and walking.

Since 2016, there has been significant investment in transport projects in Dublin City Centre, including Luas Cross City and improvements to the cycle network. This expenditure will increase exponentially as major infrastructure projects are realised over the coming decade.

While in the longer term MetroLink and future expansions to the Luas network will provide significant capacity improvements, the roll out of BusConnects and DART+ over the period of this plan will provide a major increase in public transport capacity. Improved active travel schemes are also predicted to significantly improve the offer for pedestrians, wheelers and cyclists.

These projects, some of which are already underway, will fundamentally change the public transport, walking and cycling provision in the city. In line with this, implementing these projects will require a change from the current transportation arrangements in the City Centre, particularly in terms of how traffic is managed.

New opportunities arise out of these proposed changes, and the reconfiguration of the transport networks within the City Centre offers a chance to explore how places can be transformed for the benefit of the city. This plan identifies some of these new spaces, and offers examples of how they might develop into new focal points for Dublin.

This plan envisages a new low traffic city centre with more space given over to the sustainable modes and with frequent and efficient public transport links and interchanges.

By reorienting the City Centre towards sustainable transport modes, the Plan will allow Dublin City Council to meet the mode share targets for 2028 set out in the Development Plan, as well as supporting the Council’s efforts to achieve the national objective to reduce emissions from transport by 50% by 2030 in accordance with the 2023 Climate Action Plan.

Figure 1.1 – Public transport trips entering the canal cordon (7-10am)

A chart showing that in:

2022: 98,000 Public transport trips were made into the canal cordon

2028: The target is 136,000 public transport trips into this area

## 1.2. Updating the 2016 City Centre Transport Plan

In 2016, Dublin City Council (DCC), in conjunction with the National Transport Authority (NTA), published the Dublin City Centre Transport Study, which set out a framework for the managed implementation of transport projects across Dublin City Centre in line with the vision and objectives of the Dublin City Development Plan and the NTA's recently adopted Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035.

The current Dublin City Development Plan (2022-2028) has encompassed the framework set out in the previous study, but the new policies and objectives of the Development Plan have required a corresponding update of the 2016 City Centre Transport Study. In line with this, the Development Plan Objective SMT05 requires Dublin City Council:

“To review the City Centre Transport Plan 2016 in collaboration with the NTA in the lifetime of the plan, setting out a clear strategy to prioritise active travel modes and public transport use, whilst ensuring the integration of high quality public realm.”

This Transport Plan gives local effect to the following national policies for Dublin City Centre:

- Climate Action Plan 2023;
- National Sustainable Mobility Policy; and
- National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland

## 1.3. The Plan Area

To develop the plan, a study area roughly aligned with the area generally bounded by the Royal and Grand Canals has been identified. This central part of Dublin City has a population of approximately 130,000 residents contains approximately 195,000 jobs, as well as a variety of different land uses, levels of activity and accessibility.

Within this wider study area however, it became clear during the early stages of the plan development that the focus was moving towards a more central innercity core. This Inner Core captures the highest order attractions within the city, notably in terms of retail, employment, night-life, as well as a concentration of nationally important cultural, educational and governmental institutions. Analysis of existing travel data also highlighted that while this core is a key destination for people coming into the city, much of the private car traffic is travelling through it. In this regard, 6 out of every 10 cars driving into the Inner Core had a destination outside this core area.

The full study area, and the Inner Core area are presented in Figure 1.2

Fig 1.2

A map showing the area covered by the Dublin City Centre transport plan: bounded by the R101 to the north and the R111 to the south.

The Inner Core area is within this and is about 2 kms wide.

## 2. Implementing the Dublin City Development Plan (2022-2028)

The Development Plan's vision for Dublin is as follows:

“Within the next 10 years, Dublin will have an established international reputation as one of Europe's most sustainable, dynamic and resourceful city regions. Dublin, through the shared vision of its citizens and civic leaders, will be a beautiful, compact city, with a distinct character, a vibrant culture and a diverse, smart, green, innovation-based economy. It will be a socially inclusive city of urban neighbourhoods with excellent community and civic infrastructure based on the principles of the 15 minute city, all connected by an exemplary public transport, cycling and walking system and interwoven with a high quality bio-diverse, green space network. In short, the vision is for a capital city where people will seek to live, work, experience, invest and socialise, as a matter of choice.”

### 2.1. Development Plan Priorities

The City Centre Transport Plan identifies policies and projects which will assist in the implementation of the transport policies and objectives of the Dublin City Development Plan, within the City Centre area. Importantly, the plan outcomes also support the delivery of a myriad of other Development Plan policies, including improving air quality, reducing the impacts of noise, and protecting the built heritage.

In particular, the City Centre Transport Plan frames the implementation of the following Development Plan Sustainable Mobility and Transport policies, and their associated objectives:

- SMT1 – Modal Shift and Compact Growth
- SMT2 – Decarbonising Transport
- SMT3 – Integrated Transport Network
- SMT8 – Public Realm Enhancements
- SMT11 – Pedestrian Network
- SMT12 – Pedestrians and Public Realm
- SMT14 – City Centre Road Space
- SMT15 – Last Mile Delivery
- SMT16 – Walking, Cycling and Active Travel
- SMT18 – The Pedestrian Environment
- SMT22 – Key Sustainable Transport Projects
- SMT25 – On-Street Parking
- SMT28 – Repurposing of Multi-Storey Car Parks

The City Centre Transport Plan also provides detail in support of, Inter alia, the following Development Plan policies:

- SC1 – Consolidation of the Inner City
- SC2 – City's Character
- SC10 – Urban Density
- SC11 – Compact Growth
- QHSN4 – Key Regeneration Areas
- QHSN6 – Urban Consolidation
- QHSN10 – 15-Minute City
- CEE26 – Tourism in Dublin
- CCUV15 – Premier Shopping Area
- CCUV17 – Diversifying the City Centre

CCUV18 – Residential Development  
 CCUV19 – Parking and the Retail Core  
 CCUV42 – Public Realm – City Centre  
 SI34 – Management of Air Quality

Cars, Taxis and Goods	29%	17%
Total	100%	100%

Taken together, these policies give clear direction in terms of land use development and management of all transport modes in the City Centre. Notably, there is clear direction from the Development Plan that vehicular traffic in the City Centre needs to be managed. This is accompanied by a renewed emphasis on the need to better provide for higher capacity sustainable modes of travel, active travel and to more efficiently service the diversity of business, commercial and cultural activities within the city.

The largest change required is in the Car / Taxis / Goods category where a 40% reduction in the existing mode share level is targeted in the Development Plan, with the reduction falling mainly on the private car as the demand for taxis and goods is likely to grow over the next number of years. The achievement of these targets will require a reorientation of the City Centre’s streets towards sustainable modes of transport.

## 2.2. Mode Share Targets

The Development Plan includes mode share targets for travel into Dublin City Centre. These targets are based on the Canal Cordon Counts undertaken every year and relate to travel into the centre during the peak 3-hour morning period.

The Canal Cordon mode share targets for 2028, as set out in the Development Plan are shown in Figure 2.1 below:

Figure 2.1 2028 Development Plan Target Outcome

Mode of Travel	2019	2018 Target
Walking	11%	13%
Cycling	6%	13%
Public Transport	54%	57%

#### SMT1

It is the Policy of Dublin City Council to continue to promote modal shift from private car use towards increased use of more sustainable forms of transport such as active mobility and public transport, and to work with the National Transport Authority (NTA), Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and other transport agencies in progressing an integrated set of transport objectives to achieve compact growth.

#### SMT8

It is the Policy of Dublin City Council to support public realm enhancements that contribute to place making and liveability and which prioritise pedestrians in accordance with Dublin City Council's Public Realm Strategy ('Your City – Your Space'), the Public Realm Masterplan for the City Core (The Heart of the City), the Grafton Street Quarter Public Realm Plan and forthcoming public realm plans such as those for the Parnell Square Cultural Quarter Development and the City Markets Area.

#### SMT14

It is the Policy of Dublin City Council to manage City Centre road-space to best address the needs of pedestrians and cyclists, public transport, shared modes and the private car, in particular, where there are intersections between DART, Luas and Metrolink and with the existing and proposed bus network.

#### SMT15

It is the Policy of Dublin City Council to seek to achieve a significant reduction in the number of motorised delivery vehicles in the City through supporting and promoting the use of the 'last-mile' delivery through the development of micro hubs and distribution centres.

#### SMT16

It is the Policy of Dublin City Council to prioritise the development of safe and connected walking and cycling facilities and prioritise a shift to active travel for people of all ages and abilities, in line with the city's mode share targets.

#### SMT25

It is the Policy of Dublin City Council to manage on-street car parking to serve the needs of the city alongside the needs of residents, visitors, businesses, kerbside activity and accessible parking requirements, and to facilitate the re-organisation and loss of spaces to serve sustainable development targets such as in relation to, sustainable transport provision, greening initiatives, sustainable urban drainage, access to new developments, or public realm improvements.

#### CCUV24

It is the Policy of Dublin City Council to move to a low traffic environment generally and to increase the amount of traffic free spaces provided in the city centre over the lifetime of the Plan as well as create new high quality public realm areas where possible taking into account the objective to enhance access to and within the city centre by public transport, walking and cycling.



### 3. Implementing the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022-42

The policies and projects identified in this plan, are intended to provide the necessary changes to the City Centre environment, to facilitate the delivery of, and longer term operation of, the major public transport projects set out in the Transport Strategy. The plan will outline the framework for the implementation of an unprecedented level of investment in active travel within Dublin City Centre.

#### 3.1. Transport Strategy Priorities

The plan identifies priorities and objectives which will assist in the implementation of a number of key measures from the Transport Strategy. The delivery of these measures is critical to facilitate a greater number of people travelling into the City Centre by sustainable modes of transport. These include the following:

- CYC1 – GDA Cycle Network
- BUS1 – Core Bus Corridor Programme
- BUS4 – New Dublin Area Bus Service Network
- LRT1 – MetroLink
- RAIL1 – DART+

By 2030, the combination of major transport projects will facilitate a significant increase in the number of people travelling into the City Centre every day by public transport. The BusConnects service changes will increase capacity across the Metropolitan Area by approximately 25% with the City Centre remaining the focus of this network. DART+ West will

increase capacity from 5,000 passengers per hour to 13,500 and DART+ South West from 5,000 to 20,000.

The plan also facilitates and will be supported by other Transport Strategy measures such as Next Generation Ticketing, Transport Technology and Behavioural Change programmes, which will contribute to the delivery of these significant changes in how people move and live in Dublin City.

In addition to the above, there are numerous other DCC and NTA policies and objectives, such as parking standards, workplace parking charges and other emerging demand management measures, which will have a direct bearing on the transportation system in Dublin City Centre. Although this plan does not address all of these issues specifically, it provides a context in terms of new transport arrangements which can underpin the future delivery of these wider reaching policy measures.

While the concentration of public transport investment in the city centre is welcome, these schemes, along with numerous active travel projects, present considerable challenges to ensure that high-frequency and high-capacity public transport services can operate efficiently. They also present a real opportunity for the city to be transformed and to realise the vision as set out by the elected members in the City Development Plan.

The scale and nature of all of these projects, however, cannot be accommodated within the existing road network without radical changes in how the general traffic network operates within the Inner Core.

These include the following:

#### Measure CYC1 – GDA Cycle Network

It is the intention of the NTA and the local authorities to deliver a safe, comprehensive, attractive and legible cycle network in accordance with the updated Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network.

#### Measure BUS1 – Core Bus Corridor Programme

Subject to receipt of statutory consents, it is the intention of the NTA to implement the 12 Core Bus Corridors as set out in the BusConnects Dublin programme.

#### Measure BUS4 – New Dublin Area Bus Service Network

It is the intention of the NTA to complete the delivery of the new Dublin Area Bus Service Network in 2024.

#### MEASURE LRT1 – MetroLink

A Railway Order application for the MetroLink was made to An Bord Pleanála in 2022. Subject to receipt of approval, it is intended to proceed with the construction of the project.

#### MEASURE RAIL1 – DART+

The DART+ Programme will be implemented, providing electrified services to Drogheda in the north and Maynooth plus Celbridge in the west, in addition to an enhanced level of service to Greystones. The programme

will include additional fleet, aligned with higher passenger demand, and a higher frequency of service on all lines.

## 4. Changes in Dublin City since 2016

Since the publication of the Dublin City Centre Study 2016, there have been a number of significant changes, not only with regards to the physical provision of transport and land use within Dublin City, but also with regard to the Policy and social context. All of these factors need to be considered in the plan.

### 4.1. Changes in Transport Policy

#### Climate Action

In the period since 2016, a number of policy areas have progressed across the transport and planning sectors. The most important, however, has been the gradual incorporation of Climate Change as a defining issue which is required to be addressed by all agencies of Government at all levels through the Climate Action Plans, which set a target to reduce transport emissions nationally by 50%.

This plan, emerging as it has from the Development Plan and Transport Strategy, has at its core the creation of a transport system that will contribute to Dublin City Centre becoming a net-zero urban area.

All progress in land use planning and transport planning will be viewed in that context.

#### Changing Transport and Development Policy Priorities

Based on national, regional and local policies, as detailed in the accompanying Policy Background report, the priorities for transport investment in Dublin City Centre can be summarised as follows:

- The application of the Road User Hierarchy placing sustainable modes at the top;
- The use of Filtered Permeability which delivers transport networks allowing full movement and access by sustainable modes and goods vehicles, while managing access by private car;
- The development of a people-centred city which emphasises place-making and attractiveness of the public realm;
- Consolidation of development to create a city where more people live closer to the services they need including employment, shops and cultural attractions; and
- Accommodating future development in the City Centre.

### 4.2. Delivery of Transport Schemes since 2016

There has been a significant amount of change within Dublin City, both in terms of transport infrastructure and land use developments since the City Centre Transport Study was published in 2016, including the following:

- The delivery of Luas Cross City;
- The reintroduction of passenger services through the Phoenix Park Tunnel;
- The commencement of upgrades to bus services under BusConnects;
- Significant investment in Active Travel schemes throughout the City Centre; and

- Major developments such as TUD Grangegorman; Docklands; the George’s Quay area; and several sites in Dublin 8.

In that period, complementary changes have been made to the road network in the City Centre to create space for these projects, most notably to facilitate the introduction of Luas Cross City. For this project a number of changes across the city were made both prior to construction and before operation, notably:

- Stephens Green North West corner – removal of the requirement for Baggot Street traffic to use Dawson Street (since altered to incorporate Hume Street);
- Stephens Green South East corner – introduction of a right turn to the Stephens Green car parks to reduce traffic on Stephens Green North;
- Suffolk Street made traffic free;
- Grafton Street Lower made two-way for public transport;
- Kildare Street two-way running and contra-flow bus section;
- Extension of the hours of operation of the College Green Bus gate;
- Removal of general traffic from bottom of Dawson Street;
- Enhanced bus priority at Bachelor’s Walk;
- No right Turn onto O’Connell Bridge from the North Quays for general traffic; and
- Introduction of bus lanes on the South Quays at O’Connell Bridge.

These measures freed up space in the City Centre, prioritised public transport and allowed for the integration of the new Luas line in the city centre and achieved the following:

- Transformed Dawson Street and Nassau Street from heavily congested traffic routes to lightly trafficked ones;
- Created a new pedestrian and cycle link on Suffolk Street;
- Introduced a convenient link between the two retail cores of Grafton Street and Henry Street;
- Allowed the TUD Grangegorman campus to develop in a sustainable manner; and
- Opened up a new Plaza at Broadstone and a pedestrian and cycling link into the City Centre from Stoneybatter.

The successful implementation of these measures has assisted in the incremental change in how the city’s transportation networks operate, and how the city is accessed and used by the public. These transformative measures have also contributed to the freeing up of road space and reducing the excessive traffic levels in many parts of the city centre.

Figure 4.1a Suffolk Street before

A photograph of a street with heavy traffic

Figure 4.1b Suffolk Street after

A photograph of a pedestrianised street

### 4.3 Changing Travel Patterns

The long term trend in Dublin has been a significant reduction in the use of private cars to travel into the City Centre in the morning peak.

The previous Dublin City Centre Transport Study (2016) identified that 192,000 people (2014 Canal Cordon Count data) travelled into the city

centre in the morning peak, and that by 2023 it was expected that an additional 42,000 trips would need to be catered for.

Between 2014 and 2019 the numbers travelling into the City centre rose by almost 25,000 (Fig. 4.1), however, when we look more closely at this figure we see that public transport, walking and cycling rose by 31,000 while people travelling by car reduced by 6,000. One of the main reasons for the rise in public transport was due to the successful introduction of the Luas Cross city link and the reduction in bus journey times along the Quays by the North and South Quay bus lanes.

Figure 4.2 Means of Travel into Dublin City Centre 7am to 10am

A graph showing trends from 2016 to 2019:

Public transport, walking and cycling rose from 134,000 to 154,000 and private car fell from 65,000 to 58,000.

Since the pandemic ended, there has been an overall recovery in public transport numbers across Dublin. The increase in home-working however, which is evident from the Census 2022 results, is also borne out by the 2022 Canal Cordon Count.

Data from the 2022 count shows that overall demand to the City Centre in AM peak hours is down from 217,000 persons in 2019 to 177,000 in 2022. Car trips make up 27.7% of AM peak demand into the City Centre, steady with the share pre-pandemic. Overall, the proportion of trips into Dublin City Centre by sustainable modes stood at 71%, the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest figure on record after 2019. This is shown in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.3 Mode Share of Trips into Dublin City Centre – 2016-2022 (excl. 2020)

A graph showing trends from 2016 to 2022

Over this time, sustainable modes rose from 66.9% to 71.3% and car fell from 31.8% to 27.7%.

#### 4.4. Changing Traffic Patterns

In terms of the development of this plan, a primary input was the analysis of traffic data for the City Centre. This was essential to understand the absolute volumes along key routes, and also to determine the number of vehicles travelling within the City Centre area.

Ongoing traffic surveys are regularly undertaken by Dublin City Council, and the most recent counts undertaken for traffic passing O’Connell Bridge, highlight the significant reduction in general traffic using the city Quays as route through the city. Since 2017 there has been a 53% reduction in traffic on the north quays and a 34% reduction in traffic on the south quays. On average only 270 cars use the Bachelor’s Walk approach to O’Connell Bridge per hour during the AM Peak period. The figures for the whole day for 2017 and 2023 are set out in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.4 Car Traffic Cross O’Connell Bridge (12hrs)

A bar chart showing car traffic crossing the O’Connell Bridge between 7am and 7pm in the years 2017 and 2023.

The eastbound flow dropped from 6,800 to 3,200 and the westbound flow dropped from 7,300 to 4,800.

Looking more generally at traffic movements within the Inner Core of the City Centre, analysis undertaken by the NTA has shown that only 41% of all vehicles travelling into the Inner Core actually have a destination in this area.

It is recognised that some of this traffic is essential for the functioning of the city, and that it is not always possible for people to be able to change their mode for a variety of reasons. It is important that this plan ensures that access will still be maintained for traffic within most of the city centre but potentially using different routings from those at present.

In terms of through traffic however, the data highlights that 6 out of every 10 cars are simply using the city centre roads as the most convenient route to reach destinations outside the City Centre. There is no specific requirement for this traffic to be in the City Centre, and these vehicles could be using a different routes to their destination.

In summary, almost two thirds of private vehicles driving within the inner city could be removed without impacting on the vitality and viability of the economic and cultural life of this area. Taking this into account, the plan was able to identify opportunities to utilise roadspace differently. If this through traffic can be moved to other modes, times or spaces, the City can make significant changes to the public realm and facilitate the necessary improvements to sustainable transport modes while growing the numbers of people able to access the city centre.

## 4.5. Retail Travel Patterns

In 2022, the NTA carried out a travel and expenditure survey of people in Dublin City Centre, focussed on the retail core. It found that 84% of people travel by public transport, walking and cycling, compared to 16% by private car.

In terms of retail expenditure, car users were found to account for less than a quarter of retail expenditure in the City Centre, while expenditure by sustainable transport user equated to just over 76% of all retail spend.

Figure 4.5 Retail Spend by Mode

A chart showing money spent on retail in the city centre, by mode of transport used to enter the city.

Mode	Percentage
Car	24%
Motorbike / Taxi etc	2%
Sustainable Transport	74%

## 4.6. The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic

In the aftermath of the Covid-19 Pandemic, it is important to consider how the way we live, travel and interact has changed. Technology has meant that working / learning from home is now a normal occurrence for many people, and online retailing for convenience and comparison goods has changed how we shop and the dynamics of the high street.

Although it is still too early to state with certainty how the pandemic will affect our travel plans, or indeed our settlement patterns, in the long-term, it is important to consider how this impacts the development of this plan.

It is clear that travel patterns have changed and that the introduction of remote working means that those city streets which were regarded as parts of the critical traffic network which allowed people to access their place of work on a daily basis, such as Pearse Street, no longer have the same function. The challenge of remote working is seen in both the pedestrian and cycling figures in the city where the week day volumes are down but the weekend has increased substantially.

A challenge for the city therefore is to develop more spaces which become an attractive end destination in their own right and not to use these spaces as traffic arteries facilitating people driving through to other destinations.

Figure 4.6 Proportion of Inner Core Traffic by Destination

Infographic describing private vehicles travelling through Dublin city centre:

6 out of 10 are through traffic and 4 out of 10 end their journey there.

## 5. Challenges for Transport with the City Centre

As the next tranche of public transport and active travel projects are brought forward for implementation, the issues of how to provide the physical space for this transport infrastructure as well as the additional people it will bring into the City Centre has become the most urgent transport planning challenge facing the city.

If the vision set out in the Development Plan is to be realised, a fundamental change in how we view the use of space for the private car, and where and when it should be accommodated, needs to be considered.

For many years, the bus network has been the primary carrier of people into the city, with over 60,000 passengers on average arriving in the morning peak period each day. BusConnects will increase that capacity, adding significantly to the amount of people getting into the city by public transport each day. While the proposed BusConnects Core Bus Corridor priority schemes will enable buses to reach the City Centre without undue delay, they do not provide for cross-city priority within the city centre.

It would be highly undesirable that the large investment in the bus system results in more buses making it to the City Centre quicker but then experiencing significant delays in journeying through the central area. Such a scenario would have the effect of diminishing the gains made elsewhere on the network at such significant expense and effort.

This is a key challenge, as the full benefits of the BusConnects Programme can only be realised if the convergence of buses into the city centre can be

managed to ensure priority and journey time reliability for the new bus services, as well as to provide additional space for the increased volumes of passengers getting into the city centre by bus. This consideration is a critical factor in determining what the transport environment in the city centre should look like.

Similarly the rollout of safe cycle routes linked through and around the City Centre, as defined in the GDA Cycle Network Plan requires reallocation of road space and a reconfiguration of the functions of many streets.

Within the Development Plan, as well as in supporting publications such as 'Your City, Your Space; Dublin City Public Realm Strategy (2012)', there is a clear objective regarding the Civic Spine from Parnell Square through College Green to Dame Street as well as a desire to continue the development of a low traffic city in order to gain pedestrian space and public realm opportunities.

Taking all of the above and the other objectives within the Development Plan and Transport Strategy it is proposed to move forward with a number of significant traffic management changes within the City Centre in tandem with public transport improvements and investment in active travel. Together these will allow a different transport environment and public realm to emerge in the City Centre.



## 6. Vision and Objectives

Central to the update of the Dublin City Centre Study, was the need to reassess and establish a clear vision and set of objectives, to frame the development of the revised networks and proposals.

The vision and objectives are linked to those presented in the Dublin City Development Plan and Transport Strategy.

### 6.1. Vision

The vision for this plan, as shared by Dublin City Council and the NTA is as follows:

*A thriving City Centre where the transport system enhances freedom of movement and meets the environmental, social, cultural and economic needs of the people it serves.*

### 6.2. Overarching Objectives

The overarching objectives and sub-objectives of this plan are as follows:

- To Provide a Significantly Enhanced City Centre Environment
  - Transition to a low traffic City Centre;
  - Remove unnecessary through private car traffic from the City Centre;
  - Improve Air Quality;
  - Reduce transport and traffic noise;
- To Facilitate the Delivery of a Net-Zero City Centre Transport System
  - Enhance the visual environment;
  - Improve the public realm;
  - Increase biodiversity; and
  - Protect and enhance the experience of the city's natural and architectural heritage.
- To Improve the City Centre's Economy and Liveability
  - Transition to Zero Emissions transport;
  - Reduce access for carbon emitting vehicles;
  - Accommodate high-capacity low-emission public transport;
  - Prioritise walking and cycling; and
  - Provide the transport interventions that support compact and consolidated development.
- To Increase the City Centre's Resilience and Sustainability
  - Increase the opportunities for people to travel to, from, within and through Dublin City Centre efficiently, effectively and sustainably;
  - Increase the capacity of the transport system;
  - Prioritise sustainable transport capacity;
  - Prepare for the introduction of the major public transport projects and take advantage of the opportunities they will create.
  - Support access for deliveries, disabled people, emergency services and other essential vehicles;
  - Allow limited vehicular access to the City Centre;

- Meet the Dublin City Development Plan mode share targets;
- Support the night-time economy and cultural sectors; and
- Ensure that the City Centre is accessible for all.

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## 7. Developing the Plan

This plan has been developed using an iterative process whereby each mode of transport has been considered in combination with every other mode, and with a view to the wider socio-economic and cultural objectives for the City Centre. The two key constraints in this regard are the limited amount of roadspace available, and the scale of the ambition of the Development Plan's vision for the City.

### 7.1. Introduction

In recent decades Dublin's Inner Core has been defined by transport policies which emerged in the 1990's in publications such as the Dublin Transportation Initiative (DTI) which stated that Dublin would no longer build road capacity for the car in the core area as a means of reducing congestion. Instead the focus was shifted to developing public transport and encouraging walking and cycling. These policies have been reflected in City Development Plans and various successors to the DTI, including the Transport Strategy.

The experience of the Covid-19 Pandemic and the rapid changes that can be made in locations when car traffic falls, such as Nassau Street, Capel Street North and South Quays, shows that when traffic volumes are reduced, numerous possibilities for alternative use of road space can emerge.

### 7.2. Establishing the Transport Context for the Study

Across the world, there has been significant change in the way 'success' has been measured in terms of city planning, and traffic management.

Notably, there is an understanding that road space is a finite commodity, and that there is a critical need to understand the use of space for all user groups. The move towards sustainability as a key driver for change in transport emerged late in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and has gathered momentum with the introduction of new international and national policies and guidance.

This has provided a platform for the reconsideration of the City's streets as spaces for people; for activities; for public transport and active travel, rather than the private vehicle. This platform will facilitate more attractive, sustainable and efficient cities.

### 7.3. Reconsidering the City Centre Streets

Based on international best practice, this plan reconsiders the function and use of the City Centre streets. The City's streets have been reviewed in terms of their use, or potential use, as spaces for shared and collective actions – both for meeting and for movement.

The plan endeavours to make best use of the historic and attractive setting of the City Centre to rebalance transport, and to bring Dublin into line with the quality of life achieved in the best cities in the world in terms of liveability, equality, and economic and environmental sustainability.

This will be achieved by moving towards a low traffic City Centre where the reduction in through traffic and private car traffic facilitates effective public transport; attractive, safe and accessible cycling and walking, and efficient deliveries. The plan also facilitates future public realm improvements to the spaces between buildings, subject to detailed design. These changes

will be made in order to achieve and reflect the vision for the City as set out by the elected members in the Development Plan.

#### **7.4. Defining the Requirements for Each Mode**

In planning for each mode, it is important to ensure that certain types of travel, particularly public transport or cycling, are not compromised in a manner contrary to the objectives of the plan. As such, the iteration between the various networks for each mode, to find the appropriate balance, was a key part of the plan's development.

In line with this, the plan established guiding principles for each mode, and highlighted key objectives to facilitate the delivery of each network. An outline of these considerations is set out below:

- Walking and Wheeling – Routes which cater for the most people travelling on foot or by wheelchair or with buggies, travelling to retail, major employment areas, public transport facilities and tourist attractions will be considered a priority for the provision a high quality pedestrian environment;
- Cycling – Similar to Walking and Wheeling, routes that will attract the most cycle trips will be considered a priority for investment in cycle facilities;
- Trams and Buses – The on-street public transport network comprises the fixed tram lines and assumed, as a starting point, the BusConnects Service Network and current and proposed bus lanes. Bus Stopping locations, and as required set down locations for coaches are an important consideration, and require area specific solutions;

- Taxis - Taxis will continue to be an integral element of the public transport system. Accessibility within and through the City Centre will continue to be an important consideration, and may require area specific solutions. The use and availability of appropriate rank space within the City Centre, and the use of technology to utilise this mode efficiently needs to be taken into account;
- Deliveries and Servicing – Access for deliveries to businesses is critical for the city centre, and accessibility for goods/deliveries needs to be maintained, however this may need to be balanced against the objectives related to sustainable modes and urban design to find the appropriate solution. A key element of this will be the ability for goods and service vehicles to access into areas at certain times where general traffic is not permitted;
- Motorcyclists – Motorcyclists will continue to be regarded as motorised vehicles, but with advantages to their use, relative to the private car, in terms of road space and parking spaces; and
- Private cars and shared cars – A managed arrangement for access by private cars within the City Centre will be maintained. Through traffic will be restricted and reduced, with non-city centre orientated traffic directed towards other established routes outside the Inner Core.

#### **7.5. Planned Networks**

The plan is based on the requirement to consider the provision of all modes collectively, and the process has involved an iterative approach to the consideration of the use of roadspace, however it is important to try and maintain the integrity of recently completed work.

The BusConnects Redesign project went through an extensive design process, included the most comprehensive public consultation ever carried out in Ireland. The routes are currently being implemented on a phased basis, and to protect this process, it was considered that for this plan, the BusConnects Network did not need to be, and should not be, fundamentally altered.

Equally the GDA Cycle Network was recently published as part of the GDA Transport Strategy, having been subject to a statutory public consultation process as well as a full environmental assessment. Again it was considered that for this plan the GDA Cycle Network would not be fundamentally altered.

It is noted however, that both the BusConnects Network and the GDA Cycle Network were designed within the constraints of the existing traffic management arrangements. If the traffic management arrangements within the city centre are agreed and implemented, it will present an opportunity to reconsider these networks within the city centre, to refine and improve as appropriate.

Figure 7.1 2022 Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan For Dublin City Centre

Map showing the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network: Primary Radial, Primary Orbital and Secondary Routes, and Greenway and Feeder Routes

## 7.6. Traffic Management

Although all modes have been considered in the plan, a central consideration of the development of the proposals is to understand the

travel requirements into the city centre, notably in terms of vehicular access for goods movement, servicing and private vehicles.

In this regard, as part of the definition of the transport networks and opportunities, careful consideration was given to potential alternative arrangements for traffic movement, which would retain vehicular access to all areas while managing unnecessary through movements. To assist in this task, the plan examined a new potential traffic management structure by applying the concept known as the “Accessible Urban Zone” (AUZ).

This concept is not new and has been evolving over many years in Dublin City under different guises. For example, a similar type of approach can be seen on the ground in local areas such as Portobello where through movement by private car has been managed in order to protect residential amenity. Similarly, the measures applied to minimise traffic travelling through College Green and on O’Connell Street may be viewed in the same manner.

Figure 7.2 Conceptual Representation of Potential Alternative Traffic Management

Conceptual Representation of Accessible Urban Zones.

The city is divided into a few zones.

Pedestrians, cyclists and buses can travel throughout the city.

Cars can enter and leave any given zone but not travel from one to another by crossing the inner city.

The principles for traffic management in the Inner Core are as follows:

- Most areas of the City Centre will be accessible by private car;
  - To maintain access to car parks for workplaces and residences and multi-storey car parks where it does not interfere with the overall aim of the plan.
  - To allow servicing and deliveries at the appropriate times; and
  - To maintain access for emergency vehicles.
- North-South/ South - North private car movements across the Liffey will take place outside the Inner Core.
  - To reduce through traffic by private vehicles in the core city centre.
- East-West / West - East private car movements will take place outside the Inner Core
  - To reduce through traffic by private vehicles in the core city centre.
- Private car movements within the city centre will be managed.
  - To reduce traffic volumes which will reduce noise and air pollution;
  - To enable the creation of public spaces; and
  - To make the city more liveable for residents and businesses and more welcoming for visitors.

## 8. City Centre Traffic Management Proposals

### 8.1. Introduction

Evolving from the objectives and vision set out in this plan and the other supporting strategies it is clear that in order to bring about the reduction in car traffic in the Inner Core and so allow the Development Plan vision to be achieved, it is necessary to commence a series of traffic management changes across the City Centre.

The aim of these interventions is to remove as much through traffic from the city core as possible while still balancing the necessary access for deliveries etc. that the city requires.

Once the traffic volumes have been reduced, it will open up the possibilities to deliver the public realm improvements and transport priorities outlined in the later chapters of this plan.

It should be noted that these interventions are focused on the management of traffic movement, in the shorter term.

It is the intention of Dublin City Council in conjunction with the NTA to implement these interventions in a phased manner within the lifetime of the current Development Plan, to ensure that the objectives of this plan can be delivered.

The Strategic Environment Assessment has identified the potential for minor negative environmental impacts to emerge due to the displacement

of traffic arising out of the proposals below. These effects relate primarily to Air Quality and Noise. DCC and the NTA will monitor these effects on a regular basis in the context of the wider benefits which are forecast to accrue from this plan, and mitigate any negative impacts that may emerge, as appropriate.

To initiate change, Dublin City Council in conjunction with the NTA will seek to implement the following priority elements of the City Centre Plan:

### 8.2. Bachelors Walk and Aston Quay

Private vehicle traffic along the North and South Quays will be removed at these locations leaving the space for buses, taxis, cyclists and pedestrians only. Arrangements for deliveries and local access will be developed. The rationale for these measures is as follows:

- The BusConnects network redesign means that the Liffey Quays will be of increased importance as a corridor for public transport with the need to reduce bus congestion and allow greater pedestrian space for bus passengers waiting and alighting;
- An ambition of the plan is to facilitate the delivery of the Liffey Cycle Route, and the removal of through traffic will free space for this scheme and facilitate both the interim and permanent schemes;
- The removal of through traffic will also allow for a more efficient management of the O'Connell Bridge junction, which, following further analysis could allow for additional signal time for pedestrians moving between Westmoreland Street and O'Connell Street, the busiest pedestrian thoroughfare in the city; and

- This measure would also allow for the extension of the wide footpaths on O’Connell Street through to O’Connell Bridge.

### 8.3. Westland Row and Pearse Street

To facilitate priority for public transport, walking and cycling in the south east quadrant of the City Centre, a major traffic change will be made at the junction of Westland Row and Pearse Street. Only public transport and cyclists will be allowed to turn left from Westland Row onto Pearse Street. A new right turn for general traffic will be introduced at this Junction and the section of Pearse Street from Westland Row to Sandwith Street will be made two-way.

Westland Row becomes an even more important bus link under the BusConnects project and priority for this corridor is needed. There is a requirement, however, for access to be maintained to Westland Row for traffic due to the height of other railway bridges in the area. This will allow the use of Westland Row by high sided vehicles while ensuring that public transport will be prioritised. Westland Row will no longer be a through route to Pearse Street but will allow access towards the Samuel Beckett Bridge instead.

The reduction in general traffic resulting from this measure along Pearse Street from Westland Row and onto Tara Street will allow for these streets to be reimagined with better walking and cycling facilities alongside the high priority afforded to public transport. Both of these streets will have the number of lanes reduced with a range of associated measures including additional greening. This change will also facilitate the pedestrian movements in the area especially at Pearse and Tara Street stations and will allow for increase in use of these stations as a result of DART+ and

prepare for the construction and operation of MetroLink in the medium term.

Subject to detailed design, this change could also facilitate an enhanced public realm at Lincoln Place or Merrion Street Lower.

### 8.4. Beresford Place and Gardiner Street

Implementation of the changes proposed at Westland Row in combination with the removal of through traffic from the South Quays at Aston Quay will result in the Pearse Street-Tara Street route no longer comprising a major traffic artery.

This allows us to consider the implications for the north side of the river from these changes and two significant opportunities present themselves, as follows:

- i. Beresford Place
  - The reconfiguring of the Beresford place one way traffic gyratory to two way movement and the reduction in traffic lanes on Gardiner Street from four lanes to two lanes allowing for safer pedestrian and cycling use of this area;
  - An opportunity for a public space extending from Liberty Hall to the Customs House by the opening of the road space at this location to walking cycling greening and seating through the removal of through traffic; and



- General traffic from the South side would be diverted along Custom House Quay to a two way link at Memorial Bridge allowing connection to Gardiner Street and Amiens Street.

ii. Custom House Quay

The second opportunity is to close the quay at the Custom House and to route all traffic around the back of the Customs House.

- Creates an opportunity for a public space outside the Custom House;
- Reduction in lanes from Liberty Hall to Custom House;
- Opportunities for dedicated cycling facilities and increased pedestrian space; and
- Rerouting traffic means that the Beresford Place one-way gyratory stays in place for general traffic but with a contra-flow bus and cycle facility.

The proposed improvements on Gardiner Street could still be taken forward under either proposal.

These two options will form part of the consultation on this plan to determine which should be brought forward for more detailed consideration.

## 8.5. College Green and Dame Street

In line with the ambitions set out in the Development Plan, in the initial stages of this plan, traffic will be removed from College Green and Dame Street from the junction with George's Street eastwards. Deliveries and

limited access will be facilitated. This specific measure will be phased in conjunction with the implementation of the BusConnects service changes to ensure that bus services are facilitated until the new routes operating away from College Green and Dame Street are introduced.

The full public realm scheme for the area can then be developed subject to detailed design. Furthermore, the reconfiguration of the bus network allows for opportunities along the rest of Dame Street to Christchurch for wider footpaths and improved cycling facilities.

## 8.6. Parliament Street

Following the successful transformation of Capel Street into a traffic free environment, it is the intention to replicate this scheme on Parliament Street, introducing a car free corridor for pedestrian and cyclists on the western edge of city centre retail core. This will be undertaken in tandem with the BusConnects network redesign changes which will remove public transport from this street. Deliveries and access will be facilitated in a similar manner to Capel Street, and a two way cycle link across Grattan Bridge could be implemented.

## 9. Public Realm Opportunities

The traffic management changes set out in Chapter 8 will open up significant opportunities for an enhanced public realm in Dublin City Centre. This chapter sets these out in brief detail as a set of concept sketches and photomontages. All of these concepts would require comprehensive planning and design work and will be subject to the appropriate assessment and planning consent procedures prior to delivery.

At many of these locations, once traffic changes have been implemented, and in advance of the delivery of permanent projects, appropriate interim improvements will be put in place.

The primary potential opportunities set out in this chapter relate to the following locations:

1. College Green and Dame Street ;
2. Parliament Street;
3. Bachelor's Walk;
4. South Quays;
5. Liberty Place;
6. Custom House Quay;
7. Gardiner Street;
8. Pearse Street and Tara Street;
9. Lincoln Place; and
10. Christchurch Place

A map showing the location of primary potential opportunities for traffic management changes.

### 9.1. College Green and Dame Street

The College Green Dame Street Project is the revised and expanded proposal to reinvent the historic College Green and Dame Street East area as a landmark public space at the heart of Dublin City.

The historic city core will be transformed; becoming an attractive pedestrian-friendly space that prioritises universal accessibility, social inclusion, sustainability, biodiversity and greening, while upholding and enhancing the history and heritage of this unique location.

Under these proposals, the area from College Green to the junction with South Great George's Street will become traffic-free, apart from timed deliveries and limited local access. The project will provide a world-class, multi-functional space, which complements some of Dublin's most illustrious historical buildings, notably Trinity College and the Bank of Ireland, allowing more space for people to enjoy cultural and recreational events, celebrations and social activities.

The College Green Dame Street Project objectives are:

- To provide a world-class, multi-functional public space, which complements the adjacent historical buildings;
- To remove all through vehicular traffic while facilitating deliveries and emergency vehicles;
- To create a high-quality, pedestrian-priority space;
- To support the City's Climate Action Plan by prioritising sustainability and greening in the development of the design;
- To provide a safe cycle route;
- To support the local economy by enhancing footfall; and

- To use the principles of universal design to provide an accessible space for all to enjoy

Figure 9.1.1 Perspective College Green Proposed

A picture of a tree-lined pedestrianised area

## 9.2. Parliament Street

The existing traffic lanes on Parliament Street would be reallocated to cycling with increased pavement width on both sides, facilitating pedestrian movement, enabling on-street activities, and improving the vitality of the area. The two-way cycling link would connect Dame Street to Capel Street, from City Hall and over Grattan Bridge. The interventions prioritise active travel, fostering healthy placemaking through additional green infrastructure and provision of spaces for a diverse mix of activities.

Figure 9.2.1 Section Parliament St Proposed

A cut-away section of the road showing that there will be:

- 3 metres width of pavement
- 2.5 metres width of seating area for park benches
- 4 metres width of bicycle route running down the centre
- 2.5 metres width of seating area for park benches
- 3 metres width of pavement

Figure 9.2.2 Plan Parliament St Proposed

A map showing Parliament Street from above, also showing the pavement, seating area and central cycle path

Figure 9.2.3 Perspective Location

A photograph showing Parliament Street from above

Figure 9.2.4 Existing situation

Photograph of the existing road

Figure 9.2.5 Parliament Street Perspective

A picture showing a pedestrian's view along the road after the transformation: cyclists, pedestrians, and people making use of the seating

### Key public realm interventions:

- Widening of existing footpaths
- Introduction of flexible zones to accommodate a variety of street furniture and zones of seating outside units.
- Provision of green infrastructure.
- Raised table crossing to create a more pedestrian-friendly environment

## 9.3. Bachelor's Walk

A section of Bachelor's Walk will be reserved for public transport, walking and cycling only. The North Quays would therefore benefit from a significant release of open space for cycling, walking and spending time. The location shown here, Bachelors Walk, is a wider section, opening up to

O’Connell Street and Bridge, which provides significant public transport connectivity through Luas and Bus. As the North Quays is the “sunny side” of the river, it creates an attractive place to rest, interact and play. Additionally, the proposals for the area help to deliver on the aspirations of the Lingering Strategy presented in The Heart of Dublin City Centre Public Realm Masterplan (DCC), as well as the Dublin City Development plan, by promoting the development of high quality streets and public spaces that are safe, accessible and inclusive. Eventually, public transport could be concentrated altogether on the South Quays, releasing additional space for public realm in the north.

Figure 9.3.1 Section North Quays Proposed

A cut-away section of the North Quays showing that there will be:

- 4 metres width of pavement for outdoor seating
- 7.9 metres width of pedestrian area with park benches
- 4 metres width of bus route running down the centre
- 4 metres width of cycle route running down the centre
- 2.5 metres width of pedestrian area next to the river
- 4.4 metres width of pedestrian area extending over the water

Figure 9.3.2 Plan North Quays Proposed

A view of the North Quays from above, showing the proposed usage as in Fig. 9.3.1

- Through-traffic is discouraged, and vehicles are only permitted on certain sections of the quays to facilitate access. Only public transport is allowed through Bachelor’s Walk.

- Widening of existing footpaths and the development of a two-way cycling lane along the Quays to support a modal shift and to provide a direct, safe and attractive east-west link.
- A wide raised table crossing allows a large flow of pedestrian movement across the quays.
- Flexible zones along the active frontage of the buildings are introduced to accommodate a variety of urban furniture such as outdoor café terraces, seating and planters

Figure 9.3.3 Perspective Location

A photograph showing North Quays from above

Figure 9.3.4 Existing situation

A photograph showing North Quays, taken from O’Connell Street Lower, looking west

Figure 9.3.5 North Quays Perspective

An artist’s impression of North Quays after its transformation, viewed from O’Connell Street Lower, looking west

## 9.4. South Quays

To facilitate greater numbers of people travelling by bus, sections of the South Quays will be reserved for public transport, walking and cycling. This will facilitate improvements to the pedestrian and cycling environment.

Although the section of the South Quays where the Ha'penny Bridge lands is narrow, it has a pivotal role in the improvement of pedestrian links across the river and can sustain a high-quality public realm for pedestrians.

- Raised table crossing promoting safe and legible pedestrian movements between Temple Bar, the South Quays, Ha'penny Bridge and the North Quays.
- Potential for boardwalk to support pedestrian movement along the South Quays. A lighting and arts strategy to create an attractive wayfinding system, encouraging night-time activation and enhancing the perception of safety.
- Planters in appropriate locations to create a more attractive place.

Figure 9.4.1 Section South Quays Proposed

A cut-away section of the South Quays showing that there will be:

- 4.2 metres width of pavement
- 6.5 metres width of bus route running down the centre
- 1.7 metres width of pedestrian area next to the river
- 4 metres width of pedestrian area extending over the water

Figure 9.4.2 Plan South Quays Proposed

A view of the South Quays from above, showing the proposed usage as in Fig. 9.4.1

Figure 9.4.3 Perspective Location

A photograph showing South Quays from above

Figure 9.4.4 Existing situation

A photograph showing South Quays. Wellington Quay is visible, as is Ha'penny Bridge

Figure 9.4.5 South Quays Perspective

An artist's impression of South Quays after the transformation

## 9.5. Liberty Place

A new civic space could be provided as a result of the removal of traffic from a section of Beresford Place. This would comprise the western part, marked by the presence of the James Connolly Memorial, the elevated Loopline rail line and the nearby Liberty Hall theatre. To the north lies Irish Life Plaza.

### Key Opportunity: The LoopLine Light

The Light Line would be a celebration of the Loopline Bridge that spans across the Liffey in the form of an art installation to the south, north, and over the Liffey.

Tempe Light Rail Transit Bridge

A photograph of the Tempe Light Rail Transit Bridge

This would be the object of an international competition launched with the aim of creating a statement of global impact immediately identifiable with the Irish capital. A precedent for the initiative is the Tempe Light Rail

Transit Bridge in Arizona, a prominent railway bridge over Temple Town Lake, featuring interactive responses to passing trains, complementing environmental conditions and seasonal/social events. This idea would be subject to the agreement of Irish Rail and would require full heritage and conservation assessments.

Figure 9.5.1 Section Liberty Place Proposed

A cut-away section of Liberty Place showing that there will be:

- 8 metres width of pavement for outdoor seating
- 4 metres width of cycle route
- 6 metres width of pedestrian area
- 5 metres width reserved for a pedestrian mall esplanade: a covered area with food stalls etc
- 15 metres width for a pedestrian area with street furniture
- 6 metres width reserved for indoor commercial space

Figure 9.5.2 Plan Liberty Place Proposed

A view of Liberty Place from above, showing the proposed usage as in Fig. 9.5.1

Figure 9.5.3 Perspective Location

A photograph showing Liberty Place from above

Figure 9.5.4 Existing situation

A photograph showing Liberty Place

Figure 9.5.5 Liberty Place Perspective

An artist's impression of Liberty Place after the transformation

- James Connolly Memorial is provided with a suitable setting, commensurate with the importance of one of the leading figures of Irish independence.
- Public art installation on the LoopLine.
- Active uses such as cafés, restaurants and bookshops providing revenue opportunities and night-time activation throughout, including under the Loopline.
- A large plaza with landscaped areas, activating the interface of Liberty Hall and the Irish Life building.
- Improved pedestrian links to Irish Life Plaza to the north.
- Revenue opportunities for Dublin City Council from the rental of commercial premises.
- Extension of Custom House garden, subject to architectural heritage, planning and land ownership considerations

## 9.6. Custom House Quay

Custom House Quay could benefit from an enhanced public realm that would result from the removal of traffic between Eden Quay and Talbot Memorial Bridge. This is a privileged location dominated by the presence of the Custom House building and contained by the elevated Loopline rail line crossing the Liffey. Custom House hosts both the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and a visitor centre. It is surrounded by gardens on the west, north and east. During public holidays, the space in front of Custom House hosts fun fairs and festivals, demonstrating the opportunity (and demand) for large public events. It is

well lit at night and noted for impressive reflections into the Liffey, particularly visible from the South Quay. The Loopline Bridge offers an industrial counterpoint to the classical arrangement of Custom House.

Reductions in traffic volumes offer the opportunity to return this public space to communities permanently, providing play spaces for all ages, a public square and tourist facilities, and giving Custom House an appropriate setting to celebrate its historical value.

### **Key opportunity: Custom House Plaza**

Creating a grand parade and plaza for public life, celebrating the Custom House and creating a platform for uses that encourage play and attracts visitors to dwell. Largely free of street furniture, this space can host (pop-up) events during public holidays.

Exhibition Road, London

A photograph of Exhibition Road, London

A precedent for this initiative is Exhibition Road in London where a levelled pavement connects various museums and institutions through a high quality urban realm that encourages walking and cycling, thereby attracting visitors and the public.

Figure 9.6.1 Plan Custom House Quay Proposed

A view of Custom House Quay from above, showing the proposed usage Custom House Quay, George's Quay, the Loopline Bridge, the Talbot Memorial Bridge and the river are visible

Custom House Quay is marked as having patterned paving in the area directly in front of Custom House, the areas to the west and east stretching to the bridges are marked as a pedestrian improvement zone. A cycle route runs through the middle

George's Quay is also marked as having patterned paving, flanked with pedestrian improvement zones to the west and east where the Quay meets the two bridges

Figure 9.6.2 Section Custom House Quay Proposed

A cut-away section of Custom House Quay showing that there will be:

- 4 metres width of pedestrian area
- 4 metres width of cycle route
- 20 metres width of pedestrian area, next to the river

The image also shows the river and George's Quay, which is marked as having:

- 8 metres width of pedestrian area next to the river
- 23 metres width for wheeled traffic, including a cycle line and a bus lane
- 2 metres width of pavement

Figure 9.6.3 Perspective Location

A photograph showing Custom House Quay from above

Figure 9.6.4 Existing situation

A photograph showing Custom House Quay

Figure 9.6.5 Custom House Quay Perspective

An artist's impression of Custom House Quay after the transformation

- A grand parade and plaza for public life, celebrating Custom House and facilitating uses that encourage play and attract visitors to dwell. Largely free of street furniture, this space can host events.
- Complementing the semi-circular gardens surrounding Custom House, landscape features would frame the view of Custom House. This will provide shaded spaces and create opportunities for incidental play.
- A light installation at the Loopline bridge potential light installation at Loopline bridge similar to Samuel Beckett Bridge.

## 9.7. Gardiner Street

As a 1.2km-long corridor, Gardiner Street is a primary north-south link for North Dublin with high flows of traffic. As traffic interventions take effect, the street can be reconfigured to better facilitate public transport, pedestrian and cycle movements, while providing much-improved public realm. Safeguarded by a verge lined with trees, a 2-way cycle lane across the whole length of the corridor can afford fast cycling journeys. Additionally, a dedicated bus lane can be created for the southern half of the scheme, between Beresford Place and Parnell Street/Summerhill. The intersection between Beresford Pl and Gardiner St could become an attractive Gateway into the area through the use of signage, colour and lighting along the Loopline bridge and its arches.

The interface of the street with Diamond Park can be developed as a landscape buffer to protect the space and the playground from vehicles and noise. This also affords the opportunity to create a landmark mid-street, with a light sign that announces Diamond Park. Lighting along the entire corridor can be used to reinforce the proposed intervention. Using the green verge as a the key unifying feature of the proposal, lighting will be provided at two levels, both shedding a light across the street at higher level and over the near-side pedestrian and cycling below canopy level.

Figure 9.7.1 Section Gardiner Street Proposed

A cut-away section of Gardiner Street showing that from west to east there will be:

- 2.4 metres width of pavement
- 9.8 metres width of road for wheeled traffic
- 1.8 metres width of green space
- 3 metres width for cycle lanes
- 2.1 metres width of pavement

Figure 9.7.2 Section Plan Gardiner Street Proposed

A view of Gardiner Street from above, showing the proposed usage as in Fig. 9.7.1

Figure 9.7.3 Plan Gardiner Street Proposed

A view of Gardiner Street from above, showing the wider environment, including Mount Joy Square Park and Custom House

Figure 9.7.4 Perspective Location



A photograph showing Gardiner Street from above

Figure 9.7.5 Existing situation

A photograph showing Gardiner Street

Figure 9.7.6 Gardiner Street Perspective

An artist's impression of Gardiner Street after the transformation

### **Key public realm interventions:**

- A wide pavement with enhanced landscaping will complement the edge of Diamond Park and improve the pedestrian experience along the entirety of Gardiner Street
- A lighting strategy along the verge will light the environment at night, creating a more legible space and increasing the sense of safety.
- Segregated cycle lanes shaded by trees will further improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians
- A light intervention will re-define Diamond Park as a mid-route landmark.

## **9.8. Tara Street and Pearse Street**

A coordinated reconfiguration of Pearse Street and Tara Street as key movement corridors provides a wide range of opportunities for creating quality walking and cycling environments and fast public transport connectivity, whilst retaining local vehicular access. The environment along Tara Street will be significantly transformed with two high profile

redevelopment projects currently under construction. These two projects, College Square and Aqua Vetro, will increase footfall locally and increase pressure on public realm and public transport.

A new street layout for the corridor with wider pedestrian pavements, dedicated cycle lanes and improved public transport will reshape the perception of the area. Reconfigured as an Urban Boulevard, Pearse Street can incorporate additional urban greening, with tree planting and a verge along its entire length, providing shading and a green buffer for pedestrians and surrounding properties. Additionally, the consideration of a wider scheme, in this document branded as the Tara Triangle, provides additional opportunities for placemaking by creating an alternative pedestrian route along the railway arches, from Pearse Street to Tara Train Station and the future Metro Stop. Activating the underused arches with cafés, breweries, restaurants, creative workshops and flexible workspaces will stimulate walking journeys through the quarter and could encourage the manifestation of a new destination for Dublin, which celebrates the infrastructural heritage of the city, whilst providing additional commercial activity.

The combination of these three initiatives, along with the new developments, has the potential to create an entirely new micro-centre for the capital.

### **9.8.1 Section Tara Street Proposed**

A cut-away section of Tara Street showing that there will be:

- 5.1 metres width of pavement
- 2 metres width for a cycle lane
- 6 metres width of road for wheeled traffic

2 metres width for a cycle lane  
4 metres width of pavement

Figure 9.8.2 Section Pearse Street Proposed

A cut-away section of Pearse Street showing that there will be:

Pavement  
A cycle lane  
A strip of green space for trees  
Road for wheeled traffic  
A cycle lane  
Pavement

Widths are not marked in metres

Figure 9.8.3 Plan: Pearse Street and Tara Street Proposed

View of Pearse Street and Tara Street from above, showing the location of the future Tara Street Metrolink Station

Figure 9.8.4 Perspective Location

A photograph showing Pearse Street from above

Figure 9.8.5 Existing situation

A photograph of Pearse Street

Figure 9.10.6 Pearse Street perspective

An artist's impression of Pearse Street after the transformation

Figure 9.8.7 Perspective Location

A photograph showing Pearse Street and Tara Street from above

Figure 9.8.8 Existing situation

A photograph of Tara Street

Figure 9.8.9 Tara Street Perspective

An artist's impression of Tara Street after the transformation

### **Key opportunity: Urban Boulevard**

The urban boulevard is a street lined with trees and a verge, supporting segregated cycle lanes. This approach enhances the tree cover along Pearse and Tara Street, providing shade for pedestrians and cyclists, and encouraging safe active travel journeys. A precedent for this intervention is the Avenida Diagonal where an overcrowded road was reformed by creating a central reservation with trees and, in each direction a lane for vehicular traffic, bus, service and bikes, along with a 7m wide pavement for pedestrians.

Avenida Diagonal, Barcelona

A photograph of the Avenida Diagonal

### **Key opportunity: The Arches**

Transforming the railway arches can create opportunities for activation of the area with restaurants, cafes, and creative workshops, alongside outdoor landscape features and terraces. A precedent that adopted a similar approach is Arcos del Rosedal. The 20 arches of San Martín Railway were transformed into a major gastronomic hub, housing restaurants, bars, gyms, and shops. The open space adjoining the archways incorporates landscape features including pergolas covered with plants, creating shaded areas for outdoor seating. The public realm is lined with trees and high quality paving, incorporating a generous walkway and space for pop-up stalls.

Arcos del Rosedal, Buenos Aires

A photograph of the Arcos del Rosedal

#### **Key public realm interventions to Pearse Street:**

- Improved public transport accessibility along the street, while retaining access for private vehicles to properties and commercial spaces.
- Extended pedestrian pavements to provide space for comfortable walking journeys
- Segregated cycle lanes on each side of the street through a raised verge and kerb connecting to Tara Street
- Pearse Street could become a tree lined boulevard, providing shade and increased tree canopy cover.

#### **Key public realm interventions to Tara Street:**

- Improved bus connectivity

- Wider pedestrian pavements to provide space for comfortable walking journeys, considering additional footfall from upcoming new developments Aqua Vetro and College Square
- Raised cycle lanes with a kerb facilitating fast and safe cycle journeys, linking Tara Street to the improved cycle network along Pearse Street and the rest of the city
- Trees planted at sections of Tara Street where pavement width allows to improve the green infrastructure network

### **9.9. Lincoln Place**

Lincoln Place is a link between Trinity College, the Instituto Cervantes and the National Gallery of Ireland. Subject to the feasibility of rerouting public transport, reconfiguring the current gyratory will simplify local traffic movement and create opportunities for new public realm. By pedestrianising Lincoln Place it can become a space for resting and recreation, providing seating and terraces for spillover activity from surrounding commercial premises. In the event that rerouting public transport is found not to be feasible, the potential for a new public realm on Merrion Street Lower will be investigated.

#### **Key opportunity: Landscape feature**

Central to the space at the intersection of Lincoln Place and Clare St is a green feature with seating around its edges. A large tree will provide shading during the day and illuminate the area at night, creating a more legible and safe space, while reinforcing the presence of the gallery along Clare Street. A precedent for this intervention is Carlos Place in London, where the public realm was enhanced by the addition of a water/lighting feature – ‘Silence’ by Tadao Ando – and incorporating urban greening. The

pedestrian realm was separated from vehicular space through the use of different materials, removing the need for curbs, providing traffic calming measures and improving accessibility.

Carlos Place, London

A photograph of Carlos Place, London

Figure 9.9.1 Plan Lincoln Place Proposed

View of Lincoln Place from above

Figure 9.9.2 Section Lincoln Place Proposed

A cut-away section of Lincoln Place showing that along Clare Street there will be:

3.5 metres width of pavement

3 metres width for cycle lanes

6 metres width of road for wheeled traffic

1.5 metres width for cycle lanes

3 metres width for cycle lanes

4 metres width of pavement and street furniture

### **Key public realm interventions:**

- Activate the ground floor spaces along Lincoln Place and provide spillover space for commercial activities to take place, such as terraces and vendor stalls.

- Introduce a raised-table crossing between the National Gallery and Lincoln Place to improve access to the gallery and reframe the approach from the north

- Central to the space at the intersection of Lincoln Place and Clare St is a green feature with seating around its edges. A large tree will provide shading and illuminate the environment at dusk, creating a more legible and safe space, while offering a counterpoint to the gallery façade across the street.

- A high quality, levelled public realm will provide vehicular access to Trinity College, while prioritising safe pedestrian movements. Additional cycle parking can be placed in strategic locations to provide access to the key destinations in the area.

- A wider pedestrian pavement will be provided along Merrion St, The Mont Hotel and Berlitz school to improve the pedestrian and arrival experience and recharacterise the northern end of Merrion St

Figure 9.9.3 Perspective Location

A photograph of Lincoln Place from above

Figure 9.9.4 Existing situation

A photograph of Lincoln Place

Figure 9.9.5 Lincoln Place Perspective

An artist's impression of Lincoln Place after the transformation

## **9.10. Christchurch Junction**

The Christchurch Junction is a key node in the Dublin tourism trail from the city centre to Guinness Storehouse, with key landmarks such as Christchurch Cathedral and Dublinia, as well as the Peace Park, at the corners of a vehicle dominated junction.

The key design objectives are to reclaim road space to create a more pedestrian and cycle friendly setting at the interface with the landmarks, while providing generous pedestrian crossings to enhance key desire lines. The proposed BusConnects design along the Nicholas and High Streets part of the junction has been retained to enhance bus movements.

Figure 9.10.1 Section Christchurch Junction

A cut-away section of Christchurch Junction showing that from the Peace Park to Christchurch Cathedral there will be:

- 10 metres width of pedestrian space
- 2 metres width for cycle lanes
- 10.7 metres width of road for wheeled traffic
- 2.3 metres width for cycle lanes
- 10 metres width of pedestrian space

Figure 9.10.2 Plan Christchurch Junction Proposed

View of Christchurch Junction from above

Figure 9.10.3 Perspective Location

A photograph of Christchurch Junction from above

Figure 9.10.4 Existing situation

A photograph of Christchurch Junction

Figure 9.10.5 Christchurch Junction Perspective

An artist's impression of Christchurch Junction after the transformation

- Widening of existing footpaths at the interface of the key landmarks
- Christchurch Place narrowed to three vehicular lanes with cycle lanes and presented as a 'softer street' to create a better setting for Christchurch Cathedral
- Wider, raised and more direct crossings across Christchurch Place and Winetavern Street, with an improved staggered crossing across High Street
- The northern interface of Peace Park opened up to engage with an improved Christchurch Place
- Tighter junction geometry with softer road surfacing to calm traffic and create a visually enhanced junction along this key tourist corridor.

## 10. The City and Traffic

In addition to the detailed proposals in Chapter 8, this plan will require complementary associated objectives for the management of private car traffic in the plan area as a whole. There is limited road space in Dublin City Centre and, in order to serve the level of activity forecast, it is essential that the most efficient and most environmentally sustainable modes are given priority.

Taking into account the objectives from Chapter 6 as well as ambitions of the Development Plan, this plan will encourage the development of all of Dublin City Centre in a manner which manages the use of the private car, notably by considering revised traffic movement arrangements which will facilitate reduced access by car to the City Centre.

### 10.1. Priorities for the City Centre Traffic Network

- Access into the Inner Core will be maintained for necessary trips;
- Car traffic without a destination in the Inner Core will be redirected as far as possible via alternative existing routes;
- On selected streets, general car traffic will be removed;
- A 30kph speed limit will be introduced on all roads in the City Centre;
- The movement of car traffic will be considered alongside the requirements for movement by sustainable modes and will no longer be assumed to get priority at junctions;
- On-street parking will be reduced to cater for sustainable modes;
- On street car parking will move to an emission based fee structure;

- Access to City Centre Car Parks will be maintained, as required, and will be managed to ensure that sustainable transport and public realm objectives can be realised; and
- The redevelopment or repurposing of the most centrally located multi-storey car parks will be pursued

## 11. The City of Public Transport

Dublin City Centre is reliant on public transport for its economic welfare and for fostering its role as a cultural and entertainment core. It is also a critical element of the liveability of the City Centre by providing accessibility to a range of services and attractions to a large population.

One of the most important considerations for this plan in this regard is to ensure that the public transport network can grow and develop in line with the growth in population, employment and other attractions that will occur over the coming years in the City Centre. This relates not only to the introduction of MetroLink and DART+ but also the on-going investment under the BusConnects service network implementation.

Taking into account the objectives from Chapter 6 as well as ambitions of the Development Plan, this plan will encourage the development of Dublin City Centre in a manner which prioritises public transport movement over general traffic movements in terms of roadspace allocation and junction configurations.

### 11.1. Priorities for the City Centre Public Transport Network

- Luas and Bus Spines will be given maximum levels of priority on streets and through junctions in terms of roadspace allocation, and junction and signal configurations, balanced with the needs of cyclists and pedestrians;
- The streets of the City Centre will be planned and designed with a view to accommodating the physical requirements of new patterns

of increased pedestrian activity arising out of BusConnects, DART+, MetroLink and future Luas development;

- Bus stopping patterns, including tourist buses and coaches, will be rationalised in order to minimise impact on service efficiency and on the public realm;
- Bus shelters will be provided where required and where space permits; where shelters cannot be provided seating at bus stops will be considered where possible.
- City Centre layover for bus services will continue to be managed, and will be reduced. This will include consideration of driver welfare requirements;
- The stopping requirements of tourist and commuter coaches will be coordinated, to ensure that kerbside space within the City Centre is appropriately used. This will ensure that while access is maintained, there is an efficient approach to set down and pick up arrangements;
- The layover of tourist and commuter coaches will be managed, and the utilisation of the NTA Coach Parking facility in the Docklands will be encouraged. Overnight layover and weekend use of this facility will be considered, subject to planning permissions;
- The development of other coach stopping facilities, including terminus, interchange and layover facilities within and outside the City to facilitate the better management of commuter and tourist coaches within Dublin City Centre will be considered;
- All public transport services should be simple to navigate and legible;
- The integration of public transport services, including easy interchange between services at key nodes, will be a consideration in the design and planning of the public realm;

- On-street public transport information will be provided in accordance with the programmes and projects of the NTA; and
- The integration between the Bus Automatic Vehicle Location system and the City Council’s Intelligent Transportation System for bus priority will continue to be given a high priority in terms of funding and resourcing.

## 11.2. Specific Public Transport Project – City Centre Bus Priority

The BusConnects Programme includes 12 radial Core Bus Corridor (CBC) schemes – roads with bus priority so that buses can operate efficiently, reliably and punctually along each route.

All of the CBCs run into the City Centre and, as set out in Chapter 5, a critical element of this plan is to ensure that BusConnects can operate an efficient,

reliable and punctual service within the City Centre. This plan will ensure that when the new BusConnects CBCs are in place, bus priority will continue across the city through the reallocation of road space from general traffic, to ensure the bus network operates unimpeded.

Figure 11.1 Bachelor’s Walk Bus Priority

A view from above showing the proposed changes to Bachelor’s Walk

Figure 11.2 The Primary Public Transport Network

A map showing the public transport network for central Dublin.

The area covered is seven kilometres from west to east.

The map shows the bus network, the Luas tram system and the rail line.



## 12. The City and Taxis

Taxis provide an important transport service offering door-to-door trips and form a key component of the overall transport system in Dublin City Centre. They can be of particular importance for disabled and elderly people who may not be in a position to drive or readily use public transport, and are critical in meeting late-night travel demand.

Taking into account the objectives from Chapter 6 as well as ambitions of the Development Plan, this plan will encourage the development of Dublin City Centre in a manner which acknowledges the complementary and essential role of taxis in meeting demand for travel, and will endeavour to protect and maintain their role in the City Centre.

### 12.1. Priorities for the City Centre Taxi System

- Appropriate rank space will be provided, taking into account the requirements of cycling, deliveries and servicing, general traffic, and the use of technology;
- The provision of welfare facilities for taxi drivers will be examined; and
- The potential for a dedicated taxi holding areas will be investigated, including the use of multi storey car parks for this purpose.

### 12.2. Specific Taxi Projects – City Centre Taxi Holding Area

The need for a dedicated space for taxi drivers to avail of welfare facilities and take breaks has been acknowledged for a number of years. It is the intention of the NTA and DCC to identify a location for such a facility. The potential to convert central multi-storey car park for such a use has been considered.

## 13. The City of Walking

The reduction of through-traffic in the Core City Centre will provide significant opportunities for improving the pedestrian environment. Almost every trip in Dublin City Centre ends with the person using the pedestrian network. People are required to reach their destinations on foot or by wheelchair having alighted from public transport, parked their bicycle, or parked their car. As such, the quality of the pedestrian environment is of critical importance for almost every resident, worker and visitor in Dublin City Centre.

Taking into account the objectives from Chapter 6 as well ambitions of the Development Plan and 'Your City, Your Space; Dublin City Public Realm Strategy (2012)', in principle the pedestrian network will be:

- Universally accessible;
- Safe;
- Attractive; and
- Legible.

### 13.1. Priorities for the City Centre Pedestrian Network

Within the plan period, the City Council will endeavour to prioritise the following initiatives to improve the Pedestrian Network across the city:

- The specific needs of wheelchair users, the elderly, children and those with mobility impairments will be central in the planning and design of the City Centre walking network;
- All streets and roads in the plan area will have high-quality footpaths;

- Footpaths will be cleared as much as possible of any obstructions, such signage and cabinets., in particular for wheelchair users and those with buggies;
- Raised table crossings will be sought on minor side roads where practicable;
- The pedestrian environment at existing and proposed public transport interchanges and stations will be improved in order to cater for passenger flows from services into the pedestrian network;
- Where signalised junctions are provided which cater for pedestrians and general traffic only, waiting times and crossing times will be balanced in favour of pedestrians;
- At major public transport nodes, particular attention will be paid to ensuring there is sufficient space for peak demands for pedestrian movement; and
- Space for walking and wheeling will be increased at junctions where capacity is not required for cyclists and public transport.

Figure 13.1 The Primary Pedestrian Network

A map showing the most important walking routes within the city centre

## 14. The City of Cycling

The quality, safety and usability of the City Centre streets for cycling can be significantly improved by reducing the level of through traffic. When discussing cycling in Dublin City Centre, it is vital that we acknowledge all forms of movement by people using all types of bicycle. Standard bicycles may continue to dominate this mode in the short-term, however the growth of cargo bikes, electric bikes, scooters and e-scooters, as well as the proliferation of various rental bike schemes, will continue to change the character of this mode over the coming years.

While DCC and the NTA are of the view that the entire City Centre should present a welcoming environment for all standards of cyclists, there is a focus on the primary cycle network which is forecast to carry the highest number of cyclists and connect the most important trip attractors.

Taking into account the objectives from Chapter 6 as well as ambitions of the Development Plan, this plan will encourage the development of Dublin City Centre as a safe, convenient and attractive place to cycle where all major trip attractors and centres of activity are served effectively by direct, high-quality cycle infrastructure.

### 14.1. Priorities for the City Centre Cycling Network

- The primary cycle network will be provided with high-quality infrastructure which either segregates cyclists from general vehicular traffic, or will comprise a low traffic or traffic free environment;
- Segregated infrastructure will be sought on the secondary cycle network and delivered where feasible and deemed necessary;

- Cycling will be permitted on “traffic-free streets”;
- Two way cycling will be permitted on one-way streets where possible;
- Cycle Parking will be promoted in all multi-storey car parks where it can be provided and accessed safely and conveniently;
- The Cycle infrastructure on the primary network in the City Centre will operate on a 24-hour basis;
- The maintenance and expansion of bicycle rental schemes will be kept under review; and
- Investment in on-street public cycle parking will continue in order to provide publicly accessible cycle parking spaces which cater for both standard bicycle spaces and non-standard spaces for adapted and cargo bikes.

### 14.2. Cycling Enhancement Project – Liffey Cycle Route

While it is intended to continue investment in cycle infrastructure throughout the City Centre, including investment under BusConnects, there are a selection of significant cycling projects which can be prioritised for implementation as part of this plan, subject to detailed design and planning consent, e.g., the Liffey Cycle Route.

The Liffey Cycle Route is identified as a Primary Route in the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan, and has been a priority for DCC and the NTA for many years, but a number of issues have delayed its implementation.

The removal of through traffic on the quays will free road space along this route, and should allow for cycle infrastructure to be provided on this Primary Cycle Route. The development of a high quality cycle route, which will meet the requirements of cyclists of varied experience, will provide a

central spine through the city for cycling, something which has been lacking to date.

Figure 14.1 Liffey Cycle Route at Inns Quay/Four Courts

Photograph of the Liffey Cycle Route

Figure 14.2 The Primary Cycling Network

A map showing the most important cycling routes within the city centre

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## 15. The City of Future Mobility

The transport and mobility sector is undergoing a transformational social, technological and economic shift, fundamentally changing the way people and goods are moved. These changes are being driven by four key technology trends: Autonomous, Connected, Electric and Shared vehicles/mobility services (ACES). Taken independently, each has the potential to transform Dublin City Centre's transport system and, in combination, they may drive unprecedented change. ACES may facilitate and promote a transition from the present vehicle-centric system towards a more efficient, data-enabled and driverless ecosystem with end-users at its heart. It is important that Dublin City Centre is prepared for this transition.

This plan will encourage a physical, administrative and political environment which is receptive to new, emerging and proven innovations in the urban mobility sector which align with the plan objectives.

### 15.1. Priorities for the Future Mobility Network of Dublin City Centre

- The pedestrian network will be supported by enhanced levels of environmental monitoring and digital wayfinding;
- Developments in the area of bike sharing and their associated apps will be accommodated in the City Centre;
- Intelligent Transportation Systems will continue to be used and expanded on for the management of all travel;

- The emerging regularisation role of e-scooters and other modes of micro-mobility will be accounted for in the City Centre's transport system;
- The supply of public charging stations for e-scooters and e-bikes will be explored;
- The potential for e-cargo bikes for last-mile delivery will continue to be expanded;
- Emerging innovations in the area of autonomous vehicles for all travel demand purposes will be monitored by DCC and the NTA for their application in Dublin City Centre;
- The NTA will continue to develop Transport for Ireland's integrated travel planning and travel information apps and will implement Next-Generation Ticketing;
- Transport interchanges within the City Centre will be examined with a view to developing broadly-based Mobility Hubs covering a wide range of travel requirements;
- Shared transport systems such as car-sharing, will be facilitated as an alternative to the private car where no sustainable transport option is available; and
- From a holistic perspective, the City Centre will accommodate the emerging objectives and requirements of Mobility as a Service insofar as they align with the objectives of this plan.

### 15.2. Future Mobility Project – Flex Space

Flex-space is a real time and flexible road and public space management service. Based on real-time traffic flow of vehicles and pedestrians, and real time demand for specific activities in public realm spaces, this platform

service allows to effectively allocate urban space to the use or mode in most demand.

The service can allocate road network space to different modes based on real-time and predictive demand and needs. For example, when major events are taking place in the city, additional road space could be allocated to bus and cycling priority. It can also be used to facilitate deliveries to certain streets at certain times before shifting to pedestrian use, for example.

Public space could also shift between activities, at peak commuting times space might be allocated to different transport modes and when the transport demand decreases it can be allocated to other community uses – sports, pop-up markets, etc. Dublin City Council will investigate the potential for the use of flex-space in the City Centre, in particular the reallocation of roadspace to public open space at weekends or in the evenings to facilitate other uses.

## 16. The City of Equality

All transport infrastructure and services should be equally accessible for all members of society. Unfortunately this is not always the case. There are a number of grounds under which people can experience discrimination and inequality in transport, in particular on the grounds of disability, gender and age. Dublin City Council, the NTA and transport operators are required under legislation to design and operate infrastructure and services in a manner which does not lead to such discrimination. This desire to develop a city where accessibility to transport is seen as open to all is an underlying principle of this plan.

Additionally, there are issues around personal security in the City Centre which do not impact on all sectors of the population equally. In particular, women and girls feel less safe walking in Dublin City Centre late at night. While this issue reaches beyond transport, it is a factor which can be influenced by better consideration of the accessibility and visibility of public transport operations, and in particular taxi services. These considerations are also important in how the City Council plan and design the urban environment in terms of ground floor activity, lighting and overall passive surveillance of public space.

This plan will prioritise the development of a transport system which is operated and managed, and the public realm planned and designed, with the needs of all sections of society as a primary consideration.

### 16.1. Priorities for Equality

- Transport infrastructure and services will be universally accessible;
- The views of groups representing various sectors of society will be sought on a regular basis in addition to during public consultations on schemes;
- All major transport and public realm schemes will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment;
- The transport system and the public realm will be designed and managed in a manner which seeks to eliminate discrimination;
- Security and perceptions of security will be improved for people using public transport, walking or cycling at night. For example, by improving lighting at public transport stops and stations and along access points to and from stops; designing in passive surveillance and high quality lighting along pedestrian routes; and to reduce anti-social behaviour around stops and stations;
- and
- The NTA, in conjunction with the transport operators, will continue to implement inclusivity campaigns across the public transport network.

## 17. The City for Residents

Dublin City Centre contains some of the most densely populated areas in the country and some of the oldest housing stock. There is a wide range of communities spread throughout the area with varying transport needs – from elderly residents who have lived there all their lives to new young communities. Families with children, single people, young couples, from all backgrounds.

There are pockets of affluence adjacent to areas of deprivation. This plan takes into account the wide variety of transport needs throughout the day, with a focus on catering for the vast majority of those needs by sustainable modes which offer the greatest levels of accessibility to the widest range of people.

This plan will consider the development of the transport network and public realm in Dublin City Centre which will take full account of the needs of the residents with a focus on the 15-Minute City concept and liveability.

### 17.1 Priorities for City Centre Residents

- Walking and cycling links between residential blocks and local services, such as schools and shops will be improved in terms of safety and convenience;
- Opportunities to improve the public realm on a local scale within residential neighbourhoods will be examined;
- Transport facilities, such as communal or neighbourhood cycle parking will be rolled out, targeted at those locations characterised primarily by terraced housing without rear or side access;
- Car sharing schemes will be facilitated in residential areas;

- Deliveries to residents will be facilitated;
- Air Quality and Noise levels in the City Centre will be monitored and further measures introduced if required; and
- All-day commuter parking in central areas will be addressed by way of extending the permit system.



## 18. The City for Business

Dublin City Centre is the commercial and financial core of the country. Efficient movement of people, goods and services is critical to maintaining that role. The physical manifestation of this can range from the offices in the adapted Georgian townhouses of Merrion Square to the modern towers in Docklands. In retail terms, the principal streets of Grafton Street and Henry Street and their environs offer a high concentration and variety of retail outlets and services. Added to this is the high value entertainment, cultural and social life of the capital, which dominates the City Centre in the evenings and early morning. All of these sectors need servicing and access in order to keep in business and to grow.

Taking into account the objectives from Chapter 6 as well as ambitions of the Development Plan, this plan will encourage the development of Dublin City Centre in a manner which ensures that priority will be given to goods delivery and servicing above the needs of private car motorists, and balanced with the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.

### 18.1 Priorities for the City Centre Servicing and Delivery Network

- Goods delivery to businesses will be managed in terms of roadspace allocation and times of access in order to maintain the reliability and efficiency of the City Centre economy, public transport services and the provision of a high-quality walking and cycling environment;

- The delivery of goods to residential premises will be managed to ensure appropriate levels of access;
- Loading bays will be enforced and cleared of non-delivery related obstructions;
- The role of emerging and changing technologies in freight and delivery management will be monitored on an on-going basis with a view to minimising the impact of deliveries on the public realm;
- The use of micro-consolidation centres or flexible click-and-collect points at the neighbourhood level will be explored, including the use of multi-storey car parks;
- The use of low and zero emissions delivery vehicles will be promoted, including transition to smaller vehicles for last-mile and micro-deliveries; and
- A City Centre Freight, Servicing and Deliveries Plan will be developed
- The DCC HGV management strategy will move towards no longer issuing permits for certain Euro class of HGVs to enter the city to assist in reducing emissions.

### 18.2. Delivery and Servicing Project –Micro-Consolidation Centres

These are facilities to consolidate goods closer to the delivery point. A network of micro-consolidation centres well distributed within Dublin City Centre will be key to easing congestion and to optimise deliveries.

To bring greater efficiencies, these micro-consolidation centres should be located within community hubs (e.g co-working spaces, education institutions, supermarkets) and mobility hubs so heavier parcels can do

their last mile on an e-cargo bike. DCC will identify a network of these centres as part of the implementation of this plan.

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## 19. The City for Visitors

Dublin City Centre is the primary destination for visitors to Ireland, and attracts significant numbers of domestic leisure visitors, including those attending major sporting events, concerts etc. It is home to 4 of the 10 most visited tourist attractions in Ireland and 9 of the 10 top free attractions and plays host to numerous major international sporting events and many of the largest and highest-profile cultural events in Ireland.

Taking into account the objectives from Chapter 6 as well as ambitions of the Development Plan, this plan will encourage the development of Dublin City Centre in a manner which ensures that the sustainable transport needs of tourists and visitors to the city are recognised as an essential aspect in the success of the overall economy.

### 19.1 Priorities for Meeting Demand for Travel from Tourists and Visitors

- Demand for travel from Tourists and Visitors to Dublin City Centre will be facilitated by sustainable transport modes;
- The use of bus lanes for tourist coaches and for tour buses will be monitored to ensure they do not have an adverse effect on regular commuter services, in particular at peak hours;

- The set down and pick up arrangements for tourist coaches at visitor attractions will be coordinated, to ensure that kerbside space within the City Centre is appropriately managed.
- Travel information and wayfinding will be maintained and enhanced within Dublin City Centre on-street and in digital format;
- The servicing of major hotels will be maintained taking into account the needs of public transport users, pedestrians and cyclists; and
- The planning and design of sustainable transport measures will have regard to access and servicing requirements of the major Tourist and Visitor attractions.

### 19.2. Tourism Project – Christchurch Place

Christchurch Place is a key node for Dublin Tourism. It forms part of the civic spine linking Parnell Square to Christchurch Cathedral. It also forms part of the link to the Guinness Storehouse and St. Patrick's Cathedral. At present the junction of Patrick Street / High Street / Christchurch Place and Winetavern Street presents a hostile, multi-lane car-dominated environment. As part of this plan, in conjunction with the BusConnects CBC scheme on Patrick Street and building upon interim cycling measures in place today, it is intended to address this by reducing this vehicular dominance and providing expanded public realm, including tying in the space to the adjacent Peace Park more formally.

## 20. The City of Public Space

Dublin contains a number of high quality public spaces, such as Mountjoy Square and St. Stephen's Green. Many of these were developed during the Georgian era and, with the exception of the Docklands and Temple Bar regeneration areas, very few spaces have been added to the City Centre in recent decades. The pressure to maximise redevelopment opportunities generally within the core – and the challenges in developing the large urban blocks such as O'Connell Street Upper – have combined and resulted in an absence of public open space at a time when demand is increasing due to the very redevelopment preventing it emerging.

This plan aims to place the public realm as a central consideration in planning for the City Centre primarily by seeking the reallocation of roadspace, but also in facilitating and promoting localised interventions on the footpaths and existing pedestrian streets.

### 20.1 Priorities for the City Centre Public Realm

- Utilise the space created by revised traffic management arrangements in the city core to create new opportunities for the public realm, and new spaces for people rather than cars;
- Public spaces will be universally accessible;
- The River Liffey, the Canals, and other major features will be the focus of high quality public realm measures;
- Biodiversity will be a central consideration in the development and maintenance of green spaces in the city, and new hard open spaces;
- The public realm will be improved through decluttering; removal of redundant signage; provision of new street furniture; spaces for meeting and lingering; enhanced security measures; and will be developed on the basis of universal public access; and
- Urban design, architectural heritage, usability and attractiveness will be key considerations in the planning and development of the City Centre's public realm.

## 21. Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) are both being undertaken alongside the preparation of the plan. All recommendations arising from the SEA and AA processes have been integrated into the plan. Many of these recommendations have been set out in the SEA Environmental Report and Natura Impact Statement; however, some of the more strategic recommendations are detailed below. Compliance with these measures will facilitate environmental protection and management.

### 21.1. Wider Planning Framework and the Regulatory Framework for Environmental Protection and Management

As detailed earlier, the plan will complement, and support, the implementation of the Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028 and the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022-2042 by providing a more detailed framework for improving the transportation system within the City Centre.

In order to be realised, projects identified in this plan (in a similar way to other projects from any other sectors) will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework. It is a specific provision of this plan to ensure that all of the provisions from the Dublin City Development Plan and the Transport Strategy for the Greater

Dublin Area identified as mitigation in the SEA Environmental Report and Natura Impact Statement that accompany the Study shall be complied with throughout the implementation of this Study.

In implementing this plan, the City Council will cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management and will ensure that plans, programmes and projects comply with EU Directives – including the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (2011/92/EU, as amended by 2014/52/EC) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC) – and relevant transposing Regulations.

### 21.2. Lower-level Decision Making

Lower levels of decision making and environmental assessment should consider the environmental sensitivities identified in Section 4 of the SEA Environmental Report, including the following:

- Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas;
- Features of the landscape that provide linkages/connectivity to designated sites (e.g. watercourses and areas of semi-natural habitat, such as linear woodlands);
- Salmonid Waters;
- Shellfish Waters;
- Nature Reserves;
- Natural Heritage Areas;
- Areas likely to contain a habitat listed in Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive;

- Entries to the Record of Monuments and Places and Zones of Archaeological Potential;
- Entries to the Record of Protected Structures;
- Un-designated sites of importance to wintering or breeding bird species of conservation concern;
- Architectural Conservation Areas; and
- Special Amenity Area Order sites and other relevant landscape designations.

### 21.3. Corridor and Route Selection Process

The following Corridor and Route Selection Process will be undertaken for relevant new infrastructure:

Stage 1 – Route Corridor Identification, Evaluation and Selection; and  
 Stage 2 – Route Identification, Evaluation and Selection.

In both stages, environmental constraints and opportunities will be key factors and the advice of relevant specialists will be sought. Site-specific field data will also be used. The need to consider other planning and transport matters is also recognised.

### 21.4. Appropriate Assessment

All projects and plans arising from this plan will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. A plan or project will only be authorised after the competent authority has ascertained, based on scientific evidence, Screening for Appropriate Assessment, and subsequent Appropriate Assessment where necessary, that:

- The plan or project will not give rise to adverse direct, indirect or secondary effects on the integrity of any European site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects); or
- The plan or project will have significant adverse effects on the integrity of any European site (that does not host a priority natural habitat type/and or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000; or
- The plan or project will have a significant adverse effect on the integrity of any European site (that hosts a natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, restricted to reasons of human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000.

## 21.5. Protection of Natura 2000 Sites

No projects giving rise to adverse effects on the integrity of European sites (cumulatively, directly or indirectly) arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall be permitted on the basis of this plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects), except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. there must be: a) no alternative solution available; b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the project to proceed; and c) adequate compensatory measures in place.

## 21.6. Climate Change, Emissions and Energy

As identified in the SEA Environmental Report that accompanies this plan, the plan facilitates sustainable mobility and associated positive effects, including those relating to:

- Reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and associated achievement of legally binding targets;
- Reductions in emissions to air and associated achievement of air quality objectives, thereby contributing towards improvement or air quality and protection of human health;
- Reductions in consumption of non-renewable energy sources and achievement of legally binding renewable energy targets; and
- Energy security.

In implementing the plan, the City Council will support, in addition to the provisions of the Dublin City Development Plan and the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area, relevant provisions contained in the National Energy and Climate Plan, the Climate Action Plan (2023), National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (2018), the National Mitigation Plan (2017), the Dublin City Council Climate Action Plan 2019-2024 and the Department of Transport's Sectoral Adaptation Plan for Transport Infrastructure, which builds on the 2017 "Adaptation Planning – Developing Resilience to Climate Change in the Irish Transport Sector".

Cognisant of the imperative to reduce emissions, DCC and the NTA will seek to ensure primacy for transport options that provide for unit reductions in carbon emissions. This can most effectively be done by promoting public transport, walking and cycling, and by actively seeking to reduce car use in circumstances where alternative options are available. During the preparation and/or review of policies and plans relating to climate change, carbon emissions and energy usage, DCC and the NTA will seek to integrate plan objectives, as appropriate.

By contributing towards a reduction in the use of the private car for trips, the plan provides for an overall reduction in the numbers of people exposed to pollution from emissions to air, including unacceptable noise levels from traffic, in particular within the City Centre. The plan has considered the potential for displacement of traffic to lead to localised potential impacts in terms of increased population exposure to air pollutants and/or elevated noise levels and identified that such impacts are unlikely to be significant. Proposed interventions will be required to demonstrate that they are consistent with all relevant legislative requirements.

## **21.7. Other SEA and AA Recommendations**

In implementing the Plan, the City Council will ensure that the measures included in Table 9.3 of the SEA Environmental Report and the Natura Impact Statement are complied with.

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## 22. Monitoring

This plan has been subject to the following assessments:

- Strategic Environmental Assessment;
- Appropriate Assessment;
- Transport Modelling.

These Assessments, in addition to the general requirement to understand how successful the plan outcomes have been against the Vision and Objectives, mean that there is a requirement to undertake ongoing monitoring of the plan implementation.

As part of this plan, the NTA and DCC will implement an expanded annual monitoring of the following inside the Canals:

- Canal Cordon counts of travel by all modes;
- Liffey Bridge counts of travel by all modes;
- Air Quality monitoring;
- Noise monitoring;
- Public transport journey times through the City Centre;
- Public transport passenger numbers;
- Progress in implementing City Centre Plan measures

## 23. Benefits of the Plan

The key potential benefits of the implementation of the City Centre Plan can be summarised as follows:

- Reduction in car traffic in the Core City Centre of up to 60%;
- More reliable journey times for economically essential traffic;
- Reduced emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> in the City Centre due to reduced traffic levels;
- Improved Air Quality due to reduced traffic levels;
- Reduction in population exposed to traffic noise due to reduced traffic levels;
- A more active and healthier population owing to the increased attractiveness of walking and cycling;
- Reduced risk of traffic collisions due to reduced traffic levels;
- Protection of the architectural heritage of the City Centre from the negative impacts of car traffic;
- Efficient and reliable public transport operations as a result of improved priority and reduction in car traffic;
- Improved cycling facilities in terms of safety, convenience and legibility;
- Improved pedestrian environment with wider footpaths and improved crossings;
- Significant public realm benefits through new public spaces;
- A more inclusive City Centre transport environment; and
- A City Centre transport system that is capable of accommodating a significant growth in population; economic activity; social vibrancy; cultural attraction; tourism; and all the other elements of a modern, progressive European capital city.

It is the view of Dublin City Council and the NTA that the forthcoming investment in sustainable transport infrastructure, as framed by the Transport Strategy and Development Plan, when viewed in the context of transformative changes over the last two decades, offers an opportunity to continue delivering the transport and traffic environment that can deliver a more sustainable, efficient and attractive City Centre.

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## 24. Delivery

### 24.1. Implementation Timelines

Dublin City Council, in conjunction with the NTA, will begin the process of implementing the outputs of this plan, upon its finalisation after consultation, in line with the overall objective of delivering the Dublin City Development Plan.

The implementation will take careful planning and coordination to ensure that the city can continue to function, and to ensure that the transformation in the way people and goods move within the city centre is phased and managed appropriately.

It should be clearly understood that this is an outline schedule and will need to be flexible to reflect the potential opportunities and constraints which will arise in the process of delivery. Notably, there will be planning considerations and timelines, as well as financial considerations, which will directly influence schedules.

In conjunction with the implementation of the major schemes set out here, DCC, in conjunction with the NTA Active Travel Investment team will continue to develop and implement smaller schemes and interventions which will support the principles set out in this plan and contribute to the delivery of the Development Plan Objectives.

Figure 24.1 Delivery of City Centre Transport Plan

A table showing the timelines for different schemes

CITY CENTRE PLAN MEASURES	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Traffic free College Green and Dame Street	2024	2025	2026				
Bachelors Walk Bus Gate		2025					
Aston Quay Bus Gate		2025					
Left-turn ban: Westland Row to Pearse Street	2024						
Tara Street / Pearse Street reconfiguration			2026	2027			
Liffey Interim Cycle Route		2025	2026				
Clontarf to City Centre Cycle Route	2024						
Capel Street Formalisation	2024						
Parliament Street Traffic-Free Street	2024						
Gardiner Street Public Realm Enhancement			2026	2027			
Custom House Quay or Beresford House Place			2026	2027	2028	2029	
Lincoln Place (subject to assessment)						2029	2030
<b>MAJOR TRANSPORT SCHEMES</b>							
BusConnects Service Enhancements	2024	2025					
BusConnects Core Bus Corridor Schemes				2027	2028	2029	2030
DART+ West and Dart+ South West						2029	2030

**“The city’s public realm matters because it reflects our identity; it becomes part of what the city means.”**

**Leslie Moore, Head of Parks Service, Dublin City Council**