



## **Appendix C2**

Blackrock to Merrion  
Core Bus Corridor  
– 2nd and 3rd  
Non-Statutory  
Public Consultation  
Submission Report

National Transport Authority  
**Blackrock to Merrion Core Bus  
Corridor Preferred Route Option**  
Second and Third Public  
Consultation Submissions Summary  
Report

Issue | 1 April 2022

This report takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our client.

It is not intended for and should not be relied upon by any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party.

Job number 268401-10

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Summary of Issues Raised by Route Section (Second and Third Public Consultations)

# 1 Executive Summary

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## 1.1 Aim and Objectives of the Scheme

The aim of the Core Bus Corridor (CBC) Infrastructure Works is to provide enhanced walking, cycling and bus infrastructure on this key access corridor in the Dublin region, which will enable and deliver efficient, safe, and integrated sustainable transport movement along the corridor.

The objectives are to:

- Enhance the capacity and potential of the public transport system by improving bus speeds, reliability and punctuality through the provision of bus lanes and other measures to provide priority to bus movement over general traffic movements;
- Enhance the potential for cycling by providing safe infrastructure for cycling, segregated from general traffic wherever practicable;
- Support the delivery of an efficient, low carbon and climate resilient public transport service, which supports the achievement of Ireland's emission reduction targets;
- Enable compact growth, regeneration opportunities and more effective use of land in Dublin, for present and future generations, through the provision of safe and efficient sustainable transport networks;
- Improve accessibility to jobs, education, and other social and economic opportunities through the provision of improved sustainable connectivity and integration with other public transport services; and
- Ensure that the public realm is carefully considered in the design and development of the transport infrastructure and seek to enhance key urban focal points where appropriate and feasible.

## 1.2 Purpose of the Non-Statutory Public Consultation

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

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

*The bus service is the main form of public transport across Dublin with 67% of public transport journeys each day made by bus.*

*The level of commuting to work by bicycle has also increased by 43% since 2011 and the need for better and safer cycling facilities will be provided through the roll-out of the core bus corridor project.*

Anne Graham, CEO of the National Transport Authority (NTA) said:

*“The BusConnects Core Bus Corridor Projects is at the heart of the NTA’s efforts to improve transport services across our capital city. By providing continuous bus priority and much improved and safer options to walk and cycle within the city, we can incentivise more people to sustainable transport modes.*

*Enhancing transport infrastructure has become all the more important as an ever-growing number of people choose to walk or cycle within the city over recent months. These shifts in travel patterns are likely to have a long-lasting impact. Buses will continue to be the most important mass public transport mode for our cities. Through the rollout of the sixteen Core Bus Corridors, we can put in place a long-term solution to meet the evolving travel needs of the public. Modern cycling infrastructure will provide new options for families within communities throughout Dublin to cycle safely. Although COVID-19 has meant we are unable to roll-out in-person information events, I would encourage the people of Dublin to visit our virtual consultation rooms and share their views on the revised proposals in the coming weeks.*

The following 16 CBCs form part of the BusConnects CBC Infrastructure works:

- Clongriffin to City Centre Core Bus Corridor;
- Swords to City Centre Core Bus Corridor;
- Ballymun to City Centre Core Bus Corridor;
- Finglas to Phibsborough Core Bus Corridor;
- Blanchardstown to City Centre Core Bus Corridor;
- Lucan to City Centre Core Bus Corridor;
- Liffey Valley to City Centre Core Bus Corridor;
- Clondalkin to Drimnagh Core Bus Corridor;
- Greenhills to City Centre Core Bus Corridor;
- Tallaght to Terenure Core Bus Corridor;
- Kimmage to City Centre Core Bus Corridor;
- Rathfarnham to City Centre Core Bus Corridor;
- Bray to City Centre Core Bus Corridor;
- UCD Ballsbridge to City Centre Core Bus Corridor;
- **Blackrock to Merrion Core Bus Corridor;** and
- Ringsend to City Centre Core Bus Corridor.

The location of each of the CBCs can be seen in **Figure 1**.

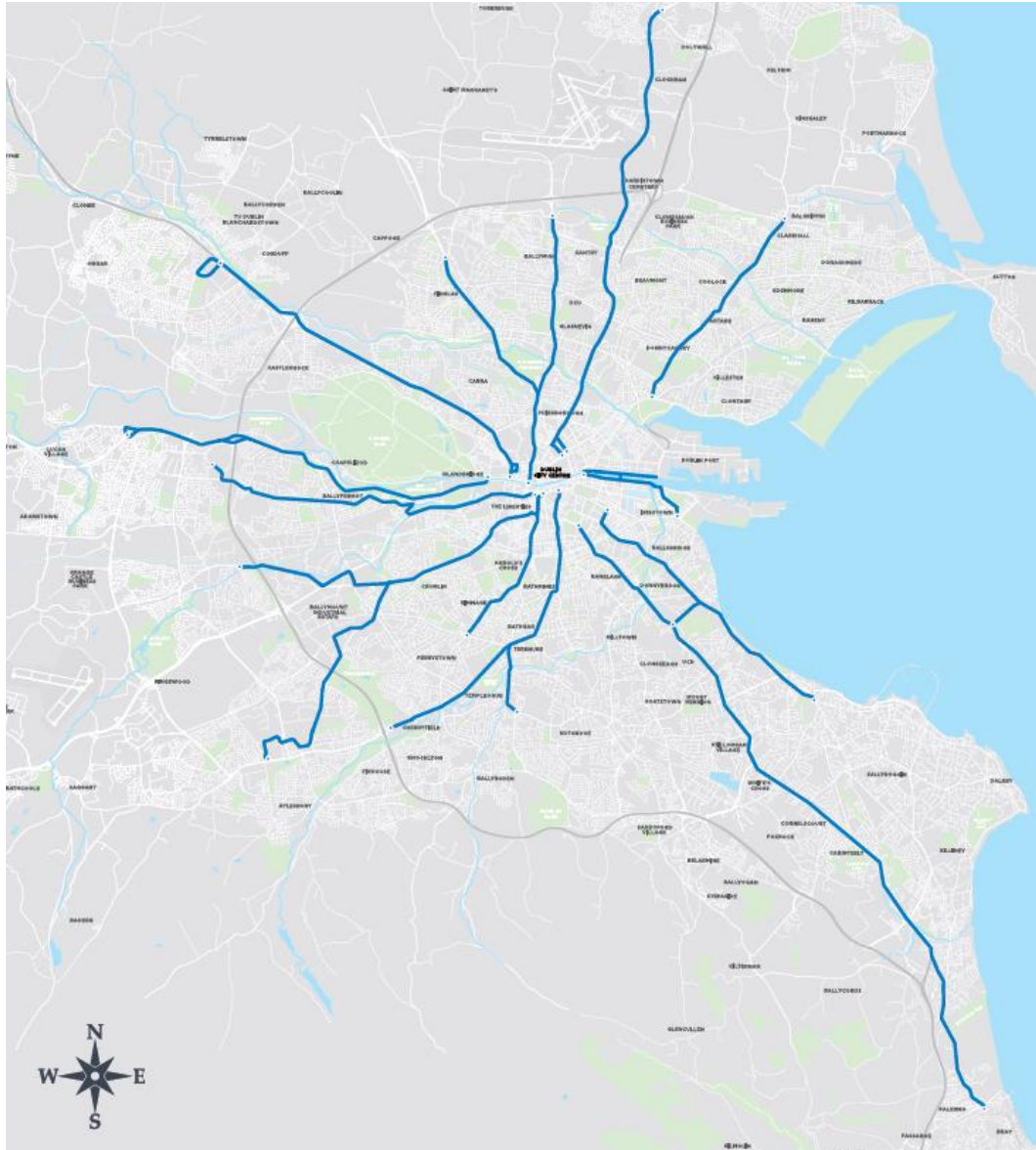


Figure 1: Radial Core Bus Corridors Emerging Preferred Routes.

### 1.3 First Public Consultation

The first round of non-statutory public consultation on the Emerging Preferred Route (EPR) for the Blackrock to Merrion CBC (the CBC) ran from the 26<sup>th</sup> of February 2019 until the 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2019, and the output from these consultations has contributed to the ongoing scheme development. In addition, a number of community forums and localised engagement events were held covering the whole route, and specific areas respectively.

A total of **84** submissions were received as part of the first non-statutory public consultation.

While a variety of matters were raised in the submissions, the key issues emerging from the consultation were as follows:

1. Loss of Parking;

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

The First Public Consultation Submissions Report is available on the BusConnects website <https://busconnects.ie/initiatives/core-bus-corridors/background-information/consultation-submission-reports/>.

## 1.4 Second Public Consultation

The second round of non-statutory public consultation for the CBC took place from the 4th of March 2020 until the 17th of April 2020 on the draft Preferred Route Option (PRO). The COVID-19 pandemic event became an issue in Ireland at the start of this period. In response to the Irish Government and National Public Health Emergency Team's guidelines in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic the majority of the planned public information events were postponed.

The consultation period remained open until the 17th of April 2020 and submissions could be made by email or by post. All relevant information, including the Information Brochures and the Emerging Preferred Route public consultation reports, was made available on the BusConnects website (<https://busconnects.ie>) to view and download. In addition, landowner meetings were held over the phone and/or online, and minutes were recorded as part of the consultation process. A number of community forums, meetings with resident groups, and one-to-one meetings were also held as part of the process prior to the COVID-19 restrictions being imposed.

A total of **31** submissions were received as part of the second non-statutory public consultation. These submissions are expanded upon in Section 2 of this report.

While a variety of matters were raised in the submissions, the key issues emerging from the consultation were as follows:

1. Cyclist Safety;
2. Pedestrian Safety;
3. Supportive of the Scheme;
4. Vehicular Access to Properties;
5. Removal of Trees;
6. Increased Air & Noise Pollution;
7. Devaluation of Property;
8. Protected Structures;
9. Loss of Parking; and
10. Traffic Issues.

## 1.5 Third Public Consultation

The third round of non-statutory public consultation for the CBC took place from the 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2020 until 16<sup>th</sup> of December 2020 on the updated draft PRO. With the continuing effect of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated Government restrictions, the third non-statutory public consultation was held virtually. Virtual consultation rooms for each CBC were developed and published. Along with offering a call back facility, these rooms provided a description of each Preferred Route from start to finish with supporting maps and included information of all revisions made, if any, since the previous rounds of non-statutory public consultation as well as other supporting documents.

The consultation period remained open until the 16<sup>th</sup> of December 2020 and submissions were accepted by email, through the virtual consultation rooms or by post. All relevant information, including the updated Information Brochures and the Emerging Preferred Route public consultation reports, was made available on the BusConnects website (<https://busconnects.ie>) to view and download. In addition, landowner meetings were held over the phone and/or online, and minutes were recorded as part of the consultation process.

A total of **201** submissions were received as part of the third consultation. These submissions are expanded upon in Section 3 of this report.

While a variety of matters were raised in the submissions, the key issues emerging from the consultation were as follows:

1. Cyclist Safety;
2. Pedestrian Safety;
3. Supportive of the Scheme;
4. Vehicular Access to Properties;
5. Removal of Trees;



6. Increased Air & Noise Pollution;
7. Devaluation of Property;
8. Protected Structures;
9. Loss of Parking;
10. Traffic Issues; and
11. Location of Bus Stops.

## 1.6 Summary of Public Consultations

Overall, throughout the three Public Consultation events, the NTA received **318** submissions in relation to the Blackrock to Merrion CBC.

**Table 1** breaks down the topics that were discussed in these comments.

**Table 1: Themes and frequency associated with public consultation comments**

Theme	Frequency of Comments Public Consultation 1	Frequency of Comments Public Consultation 2	Frequency of Comments Public Consultation 3
Accessibility/ Traffic Impact	9 comments	22 comments	88 comments
Integration / Bus Network	5 comments	13 comments	73 comments
Land Acquisition	25 comments	10 comments	54 comments
Safety	31 comments	20 comments	80 comments
Environmental Issues	25 comments	5 comments	66 comments
Social Impact	20 comments	4 comments	17 comments
Economy / Impact on Local Business	5 comments	7 comments	18 comments
Heritage	8 comments	3 comments	41 comments

Further comments were also received during community forums and meetings with residents' associations where issues raised were taken into account during the development of the design.

## 2 **Second Public Consultation (Mar-Apr 2020)**

### 2.1 **Overview**

Following the first non-statutory public consultation on the EPR, the development of a Preferred Route Option (PRO) commenced. The second non-statutory public consultation on the CBC, on the draft PRO, ran between the 4<sup>th</sup> of March 2020 and the 17<sup>th</sup> April 2020.

However, during the period of Consultation, the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted the public consultation from the 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020. In response to guidelines from the Irish Government and the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE), the following changes were applied to the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of public consultation:

- All public information events were postponed. This included the planned event relating to the CBC which was to be held in The Clayton Hotel Burlington Road on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 from 11:30am to 7:30pm;
- The public consultation remained open and submissions could be made by email and by post;
- All 16 no. PRO brochures continued to be available to view and download. In addition, the brochures were also available in HTML and Audio files; and
- Any queries and questions regarding the proposals could be emailed to the BusConnects team.

Property owners potentially affected by the proposals were notified by post and a one-to-one meeting was offered in each case. Following the implementation of the COVID-19 guidelines, one-to-one phone calls were offered to affected landowners as part of the consultation period, in place of face-to-face meetings. A number of meetings with resident groups and one-to-one meetings were also held as part of the public consultation process prior to the COVID-19 restrictions being imposed.

The public were invited to make written submissions relating to the draft PRO consultation brochure. Submissions could be made by post or by email.

### 2.2 **Information Provided in Public Consultation**

Information on the public consultation process was published in major print media from the 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020 including the Irish Times, the Irish Independent, the Herald, Dublin People, Dublin Gazette, Echo, Wicklow Times and Wicklow People, inviting the public to make a submission. Radio segments were included on Today FM, 98 FM, Newstalk, FM104, East Coast FM and Nova, beginning on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020. Digital media was published on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter as well as through online advertising space, beginning on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020. Information was also advertised at bus and Luas stops throughout Dublin City. All such communication was postponed from 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020 due to COVID-19.

The CBC Information Brochure was available for downloading from the National Transport Authority's (NTA's) BusConnects website (<https://busconnects.ie>), and hard copies could be sent by post on request, or for pickup at the NTA Office reception. Relevant background technical reports were also available for downloading from the NTA's BusConnects website.

The Public Consultation documentation provided information about the work that has been carried out as part of the BusConnects CBC Infrastructure Works. Additional information was provided on the official BusConnects website:

<https://busconnects.ie/initiatives/core-bus-corridors/background-information/technical-documents/>

The additional supporting information on the website included:

- Corridor 15 - Blackrock to Merrion, Emerging Preferred Route - Public Consultation Report 2018/2019;
- Dún Laoghaire to City Centre Core Bus Corridor – Stage F Road Safety Audit including Designer's Response to Road Safety Audit;
- Dún Laoghaire to City Centre Core Bus Corridor – CBC Feasibility Study and Options Assessment Report – Route Options Assessment Report incl. Appendices;
- Concept Scheme Drawings for the Emerging Preferred Route (EPR); and
- Concept Scheme Drawings for the Preferred Route Option (PRO).

## 2.3 Approach to Assessing the Submissions

The review of the submissions commenced in April 2020 once the consultation period had closed. The NTA received **31** no. submissions for the Blackrock to Merrion draft PRO, from the 4<sup>th</sup> of March 2020 until the 17<sup>th</sup> of April 2020. Most entries were digital (email), however, some paper bound entries were posted to the NTA. No petitions with multiple signatures were received.

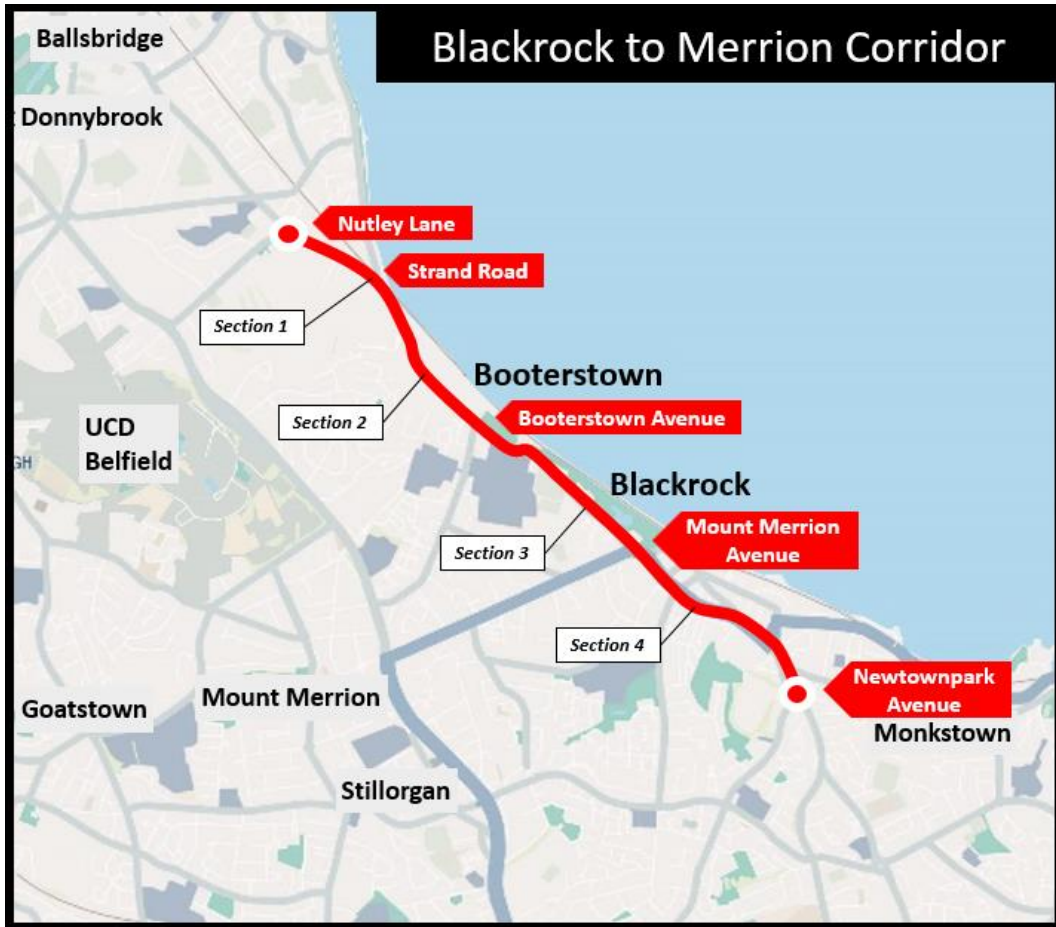
All submissions, including notes from meetings with impacted landowners and stakeholders, were entered into a database and assessed.

## 2.4 Analysis of Issues Raised by Section

The CBC was divided into four sections, and the issues raised in each submission were entered and categorised in the database by geographical section, by issue type and comment type. The four sections were:

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

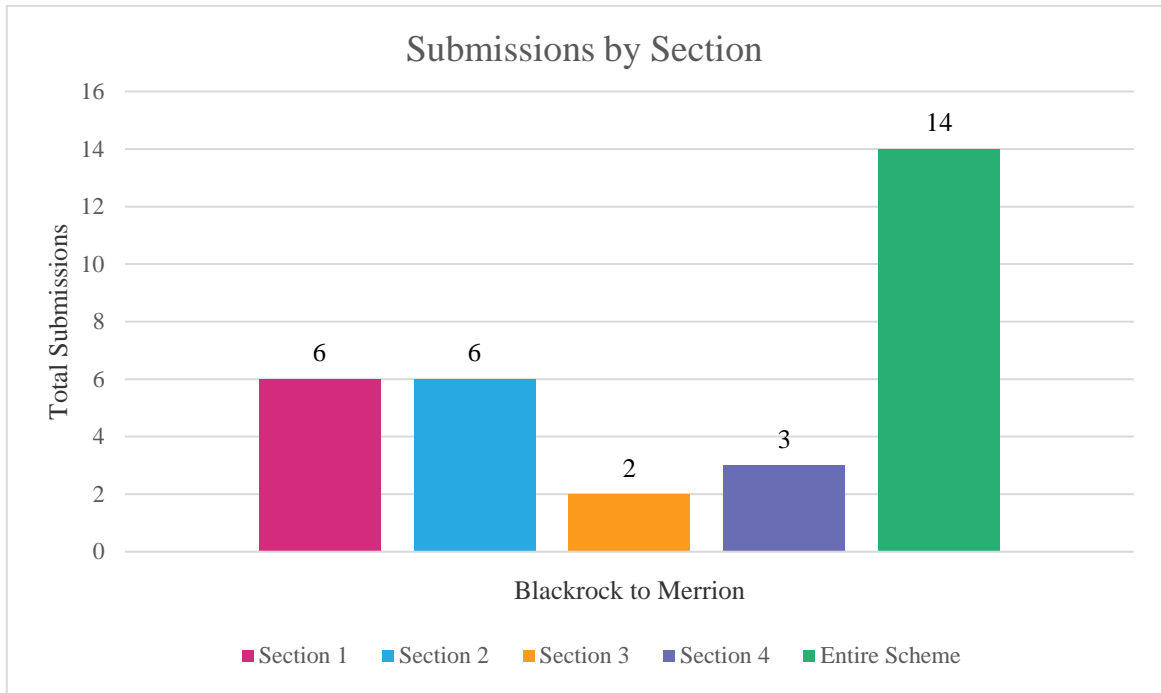
In addition to the four sections, submissions were also categorised as relating to ‘The Entire Scheme’ where the submission referred to multiple areas, or the scheme as a whole.



**Figure 2: Blackrock to Merrion Core Bus Corridor Map**

Submissions that addressed the ‘Entire Scheme’ made up the majority of responses, with approximately 45% of the total submissions generally addressing issues at multiple sections along the route. Section 1 ‘Nutley Lane to Strand Road’ and Section 2 ‘Strand Road to Booterstown Avenue’ each accounted for approximately 19% of submissions. Section 4 ‘Mount Merrion Avenue to Newtownpark Avenue’ accounted for approximately 10% of submissions and Section 3 ‘Boosterstown Avenue to Mount Merrion Avenue’ received approximately 6% of the total submissions.

The distribution of submissions, across the various sections of the scheme can be seen in **Figure 3** and **Table 2**.



**Figure 3: Distribution of Submissions per Section of the Blackrock to Merrion Core Bus Corridor.**

**Table 2: Number of Submissions per Section of the Blackrock to Merrion Core Bus Corridor.**

Section	Number of Comments	Percentage
1: Nutley Lane to Strand Road	6	19.5%
2: Strand Road to Booterstown Avenue	6	19.5%
3: Booterstown Avenue to Mount Merrion Avenue	2	6%
4: Mount Merrion Avenue to Newtownpark Avenue	3	10%
The Entire Scheme	14	45%
Total Assessed	31	100%

## 2.5 Profile of Those Making Submissions

Of the submissions received:

- 16% were from residents of the study area who are not directly impacted by the scheme and typically referred to local matters;
- 6% were from landowners of houses that are directly impacted, for example by loss of parking, or land acquisition;
- 36% were from interested parties, including commuters and residents who do not live in the study area but have an interest in the scheme;
- 10% were from representative bodies or associations, and mainly address community-focused issues;
- 19% were from businesses and institutions located in the study area, and mainly address specific impacts of the scheme;
- 10% were from public bodies, addressing infrastructure issues (Dublin City Council, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council and Dublin Bus); and
- 3% were from politicians, addressing issues in the study area.

## 2.6 Themes Raised in the Submissions

All 31 of the submissions received by the NTA were reviewed and the issues raised were categorised, summarised and analysed. A total of 8 main themes were identified during this review process. The frequency of each of these themes has been listed below in **Table 3**. Further information on specific issues raised within the submissions has been provided in the following sections. Appendix A provides in-depth listing of the various issues raised in each section.

**Table 3: Frequency of Themes raised through the Submissions.**

Theme	Frequency of Comments
Accessibility/ Traffic Impact	22 comments
Integration / Bus Network	13 comments
Land Acquisition	10 comments
Safety	20 comments
Environmental Issues	5 comments
Social Impact	4 comments
Economy / Impact on Local Business	7 comments

Heritage	3 comments
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## 2.7 Summary of The Main Issues Raised

This section identifies the key issues raised in the second non-statutory public consultation process. The NTA have established the validity of the concerns, the potential consequences for the CBC scheme, and have determined how best to address the issue and /or mitigate the negative impact.

While a variety of matters were raised in the submissions, the key issues related to the CBC scheme are as follows:

1. Cyclist Safety;
2. Pedestrian Safety;
3. Supportive of the Scheme;
4. Vehicular Access to Properties;
5. Removal of Trees;
6. Increased Air & Noise Pollution;
7. Devaluation of Property;
8. Protected Structures;
9. Loss of Parking; and
10. Traffic Issues.

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

### Issue 1: Cyclist Safety

Many commuters suggested that the designs published for this consultation event had improved since the previous round of public consultation, with regards to prioritisation of cyclist safety. Many submissions noted their support for the various design updates, including the provision of cycle tracks located behind bus stops and parking spaces, the removal of left-turning vehicular slip lanes, the provision of segregated cycle tracks and the increased number of ‘bus stop bypasses’. It was also noted that the design of many junctions, including those at Merrion Gates, Booterstown Dart Station, Mount Merrion Avenue, Temple Road, etc, have been improved, with regards to providing further safety for cyclists.

Submissions were generally supportive of the proposed two-way cycle track between the Strand Road and Blackrock Park. Some cyclists requested that a buffer be implemented between the two-way cycle track and the road, in order to protect cyclists from vehicles travelling in the opposite direction. A private group suggested crossing points be implemented across the scheme, for cyclists to easily access the two-way cycle track, from the non-coastal side of the road.

Suggestions and requests for further cycle safety provisions included:

- Bus stops should all be converted to ‘bus stop bypasses’ in order to reduce potential conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians;
- Vehicular right turns into minor roads should be eliminated, due to the potential for conflicts between the cars turning into minor roads and cyclists using the cycle tracks to cross minor roads;
- Vehicular left slip lanes should be eliminated in order to reduce conflicts between vehicles turning left and cyclists continuing along main roads. Some submissions requested tabletop junctions be provided at minor junctions in order to reduce traffic speeds of vehicles turning onto sideroads, and also to prioritise the safety of cyclists and pedestrians; and
- At junctions where the CBC meets another major road with 3 general lanes of traffic, that the general traffic lanes be reduced to 2 lanes, with cycle tracks provided on both sides of the road.

In order to ensure continuous bus lanes and cycle tracks, wide cycle tracks and ‘bus stop bypasses’ across the route, some submissions suggested that the number of general traffic lanes could be reduced, or that parking along the CBC could be eliminated or reduced to provide further space for the suggested corridor cross-section.

#### ***NTA response to Issue 1***

In response to issues raised, a number of sections along the route were amended as part of the PRO to provide enhanced provision for cyclists. Key design development changes are:

- The Merrion Road / Elmpark Green junction design has been reviewed and full protection is proposed for cyclists, including protected waiting area for cyclists turning right from Elmpark Green.
- The cycle track alignment at the Rock Road / Booterstown Avenue junction is proposed to be improved to cater for the cyclists’ desire line. A short section of cycle track is proposed on approach to the junction from the Booterstown Avenue arm to safely connect cyclists arriving from the side road into the protected junction.
- The proposed pedestrian crossing on the Rock Road just north of the main Blackrock College gates is now proposed to be a Toucan Crossing to facilitate cyclists also.
- The general traffic exit from Rock Hill onto its junction with Rock Road is proposed to be reduced to a single lane from two lanes to accommodate short sections of cycle track on approach to and exit from the junction.
- The Frascati Road / Carysfort Avenue junction design has been revised further to realign cycle crossings to suit cyclist desire lines and to offer smoother transitions where practicable, including to and from the side roads.



- The Frascati Road / Temple Road / Barclay Court junction design has been revised further to realign cycle crossings to suit cyclist desire lines and to offer smoother transitions where practicable, including to and from the side roads.
- The Temple Road / Temple Hill / Newtown Avenue junction design has been revised further to realign cycle crossings to suit cyclist desire lines and to offer smoother transitions where practicable, including to and from the side roads.
- Entry Treatments are proposed at all uncontrolled side roads.

All reasonable measures will be taken to provide a consistent implementation of a cycle regime that helps achieve the objectives of the Greater Dublin Cycle Network along the route. This is seen as a necessary, and desirable addition to the current transport options across Dublin to help reduce car use. To this end, the NTA has developed specific design guidance (BusConnects Preliminary Design Guidance Booklet - BCPDGB) to ensure that a consistent approach is adopted across all BusConnects CBC routes, with road user safety and the Protected Junction for Cyclists forming a central pillar of this guidance.

Specific attention is being given to the sections of the route which interact with existing, temporary, and planned cycle infrastructure such as at the Sutton to Sandycove Greenway (East Coast Trail). Junction designs are also being refined to ensure that cyclists can negotiate and traverse junctions safely. Along the corridors, cyclists will be provided with segregated cycle tracks and protected junctions where practicable.

Slip lanes at junctions have been removed to accommodate the proposed protected junction for cyclists. In the preliminary design, cycle tracks also continue straight as raised tracks across un-signalised side roads, and vehicles will need to navigate a 60mm kerb to cross the cycle track. This is intended to make such side roads safer for cyclists, with consideration for potential conflicts with vehicles turning into and emerging from these roads.

Where sufficient space is available, Island Bus Stops have been proposed, which help to reduce the conflict between users departing the bus and cyclists. Notably following this consultation, an additional bus stop has been redesigned as an Island Bus Stop, at Temple Road outbound, which was previously designed as a lay-by bus stop.

Shared landing areas are proposed where there is insufficient space to provide an island bus stop. The cycle track width would be reduced on the approach as a traffic calming measure to slow cyclists down and an island is proposed for bus users arriving and departing; this is to prevent bus users stepping directly into the cycle track. Cyclists will be required to yield to pedestrians when a bus is stopped at the bus stop.

Where practicable, junctions were further developed so as to provide short sections of cycle track on approach to the junction from the side roads in order to safely connect cyclists arriving from the side roads into the protected junctions. In some cases, this was achieved through reducing the number of approaching traffic lanes, such as at Rock Hill, Carysfort Avenue and Temple Road.

The final designs have been undertaken in accordance with all relevant design standards and an independent Stage 1 Road Safety Audit has been carried out prior to finalisation in order to identify and rectify any issues identified.

## Issue 2: Pedestrian Safety

Concerns were raised for the safety of pedestrians along the route, particularly at sections of the road where there is a narrow cross-section, such as at Merrion Gates, outside Blackrock College, and in Blackrock Village. Many submissions also raised concerns for the safety of both pedestrians and cyclists at bus stops along the route.

Between St Vincent's University Hospital and the Strand Road, concerns were raised that any proposed footpath width reduction could be a health and safety issue for pedestrians, particularly for vulnerable road users such as children, the elderly and those with disabilities.

Many submissions raised concerns for pedestrians at bus stops due to the potential for conflict between cyclists and pedestrians and requested that all bus stops be converted to 'bus stop bypasses'.

A private group and a public body raised concerns for vulnerable pedestrians, such as those with disabilities, at shared spaces such as bus stops and crossings, due to the potential for conflicts. These submissions requested greater segregation at bus stops and crossings, with further protection for vulnerable pedestrians.

Concerns were raised that any proposed reduction of footpath width outside Blackrock College could impact the safety of pedestrians, particularly young students accessing local schools. It was suggested that this section would see a combination of high speeds of traffic, reduced footpath width and a large volume of students which could pose a safety issue. It was requested that sufficient land acquisition from Blackrock College be negotiated in order to facilitate a wider, safer footpath for pedestrians.

A private group and a politician raised concerns for the safety of pedestrians at Blackrock Dart Station due to the location of the bus terminus at the station, the narrow cross-section through Blackrock and the high levels of footfall. The group requested the bus terminus be relocated at Booterstown Dart Station, as there is more space available to facilitate large numbers of buses, whilst also providing enough space for pedestrians.

### ***NTA Response to Issue 2***

In response to issues raised during the EPR public consultation, a number of sections along the route were amended as part of the PRO design development, and a key outcome of many of these design interventions is enhanced provision for vulnerable road users.

Within the PRO proposal, along with general improvements to the vulnerable road user environment where possible, amendments have been made on certain key sections referred to in the submissions, with the following key design development:

- The majority of junctions on the route would be modified to allow for separate cyclist and pedestrian crossings, however, shared spaces would still be used where suitable separate facilities cannot be achieved.

- Cycle tracks and pedestrian crossings will continue straight as raised tracks and tables across un-signalised side roads. This proposed entry treatment will mean that vehicles will need to navigate two 60mm kerbs to cross the pedestrian crossing when turning from the main road.

- Additional crossings are proposed on the northern arms of the Elmpark Green junction, the Trimleston Avenue junction and the Mount Merrion Avenue junction.

A key upgrade in the PRO is that major signalised junctions are generally arranged as 'Protected style' layouts with better cyclist protection and pedestrian crossing facilities. For example, the consolidation of the Rock Road / Mount Merrion Avenue junction removes slip lanes and provides a significant increase in the urban realm. This greatly improves the pedestrian environment in the busy area of Blackrock.

In the PRO, island bus stop layouts have also been incorporated as the preferred arrangement for bus stops where they interact with a cycle track where space is available. Where space is constrained, cycle movement through bus stop locations would be managed through the provision of signage and markings, tactile paving and alignment changes to the cycle track. These proposals have been developed with pedestrian and safety in mind, with particular attention given to the safety of mobility impaired users.

Where footpath widths are reduced, they have been designed to a standard minimum of 2.0m. At Blackrock College between the main gates and Castledawson Avenue, the proposed footpath width of 2.0m would be wider than the existing footpath for the majority of this section.

The final designs have been undertaken in accordance with all relevant design standards and an independent Stage 1 Road Safety Audit has been carried out prior to finalisation in order to identify and rectify any issues identified.

### Issue 3: Supportive of the Scheme

The majority of submissions were somewhat supportive of the BusConnects initiative, however many felt there were improvements to be made along the scheme. There was support for the objectives of BusConnects, improving the bus network and providing safer cycling facilities in Dublin. It was suggested that the CBCs would produce a higher capacity public transport network which would allow for higher density of housing developments, thereby contributing to addressing the current housing situation in Dublin.

Many submissions were supportive of the redesign, commenting that the proposals have improved since previous consultations, particularly at junctions. Improvements identified along the scheme included increased prioritisation of cyclist safety, safer road alignment, reduced tree loss, and reduced land acquisition.

A submission also suggested that issues raised in the previous public consultation have been either fully resolved or substantially mitigated.

### ***NTA Response to Issue 3***

The NTA welcomes this positive feedback on the objectives of the scheme as well as the support of specific changes made to the scheme in response to submissions from the public.

## **Issue 4: Vehicular Access to Properties**

Many businesses and landowners were concerned that proposed changes along the route would negatively impact access to various properties and developments along the route. These submissions raised concerns that changes to the access of developments along the route could become constricted under current proposals and should be re-examined.

Specific concerns included the following issues:

- A business raised concerns over the changes to the junction between Merrion Road and the Elmpark Green Campus development;
- An organisation raised concerns over the proposed junction at Elmpark Green Campus, which they suggested would be incapable of facilitating future capacity demand at the junction. The organisation, which shares their only access point with the Elmpark Green Campus development, noted they would potentially develop and intensify uses at the site, thereby potentially increasing use of the access in the future. Concerns were raised that the proposed access arrangements would not provide for existing and future capacity at the junction;
- A landowner raised concerns that changes to the access at Elmpark Green Campus junction would negatively impact access to the houses at Llandaff Terrace;
- A business on the Merrion Road opposite Elmpark Green Campus requested the proposed access to their site be considered in the BusConnects design proposals as has been the case with other similar developments; and
- A business on the Frascati Road in Blackrock have noted that the current BusConnects plans includes the previous access arrangements at their site in revised designs, and requests that the (updated) existing and permitted access arrangements at the site be revised in the BusConnects plans.

### ***NTA response to Issue 4***

In response to issues raised during the EPR public consultation, a number of sections along the route were amended as part of the PRO design development, and a key outcome of many of these design interventions is enhanced provision of bus priority, cyclist facilities and pedestrian facilities. In some locations these enhanced facilities for sustainable transport modes are provided through a reduction in space for private cars. In the preparation of the preliminary design for the Blackrock to Merrion CBC, which forms part of the Belfield / Blackrock to

City CBC Scheme (the Proposed Scheme), the design has been further reviewed following the second non-statutory public consultation.

While the operational capacity of some junctions may be reduced for the movement of private cars, the total capacity for the movement of people will be increased. This infrastructure, in combination with an updated bus network will improve access to properties, developments and businesses along this corridor.

The Proposed Scheme includes amendments which accommodate any recent amendments to accesses to properties – particularly noting the changes at the Frascati Shopping Centre.

The Proposed Scheme reflects design changes carried out so as to avoid impacting on the Landaff Terrace boundary at the Elmpark Green junction.

In the preparation of the preliminary design for the Proposed Scheme, the NTA have ensured that individual property access have been appropriately accommodated.

## Issue 5: Removal of Trees

Some submissions received were concerned about the loss of trees along the entire length of the CBC. Many noted their support for a reduction in tree loss relative to the EPR, however, continued to be concerned about the high volume of trees to be removed across the route. Some submissions were also concerned over the lack of replanting proposals for the scheme.

The concerns that were expressed relate mainly to aesthetics of the area and environmental concerns, including carbon absorption, biodiversity aspects, air quality and noise pollution.

There were particular concerns for tree loss between Estate Avenue and Merrion Gates. Residents were concerned that over 10% of tree loss along the scheme would occur at this location. Residents felt that there was a disproportionate destruction of the natural environment at the heart of Merrion Village. It was suggested by a resident that the parking spaces on the coastal side of the road be moved in order to eliminate the need to remove 2 trees at this location.

### ***NTA Response to Issue 5***

The NTA recognises the environmental, visual and amenity value of trees, foliage and planting in the urban landscape. However, this is being balanced against the requirement to provide sustainable means of moving people around the city-region. Hence, the NTA is committed to sustainable transport, and also to appropriate planting in the urban realm for visual and environmental purposes.

A full planting scheme has been designed and would be included as part of the Proposed Scheme. The planting scheme would optimise the public realm and environmental benefits, while minimising the maintenance requirement and impact on public lighting.

The overall impact on trees is that the Proposed Scheme would include a greater number of trees to be planted than would be removed.

Tree felling has been reduced at Blackrock College and Blackrock Clinic through a reduction and/or a removal of proposed land take in the vicinity through refinement of the proposed cross-section, while still meeting the objectives of the scheme.

At Blackrock Park, it is proposed to construct the retaining wall from the carriageway side (including traffic management measures) in order to minimise any impact on the existing planting on the embankment within the park.

In the case of the stretch of Merrion Road between Estate Avenue and Merrion Gates, where practicable, replacement trees are proposed to account for any loss of trees.

The potential impacts of the proposed scheme have been fully quantified as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process which has been carried out by the NTA during the preparation of a planning application for the scheme. These impacts will be considered by An Bord Pleanála in its assessment of the Proposed Scheme.

## Issue 6: Increased Air and Noise Pollution

Some submissions raised concerns that the proposed traffic management measures, in addition to the removal of trees and natural vegetation along the route, could increase air and noise pollution levels along the CBC.

It was suggested that increased traffic levels along the route could potentially result in increased air pollution, in the form of nitrogen emissions from car exhausts of non-electric vehicles. The proposed removal of trees could exacerbate the issue, as the natural vegetation currently absorbs toxins released from vehicle exhausts.

Some submissions also raised concerns that possible increased traffic levels along the route might result in higher levels of noise pollution. The removal of trees along the bus corridor could potentially increase noise levels further, due to the trees currently acting as a natural sound barrier.

Particular concerns were raised by some residents located between Estate Avenue and the Strand Road, where a large proportion of the trees are proposed to be removed.

### ***NTA Response to Issue 6***

The Proposed Scheme would generally reduce traffic capacity along the CBC route, with a modelled forecast of reduced flows on the CBC - which would assist in reducing the overall noise and air quality impacts of through traffic. Local traffic management measures are also proposed to ensure that through traffic movement on local side streets is minimised. A particular example of this is on Georges Avenue. The Proposed Scheme being progressed shall include a controlled exit, for authorised vehicles only, provided from George's Avenue (South) onto Frascati Road. This measure creates a cul-de-sac for vehicles on George's Avenue (north of Frascati Park) and is being proposed to address projected noise impacts on George's Avenue following an assessment of traffic

modelling data. The noise impacts are projected as a result of the Proposed Scheme due to re-routing of traffic from Carysfort Avenue to George's Avenue via Anglesea Avenue.

Other offline traffic management measures being proposed as part of the Proposed Scheme include measures at Clyde Lane (to make the westernmost c. 70m of Clyde Lane one-way north/westbound on approach to Clyde Road) and at Pembroke Park (No Right turn onto Herbert Park from Pembroke Park). While not directly on the Blackrock to Merrion CBC, these measures forming part of the overall Proposed Scheme go towards mitigating potential air and noise issues on the CBC itself.

In respect of the effect of trees on noise, individual trees do not provide any significant noise abatement, although they can provide a visual screen which helps from a noise perception perspective. Design development has involved minimising tree loss, for example along Merrion Road where trees are now being retained. The overall impact on trees is that the Proposed Scheme would include a greater number of trees to be planted than would be removed.

An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) has been prepared for the Proposed Scheme and submitted as part of the planning application. The EIAR includes an assessment of potential noise and air impacts due to redistribution of traffic. The assessment contains projected air pollution and noise levels for comparison with existing levels and with relevant limit values. These impacts will be taken into account by An Bord Pleanála in its assessment of the Proposed Scheme.

## Issue 7: Devaluation of Property

A number of submissions raised concerns that proposals could impact the value or development potential of their property. These submissions were received from both businesses and landowners.

Residents of Merrion Road and Estate Avenue were concerned with the proposals for land acquisition. Concerns of residents related to the suggested loss of architectural heritage, reduction in road symmetry, negative impact on the community, loss of mature trees, reduction of garden area, reduced privacy, increased noise levels, increased vibrations, reduced safety crossing the road, reduced parking, impact on protected railings, impact on health due to reduced air quality. Residents were concerned that these suggested impacts would negatively impact their property value. Residents suggested extending the 3-lane cross-section, currently proposed between the Strand Road and Elm Court Apartments, to extend to between the Strand Road and Herbert Avenue.

Residents also suggested the cycle lane and bus lane share a lane inbound with safety measures such as signal controlled priority, or reduced speed limit, in order to reduce the need for land acquisition.

Some submissions raised concerns that the proposed junction at Elmpark Green Campus would not be capable of facilitating future capacity demand at the junction. An organisation noted they were potentially planning to develop and

intensify uses at the site in the future. The organisation was concerned that proposed access changes might reduce their ability to expand, thereby reducing their potential property value.

### ***NTA Response to Issue 7***

Where potential land acquisition is envisaged, the NTA have, and will continue to, engage readily with landowners potentially impacted by the proposed scheme. This engagement process will seek to agree measures, whether financial and/or physical, to mitigate the direct impact of the proposed scheme. Should a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) be required, this process will fairly assess the impact of the proposed scheme on properties and provide for mitigation measures including for the construction of new boundary walls.

Proposals to adjust junctions along this route have been prepared with the intention to increase the capacity for movement of people along this corridor included to and from developments located along the corridor.

In total, the PRO proposals have reduced the number of properties impacted by permanent land acquisition as a result of road widening from 40 properties down to 20 properties when compared to the EPR for the Blackrock to Merrion CBC.

The potential impacts of the proposed scheme have been fully quantified as part of the EIA process which has been carried out by the NTA during the preparation of a planning application for the scheme. These impacts will be considered by An Bord Pleanála in its assessment of the Proposed Scheme.

## **Issue 8: Protected Structures**

Several submissions were concerned that proposals along the corridor might negatively impact on protected structures. Specific issues included the following concerns:

- Residents of Merrion Road and Estate Avenue were concerned that land acquisition, and road widening between Estate Avenue and the Strand Road would disproportionately impact protected structures (railings) at this section of the route. There were concerns that the historic built environment of Merrion Village would be negatively impacted by road widening and land acquisition; and
- Some submissions were concerned about the replacement of railings at Blackrock College following proposed land acquisition at the school, and requested the railings be replaced with similar furnishings.

### ***NTA Response to Issue 8***

In order to deliver a network of effective Core Bus Corridors, the retrofitting of new bus and cycle lanes to existing constrained urban streets is required.

The NTA have always considered land acquisition to be a last resort in the development of its schemes. However, provision for the more sustainable modes of transport (bus, bicycle etc.) requires that protective space is dedicated to these modes, to ensure continuity, reliability and safety.



Where existing railings are proposed to be removed or relocated, the intention is that the railings shall be relocated in a like-for-like manner. These will be moved and reinstated in compliance with required guidance and best practice so as to retain insofar as possible the original appearance.

The potential impact of the scheme on Heritage items has been detailed as part of the EIA process which has been prepared by the NTA during the preparation of a planning application for the scheme. These impacts will be taken into account by An Bord Pleanála in its assessment of the Proposed Scheme

## Issue 9: Loss of Parking

Some residents along the route, whose properties fronted the scheme were concerned about potential reductions in parking. This issue was particularly acute at locations where residents did not have a driveway such as between the Strand Road and Herbert Avenue, and also on the Rock Road in front of Blackrock College.

Some residents between the Strand Road and Estate Avenue were concerned about the loss of both public and private parking along this stretch of the route. There were concerns that parking is already extremely limited at this location, and a reduction in spaces may impact residents in Merrion Village. Residents suggested extending the 3-lane cross-section from the Strand Road to Herbert Avenue, or for the cycle lane and bus lane to share a lane inbound.

Residents of Seafort Parade were concerned with proposals to reduce parking spaces, in order to facilitate turning of large vehicles on the road. Residents requested that the wall bordering Blackrock Park be moved back, into the park to allow space for large vehicles to turn and to also improve residential parking.

### ***NTA Response to Issue 9***

As part of the preliminary design process a Parking Survey Report was prepared to understand the impacts of the scheme in terms of parking. The impact on public parking and loading has been reviewed, along with consideration being given to issues raised in the submissions received, with alternative options considered where feasible to minimise and/or mitigate any impact on local business owners, residents and community members.

On Merrion Road, in the vicinity of Merrion Gates, the PRO proposes to provide dedicated on-street parking. This location currently only permits time-plated informal parking within a clearway along a shared bus-lane.

While it is not intended to adjust parking provision within Seafort Parade, the PRO proposes to retain an element on on-street parking and loading opportunities on Rock Road in line with existing provision.

The interaction of cycle facilities with car parking and loading has been carefully considered in the PRO to ensure the safety of all users, with cycle tracks routed around the back of parking and loading bays, which improves the ease of parking while improving safety for cyclists.

Continued use of on-street parking on local side roads and private and public off-street parking would provide resilience with respect to local parking provision.

Aspects of the Proposed Scheme and network proposals are expected to mitigate the reduction in parking (such as the reduction of on-street parking on Merrion Road and Rock Road) by reducing the reliance on private cars due to availability of an improved bus network with journey time reliability, by the availability of improved cycling infrastructure, and by the continued and managed use of private off-street parking.

The potential impacts of the proposed scheme have been assessed as part of the EIA process which has been carried out by the NTA during the preparation of a planning application for the scheme. These impacts will be considered by An Bord Pleanála in its assessment of the Proposed Scheme.

## Issue 10: Traffic Issues

Some submissions raised concerns that the cross-section design between Estate Avenue and the Strand Road was overly constrained, which could lead to congestion at this location. Residents and commuters raised concerns that the road could become a bottleneck at this location. Some commuters suggested reducing the provision of parking and some residents suggested combining the bus and cycle tracks. An interested party also suggested introducing a slip-lane from Merrion Road to the Strand Road at this location, to reduce the potential for congestion at this junction, while the Merrion Gates are closed.

Residents also raised concerns that congestion at this point could increase air and noise pollution at this section of road. Residents were also concerned that the removal of trees at this section could exacerbate this issue.

### ***NTA Response to Issue 10***

The proposed traffic management measures, in combination with a more reliable bus service and enhanced cycle facilities would facilitate a modal shift for the corridor, and reduce through commuter traffic. Traffic management measures (e.g. turn bans, directional signage strategy, sections of filtered permeability on local streets) have been proposed to manage traffic on the road network including measures to mitigate impacts of traffic re-routing onto residential streets.

These include traffic control measures at the George's Avenue exit to Frascati Road, as well as offline measures at Clyde Lane and Pembroke Park as described in the response to Issue 6 above.

The precise impacts of the scheme on the surrounding road network, outside of the main CBC route, have been assessed as part of the traffic modelling exercise, with appropriate treatment and/or mitigation measures provided where necessary. The potential residual traffic impacts of the proposed scheme have been assessed as part of the EIA process which has been carried out by the NTA during the preparation of a planning application for the scheme. These impacts will be considered by An Bord Pleanála in its assessment of the Proposed Scheme.

## 3 Third Public Consultation (Nov-Dec 2020)

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### 3.1 Overview

The third non-statutory public consultation on the updated draft PRO, ran from 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020 until 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020.

Every property owner potentially affected by the proposals was notified by post and a one-to-one meeting was offered in each case.

Copies of the CBC PRO consultation brochure were available to the public via the BusConnects website, could be sent by post on request, and were available for download from the Virtual Consultation Room. Relevant background technical reports were also available for downloading from the Authority's website.

The public were invited to make written submissions relating to the updated draft PRO consultation brochure. Submissions could be made by post or by email.

One-to-one phone calls were offered to affected landowners as part of the consultation period, in place of face-to-face meetings.

In addition, visitors to the virtual consultation rooms were provided with an opportunity to request a call back from the design team to discuss the scheme.

### 3.2 Information Provided in Public Consultation

Due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic and associated Government restrictions, the third non-statutory Public Consultation was held largely virtually. As such, Virtual Consultation Rooms for each CBC were developed and published on the BusConnects website. These rooms provided a description of each Preferred Route from start to finish with supporting maps and included information of all revisions made, if any, since the previous rounds of public consultation as well as other supporting documents.

The CBC Information Brochure was available for downloading from the NTA's BusConnects website (<https://busconnects.ie>) and in the Virtual Consultation Room. Relevant background technical reports were also available for downloading from the NTA's BusConnects website.

The Public Consultation documentation provided information about the work that has been carried out as part of the BusConnects Core Bus Corridor Study.

Additional information was provided on the official BusConnects website:

<https://busconnects.ie/initiatives/core-bus-corridors/background-information/technical-documents/>

The additional supporting information on the website included:

- Draft Preferred Route Option Report – November 2020
- Proposed Approach to Environmental Assessment – November 2020

- Draft Transport Modelling Report – November 2020
- Corridor 15 - Blackrock to Merrion, Emerging Preferred Route - Public Consultation Report 2018/2019;
- Dún Laoghaire to City Centre Core Bus Corridor – Stage F Road Safety Audit including Designer’s Response to Road Safety Audit;
- Dún Laoghaire to City Centre Core Bus Corridor – CBC Feasibility Study and Options Assessment Report – Route Options Assessment Report incl. Appendices;
- Concept Scheme Drawings for the EPR;
- Concept Scheme Drawings for the draft PRO; and
- Traffic Count Data 2019 – 2020.

### 3.3 Approach to Assessing the Submissions

The review of the submissions commenced in December 2020 once the consultation period had closed. The NTA received **201** no. submissions for the Blackrock to Merrion updated draft PRO, from the 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2020 until the 16<sup>th</sup> of December 2020. Most entries were digital (email and/or digital letter via email). No petitions with multiple signatures were received.

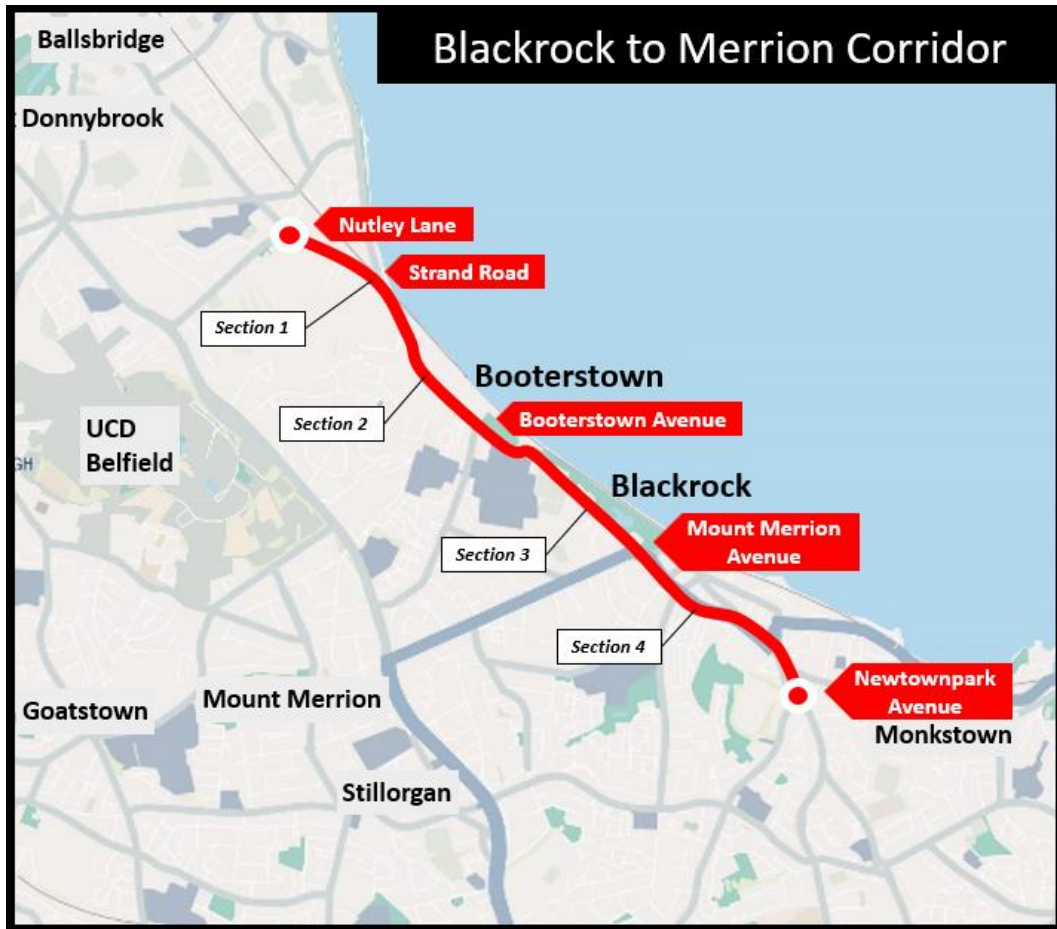
All submissions, including notes from meetings with impacted landowners and stakeholders, were entered into a database and assessed.

### 3.4 Analysis of Issues Raised by Section

The CBC was divided into four sections, and the issues raised in each submission were entered and categorised in the database by geographical section, by issue type and comment type. The four sections were:

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

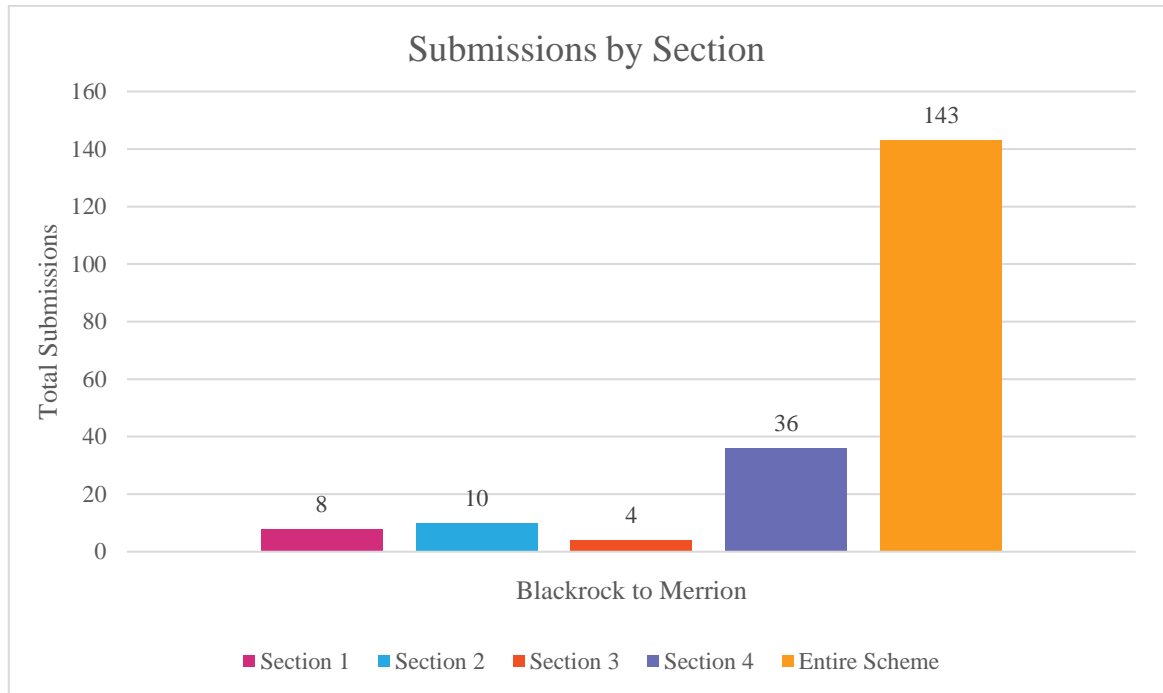
In addition to the four sections, submissions were also categorised as relating to ‘The Entire Scheme’ where the submission referred to multiple areas, or the scheme as a whole.



**Figure 4: Blackrock to Merrion Core Bus Corridor Map**

The 'Entire Scheme' made up the majority of the responses, with approximately 71% of the total submissions. Submissions that addressed Section 4 'Mount Merrion Avenue to Newtownpark Avenue' made up the majority of responses allocated to one section, with approximately 18% of the total submissions. Section 2 'Strand Road to Booterstown Avenue' accounted for approximately 5% of submissions. Section 1 'Nutley Lane to Strand Road' accounted for approximately 4% of submissions and Section 3 'Boosterstown Avenue to Mount Merrion Avenue' received approximately 2% of the total submissions.

The distribution of submissions, across the various sections of the scheme can be seen below in **Figure 5** and **Table 4**.



**Figure 5: Distribution of Submissions per Section of the Blackrock to Merrion Core Bus Corridor.**

**Table 4: Number of Submissions per Section of the Blackrock to Merrion Core Bus Corridor.**

Section	Number of Comments	Percentage
1: Nutley Lane to Strand Road	8	4%
2: Strand Road to Booterstown Avenue	10	5%
3: Booterstown Avenue to Mount Merrion Avenue	4	2%
4: Mount Merrion Avenue to Newtownpark Avenue	36	18%
The Entire Scheme	143	71%
Total Assessed	201	100%

### 3.5 Profile of Those Making Submissions

Of the submissions received:

- 65% were from residents of the study area who are not directly impacted by the scheme and typically referred to local matters;

- 9% were from landowners of houses that are directly impacted, for example by loss of parking, or land acquisition;
- 9% were from representative bodies or associations, and mainly address community-focused issues;
- 3% were from businesses and institutions located in the study area, and mainly address specific impacts of the scheme; and
- 4% were from public bodies, addressing infrastructure issues (Dublin City Council, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council and Dublin Bus).
- 10% were from politicians, addressing issues in the study area.

### 3.6 Themes Raised in the Submissions

All **201** submissions received by the NTA were reviewed and the issues raised were categorised, summarised and analysed. A total of 8 main themes were identified during this review process. The frequency of each of these themes has been listed below in **Table 5**. Further information on specific issues raised within the submissions has been provided in the following sections. Appendix A provides in-depth listing of the various issues raised in each section.

**Table 5: Frequency of Themes raised through the Submissions.**

Theme	Frequency of Comments
Accessibility/ Traffic Impact	88 comments
Integration / Bus Network	73 comments
Land Acquisition	54 comments
Safety	80 comments
Environmental Issues	66 comments
Social Impact	17 comments
Economy / Impact on Local Business	18 comments
Heritage	41 comments

### 3.7 Summary of The Main Issues Raised

This section identifies the key issues raised in the third non-statutory public consultation process. The NTA have established the validity of the concerns, the potential consequences for the project, and determined how best to address the issue and /or mitigate the negative impact.

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

1. Cyclist Safety;
2. Pedestrian Safety;
3. Supportive of the Scheme;
4. Vehicular Access to Properties;
5. Removal of Trees;
6. Increased Air & Noise Pollution;
7. Devaluation of Property;
8. Protected Structures;
9. Loss of Parking;
10. Traffic Issues; and
11. Location of Bus Stops.

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

## Issue 1: Cyclist Safety

The submissions received in relation to cyclist safety generally presented specific observations on junction layouts and potential interventions along the links. The following summarises some of the specific items raised in the submissions received:

- Concerns were expressed about pedestrian and cyclist safety in relation to the layout proposed in the section from Booterstown Avenue to Strand Road. Concerns were mainly related to the cycle track located between the footpath and the car parking and the space for opening car doors adjacent to the cycle track (particularly outside St. Mary's Boys National School).
- Submissions expressed concerns in relation to the area of Strand Road with regard to the redesign of the Merrion Gates pedestrian access and the contraflow cycle lane at the Merrion Gates junction (referring to pedestrian and cyclist safety).
- Concern was expressed about the layout of major junctions of the route particularly at St. Vincent's University Hospital, Elmpark Green (cycling off a straight-line route) and Mount Merrion Avenue junction. Concerns were also raised about the cycle tracks along Merrion Road (between Mount Merrion Avenue and Merrion Gates) and outside Blackrock College being too narrow. Recommendations include the downscaling of the Merrion Gates junction (removal of long-right turn lane to Merrion Gates) and Rock Hill junction (no need for dedicated left and right turn lanes on Rock Hill). Another recommendation includes closing one of the St. Helen's Road entrances onto the Rock Road to increase safety for pedestrians and cyclists. They also



recommended adding cycle lanes at the junction of Temple Hill and Newtown Avenue to future-proof this link into the design of the corridor.

### ***NTA response to Issue 1***

All reasonable measures are being proposed to provide a consistent implementation of a cycle regime that helps achieve the objective of the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network along the route. This is seen as a necessary, and desirable addition to the current transport options across Dublin to help reduce car use.

In response to issues raised during previous rounds of public consultation, a number of sections along the route were amended as part of the PRO design development, and a key outcome of many of these design interventions is enhanced provision for cyclists. Other key design development changes are:

- The Merrion Road / St. Vincent's University Hospital junction design has been revised further to realign cycle crossings to suit cyclist desire lines and to offer smoother transitions where practicable, including to and from the hospital where it is now proposed to tie the junction into the existing cycle lanes.
- The Merrion Road / Elmpark Green junction design has been reviewed and full protection is proposed for cyclists, including protected waiting area for cyclists turning right from Elmpark Green.
- The cycle track alignment at the Rock Road / Booterstown Avenue junction is proposed to be improved to cater for the cyclists' desire line. A short section of cycle track is proposed on approach to the junction from the Booterstown Avenue arm to safely connect cyclists arriving from the side road into the protected junction.
- The proposed pedestrian crossing on the Rock Road just north of the main Blackrock College gates is now proposed to be a Toucan Crossing to facilitate cyclists also.
- The general traffic exit from Rock Hill onto its junction with Rock Road is proposed to be reduced to a single lane from two lanes to accommodate short sections of cycle track on approach to and exit from the junction.
- The Frascati Road / Carysfort Avenue junction design has been revised further to realign cycle crossings to suit cyclist desire lines and to offer smoother transitions where practicable, including to and from the side roads.
- The Frascati Road / Temple Road / Barclay Court junction design has been revised further to realign cycle crossings to suit cyclist desire lines and to offer smoother transitions where practicable, including to and from the side roads.
- The Temple Road / Temple Hill / Newtown Avenue junction design has been revised further to realign cycle crossings to suit cyclist desire lines and to offer smoother transitions where practicable, including to and from the side roads.
- Entry Treatments are proposed at all uncontrolled side roads.

The NTA has developed specific design guidance (BusConnects Preliminary Design Guidance Booklet - BCPDGB) to ensure that a consistent approach is adopted across all BusConnects CBC routes, with road user safety and the Protected Junction for Cyclists forming a central pillar of this guidance.

Specific attention is being given to the sections of the route which interact with existing, temporary, and planned cycle infrastructure such as the Sutton to Sandycove Greenway (East Coast Trail) at Merrion Gates, Blackrock Park and Blackrock Village. Junction designs are also being refined to ensure that cyclists can negotiate and traverse junctions safely and more smoothly. Along the corridors, cyclists will be provided with segregated cycle tracks and protected junctions where practicable.

In relation to concerns over parking bays being outside proposed cycle tracks, where parking / loading is proposed along the CBC, the preferred location for raised adjacent cycle tracks is between the pedestrian footpath and any proposed parking / loading bays to provide additional protection for cyclists. A buffer zone is proposed between the cycle track and the parking / loading zone to minimise any conflict between opening doors and cyclists. The risk associated with car passengers crossing the cycle track is far less than the risk associated with vehicles crossing a cycle lane. This is consistent with Figure 4.53 of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) and has been detailed within the BCPDGB.

All cycle tracks on the approaches to junctions are proposed to be aligned to provide a smoother transition to the cycle lanes on the protected junction.

Where practicable, junctions were further developed so as to provide short sections of cycle track on approach to the junction from the side roads in order to safely connect cyclists arriving from the side roads into the protected junctions. In some cases, this was achieved through reducing the number of approaching traffic lanes, such as at Rock Hill, Carysfort Avenue and Temple Road, Carysfort Avenue, and Rock Hill.

Junctions have been designed with physical kerbed segregation at junction corners providing a protected junction for cyclists. In the preliminary design, cycle tracks also continue straight as raised tracks across un-signalised side roads, and vehicles will need to navigate a 60mm kerb to cross the cycle track. This is intended to make such side roads safer for cyclists, with consideration for potential conflicts with vehicles turning into and emerging from these roads.

Slip lanes at junctions have been removed, including at Mount Merrion Avenue, to accommodate the proposed protected junction for cyclists. In the preliminary design, cycle tracks also continue straight as raised tracks across un-signalised side roads, and vehicles will need to navigate a 60mm kerb to cross the cycle track. This is intended to make such side roads safer for cyclists, with consideration for potential conflicts with vehicles turning into and emerging from these roads.

Where sufficient space is available, Island Bus Stops have been proposed, which help to reduce the conflict between users departing the bus and cyclists. Notably following this consultation, an additional bus stop has been redesigned as an

Island Bus Stop, at Temple Road outbound, which was previously designed as a lay-by bus stop.

Shared landing areas are proposed where there is insufficient space to provide an island bus stop. The cycle track width would be reduced on the approach as a traffic calming measure to slow cyclists down and an island is proposed for bus users arriving and departing; this is to prevent bus users stepping directly into the cycle track. Cyclists will be required to yield to pedestrians when a bus is stopped at the bus stop.

The final designs have been undertaken in accordance with all relevant design standards and an independent Stage 1 Road Safety Audit has been carried out prior to finalisation in order to identify and rectify any issues identified.

## Issue 2: Pedestrian Safety

The submissions received in relation to pedestrian safety generally referred to proposals at St. Vincent's Park and along Rock Road / Merrion Road. The following summarises some of the specific items raised in the submissions received:

- A number of submissions from resident groups and individual residents expressed concerns about pedestrian safety due to the proposed location of the new bus stop at St. Vincent's Park. One such submission raised concerns about the proposed lay-by at St. Vincent's Park, inferring that the plans propose to remove the current pedestrian access from St. Vincent's Park to Temple Hill without an apparent plan to facilitate any new pedestrian access. In addition, concerns were raised suggesting an unsafe crossing at the junction between Temple Hill and St. Vincent's Park.
- Submissions raised concerns about the two-way cycle track on the outbound side of Rock Road / Merrion Road, suggesting that pedestrian footpaths appear to be reduced in the new layout.

### ***NTA Response to Issue 2***

In response to issues raised during the EPR and draft PRO public consultations, a number of sections along the route were amended as part of the PRO, and a key outcome of many of these design interventions is enhanced provision for vulnerable road users.

Within the PRO proposal, along with general improvements to the vulnerable road user environment where possible, amendments have been made on certain key sections referred to in the submissions, with the following key design developments:

The arrangement at St. Vincent's Park has been re-evaluated and the design amended. This includes the relocation of the proposed bus stop to the north of the Monkstown Road / Temple Hill junction, which in turn removes the potential requirement to encroach past the existing boundary wall at this location and removes the potential impact to the pedestrian access point. This arrangement also

introduces an additional pedestrian crossing on the western arm of the signalised junction.

The dedicated right-turn lane into St. Helen's Road is proposed to be removed and as a result the footpath widths along Rock Road at this location are to be widened within the PRO proposals in comparison to the draft PRO.

### Issue 3: Supportive of the Scheme

Many of the submissions received were supportive of the CBC proposals, yet still proposed that there were improvements to be made along the scheme.

#### *NTA Response to Issue 3*

The NTA welcomes this positive feedback on the objectives of the scheme as well as the support of specific changes made to the scheme in response to submissions from the public. The NTA will continue to engage with the public through the statutory consultation process to facilitate the development of a scheme that maximises the benefit to all.

### Issue 4: Vehicular Access to Properties

The submissions received in relation to vehicular access generally referred to the proposals along the Merrion Road.

In particular, submissions expressed concerns over loss of driveway width where road widening into private lands has been proposed, and where the proposals have increased the number of vehicular and bus lanes which need to be traversed to access and exit properties.

#### *NTA response to Issue 4*

Individual property access has been considered within the preliminary design stage with the particular issues given attention where required. In some cases, this has resulted in a requirement to widen gateways/driveways and this proposal will be incorporated into reinstatement works at the property.

Any potential safety issues associated with property access were considered in the Stage 1 Road Safety Audit carried out on the design proposals, and the design amended where relevant.

### Issue 5: Removal of Trees

The concerns that were expressed relate mainly to aesthetics of the area and environmental concerns, including carbon absorption, biodiversity aspects, air quality and noise pollution. The following summarises some of the specific items raised in the submissions received:

- A residents group expressed concerns about the loss of the green space at St. Vincent's Park which is often accessed by the elderly (posing that this area is necessary for aesthetics, privacy, air filtering and acoustic absorption) and about the removal of trees.

- Concerns were raised about the scheme in relation to street trees and requested the provision of an EIA for the plan.
- The removal of two mature trees as a result of the parking bays on the outbound side of Merrion Road was noted as an issue in the submissions.
- Concerns were also expressed about potential environmental issues (air quality, noise and light pollution) in relation to the proposed removal of trees and gardens as a result of the widening of Merrion Road.

#### ***NTA Response to Issue 5***

The NTA recognises the environmental, visual and amenity value of trees, foliage and planting in the urban landscape. However, this is being balanced against the requirement to provide sustainable means of moving people around the city-region. Hence, the NTA is committed to sustainable transport, and also to appropriate planting in the urban realm for visual and environmental purposes. A full planting scheme has been designed and would be included as part of the CBC works under the Proposed Scheme. The planting scheme would optimise the public realm and environmental benefits, while minimising the maintenance requirement and impact on public lighting

The NTA has acquired the services of an expert arboriculturist to assess the trees on the CBC. The impact on trees has been accurately quantified during the preliminary design stage, with a greater number of trees proposed to be planted than would be removed.

Within the PRO proposal, amendments have been made on certain key sections referred to in the submissions, such as the following.

The arrangement at St. Vincent's Park has been re-evaluated and the design amended. This includes the relocation of the proposed bus stop to the north of the Monkstown Road / Temple Hill junction, which in turn removes the potential requirement to encroach past the existing boundary wall at this location and removes the previously proposed impact to the existing trees and green space at this location.

In the case of parking bays on the outbound side of Merrion Road, replacement trees are proposed to account for any loss of trees.

For the proposed road widening at Blackrock Park, a new relocated retaining wall is necessary. The construction methodology proposes to construct the wall from the roadside in order to mitigate the impact on the park including the embankment and existing planting / trees.

The potential impacts of the proposed scheme have been fully quantified as part of the EIA process which has been carried out by the NTA during the preparation of a planning application for the scheme. These impacts will be considered by An Bord Pleanála in its assessment of the Proposed Scheme.

## Issue 6: Increased Air and Noise Pollution

The submissions received in relation to pedestrian safety generally referred to proposals at St. Vincent's Park and along Rock Road / Merrion Road. The following summarises some of the specific items raised in the submissions received:

- A resident group expressed concerns about the proposed land take at St. Vincent's Park (posing that moving the wall and removing trees could reduce acoustic absorption in proximity to the N31 and R113).
- Concerns were also expressed in relation to the position of the bus stop as buses passing close to houses might increase noise and air pollution and impact on people's health.
- Residents raised concerns about increased noise and pollution from traffic being closer to the property where road widening is being proposed.
- Concerns were also expressed about potential environmental issues (air quality, noise and light pollution) in relation to what the submission interpreted as a proposed ban on right-turning traffic from Merrion Road onto Strand Road (and the potential traffic impacts).

### ***NTA Response to Issue 6***

The proposed scheme would generally reduce traffic capacity along the CBC route, with a modelled forecast of reduced flows on the CBC - which would assist in reducing the overall noise and air quality impacts of through traffic. Local traffic management measures are also proposed to ensure that through traffic movement on local side streets is minimised.

A particular example of this is on Georges Avenue. The Proposed Scheme being progressed shall include a controlled exit, for authorised vehicles only, provided from George's Avenue (South) onto Frascati Road. This measure creates a cul-de-sac for vehicles on George's Avenue (north of Frascati Park) and is being proposed to address projected noise impacts on George's Avenue following an assessment of traffic modelling data. The noise impacts are projected as a result of the Proposed Scheme due to re-routing of traffic from Carysfort Avenue to George's Avenue via Anglesea Avenue.

Other offline traffic management measures being proposed as part of the Proposed Scheme include measures at Clyde Lane (to make the westernmost c. 70m of Clyde Lane one-way north/westbound on approach to Clyde Road) and at Pembroke Park (No Right turn onto Herbert Park from Pembroke Park). While not directly on the Blackrock to Merrion CBC, these measures forming part of the overall Proposed Scheme go towards mitigating potential air and noise issues on the CBC itself.

In respect of the effect of trees on noise, individual trees do not provide any significant noise abatement, although they can provide a visual screen which helps from a noise perception perspective.

Design development has involved minimising tree loss, for example along Merrion Road where trees are now being retained. The overall impact on trees is

that the Proposed Scheme will include a greater number of trees to be planted than would be removed.

The arrangement at St. Vincent's Park has been re-evaluated and the design amended. This includes the relocation of the proposed bus stop to the north of the Monkstown Road / Temple Hill junction, which in turn removes the potential requirement to encroach past the existing boundary wall at this location and removes the previously proposed impact to the existing trees and green space at this location.

An EIAR has been prepared for the Proposed Scheme and submitted as part of the planning application. The EIAR includes an assessment of potential noise and air impacts due to redistribution of traffic. The assessment contains projected air pollution and noise levels for comparison with existing levels and with relevant limit values. These impacts will be taken into account by An Bord Pleanála in its assessment of the Proposed Scheme.

### Issue 7: Devaluation of Property

Submissions were received which raised concerns that proposals could impact the value or development potential of their property. Residents raised concerns about losing part of front gardens (noting the potential impact on historical railing-hedging), posing this could result in reduced privacy, increase in noise levels and devaluation of the property. Submissions noted where such properties are included in the record of protected structures.

#### *NTA Response to Issue 7*

Where potential land acquisition is envisaged, the NTA have, and will continue to, engage readily with landowners potentially impacted by the proposed scheme. This engagement process will seek to agree measures, whether financial and/or physical, to mitigate the direct impact of the proposed scheme. Should a CPO be required, this process will fairly assess the impact of the proposed scheme on properties and provide for mitigation measures including for the construction of new boundary walls.

Proposals to adjust junctions along this route have been prepared with the intention to increase the capacity for movement of people along this corridor included to and from developments located along the corridor.

In total, the PRO proposals have reduced the number of properties impacted by permanent land acquisition as a result of road widening from 40 properties down to 20 properties when compared to the EPR for the Blackrock to Merrion CBC.

The potential impacts of the proposed scheme have been fully quantified as part of the EIA process which has been carried out by the NTA during the preparation of a planning application for the scheme. These impacts will be considered by An Bord Pleanála in its assessment of the Proposed Scheme.

## Issue 8: Protected structures

Several submissions were concerned that proposals along the corridor might negatively impact on protected structures. Specific issues included the following concerns:

- A resident group expressed concerns about the new lay-by bus stop at St Vincent's Park – stating that removing and reconstructing the wall of the boundary of St Vincent's Park estate might damage a protected structure. Concerns were also raised on the removal of trees as they represent an important piece of the protected landscape and there might be an impact on aesthetics.
- Residents were concerned about the area of Merrion Village between Merrion Gates junction and St Vincent's University Hospital, particularly regarding portions of the gardens/railings, forming the frontage of protected structures, subject to land acquisition to accommodate the layout.

### ***NTA Response to Issue 8***

In order to deliver a network of effective Core Bus Corridors, the retrofitting of new bus and cycle lanes to existing constrained urban streets is required. The NTA have always considered land acquisition to be a last resort in the development of its schemes. However, provision for the more sustainable modes of transport (bus, bicycle etc.) requires that protective space is dedicated to these modes, to ensure continuity, reliability and safety.

Where existing railings are proposed to be removed or relocated, the intention is that the railings shall be relocated in a like-for-like manner. These will be moved and reinstated in compliance with required guidance and best practice so as to retain insofar as possible the original appearance.

The arrangement at St. Vincent's Park has been re-evaluated and the design amended. This includes the relocation of the proposed bus stop to the north of the Monkstown Road / Temple Hill junction, which in turn removes the potential requirement to encroach past the existing boundary wall at this location and removes the previously proposed impact to the existing trees and green space at this location.

The potential impact of the scheme on Heritage items has been detailed as part of the EIA process which has been prepared by the NTA during the preparation of a planning application for the scheme. These impacts will be taken into account by An Bord Pleanála in its assessment of the Proposed Scheme.

## Issue 9: Loss of Parking

Some residents along the route, whose properties fronted the scheme were concerned about potential reductions in parking. Some of the particular locations raised are as follows:

- Concerns over the loss of parking at the junction of Booterstown Avenue and Rock Road, in the vicinity of the Old Punchbowl.



- Concerns over the removal of parking spaces in the Blackrock Village area.
- Concerns in relation to the removal of parking spaces as a result of the road widening at Merrion Road, both on-street and where driveways may be impacted.
- Concerns raised about car parking spaces changing to 'set down only' on the Rock Road.

### ***NTA Response to Issue 9***

As part of the preliminary design process a Preliminary Parking Survey Report was prepared to understand the impacts of the scheme in terms of parking. The impact on public parking and loading has been reviewed, along with consideration being given to issues raised in the submissions received, with alternative options considered where feasible to minimise and/or mitigate any impact on local business owners, residents and community members.

On Merrion Road, in the vicinity of the Merrion Gates junction, the PRO proposes to provide dedicated on-street parking. This location currently only permits time plated parking along a shared bus-lane.

The parking provision along the Rock Road, west of Booterstown Avenue, has been designed to balance the provision of general on-street parking with set-down parking for the nearby schools. The arrangement here has been designed to accommodate sufficiently wide footpaths, cycle tracks, as well as allowing for protective buffers.

The interaction of cycle facilities with car parking has been carefully considered in the PRO to ensure the safety of all users with cycle tracks routed around the back of parking bays, which improves the ease of parking.

Continued use of on-street parking on local side roads and private and public off-street parking would provide resilience with respect to local parking provision.

The potential impacts of the proposed scheme have been assessed as part of the EIA process which has been carried out by the NTA during the preparation of a planning application for the scheme. These impacts will be considered by An Bord Pleanála in its assessment of the Proposed Scheme.

## **Issue 10: Traffic Issues**

The submissions received in relation to traffic issues generally referred to proposals along Merrion Road from the Merrion Gates junction to Nutley Lane, and proposals for specific junctions such as at the Elmpark Green Campus. The following summarises some of the specific items raised in the submissions received:

- Concerns were expressed about the potential increase in traffic generated by the introduction of the bus lane from Trimleston Avenue to Elmpark Green Campus.
- Residents raised concerns about the single inbound traffic lane at the Merrion Gates junction where signal controlled priority is proposed (extending from

the Merrion Gates junction to Elm Court Apartments). It is suggested the extension be carried as far as the Herbert Avenue junction as this would preserve architectural uniformity and protected structures. Similar suggestions were presented, posing that such an intervention would increase safety entering and exiting Estate Avenue and Herbert Avenue.

- A resident's association raised concerns about traffic safety issues in relation to access and egress from premises including the Merrion Gates Medical Centre, Our Lady Queen of Peace Church, St. John's House Nursing Home, private residences and St Vincent's University Hospital.
- A submission raised a concern over what was interpreted to be a lack of a right turn at the Merrion Gates junction (suggesting such a proposal will lead to motorists attempting to access the Strand Road using the entrance to Elm Court, Estate Avenue, Herbert Avenue, St. Vincent's Hospital, or Merrion Village apartments as U-turn opportunities).
- Concerns were raised about the configuration of the Elmpark Green - Merrion Road junction, suggesting it will exceed its capacity under current traffic volumes; concerns regarding the impact in the reduction of traffic lanes, the access arrangements to the Elmpark Green Campus and the removal of pedestrian crossing across the entrance of the development.

#### ***NTA Response to Issue 10***

The proposed traffic management measures, in combination with a more reliable bus service and enhanced cycle facilities would facilitate a modal shift for the corridor, and reduce through commuter traffic. Traffic management measures (e.g. turn bans, directional signage strategy, sections of filtered permeability on local streets) have been proposed to manage traffic on the road network including measures to mitigate impacts of traffic re-routing onto residential streets

These include traffic control measures at the George's Avenue exit to Frascati Road, as well as offline measures at Clyde Lane and Pembroke Park as described in the response to Issue 6 above.

The precise impacts of the scheme on the surrounding road network, outside of the main CBC route, have been assessed as part of the traffic modelling exercise, with appropriate treatment and/or mitigation measures provided where necessary. The potential residual traffic impacts of the proposed scheme have been assessed as part of the EIA process which has been carried out by the NTA during the preparation of a planning application for the scheme. These impacts will be considered by An Bord Pleanála in its assessment of the Proposed Scheme.

Consultation and liaison has taken place with affected landowners to discuss the potential accommodation works necessary for the proposed works.

### **Issue 11: Location of Bus Stops**

Due to the information shown on the updated draft PRO drawings in relation to retention, relocation, and removal of bus stops, a number of submissions

expressed opinions on the proposals. The following summarises some of the specific items raised in the submissions received:

- A residents group expressed concern about the bus stop moved and introduction of a bus lay-by in proximity to St. Vincent's Park (arguing there is no need to accommodate a “passing bus” and requesting the bus stop remains in its current location). They suggested to consider alternative locations (i.e. along the Temple Road frontage of the adjacent site), posing it would serve a far larger residential catchment area and facilitate both the B3, B4 and 98 routes and at Temple Rd/Temple Hill/Newtown Ave junction.
- Submissions raised concerns about the new bus stop in the vicinity of the Merrion Gates junction, and the shared space arrangement, posing it is dangerous for pedestrians.
- Concerns were raised about the removal of inbound and outbound bus stops (No's 477 and 423) serving the residential area of Merrion Village.
- Concerns were expressed about the repositioning of the bus stop no. 3164 at St. Vincent's Park. It is suggested an upgrade of the junction at Monkstown Road, Stradbroke Road and Temple Hill (as the bus would come from Stradbroke Road before turning right onto Monkstown Road) and a new bus stop on Temple Road.
- A landowner expressed concerns about the proposed relocation of the Bus Stop 425 on the Merrion Road as it could impact the future access of the proposed development.
- A private group raised concerns about the existing location of the bus terminus at Blackrock Dart Station in relation to safety issues (argued that the current route is not suitable). They suggested moving the bus terminus to Booterstown DART Station and change Booterstown Junction on the Rock Road to allow bus only right-hand turn into Booterstown Dart Station car park (facilitating future terminus at this location).
- Concerns were raised about the bus stop locations along the CBC as there might be conflict between passengers and cyclists.
- Concerns were also expressed in relation to the position of certain bus stops, posing that buses passing close to or coming to a stop at houses might increase noise and air pollution and impact on people's health.

### ***NTA Response to Issue 11***

Within the PRO proposal, amendments have been made on certain key sections referred to in the submissions, such as the following.

The arrangement at St. Vincent's Park has been re-evaluated and the design amended. This includes the relocation of the proposed bus stop to the north of the Monkstown Road / Temple Hill junction, which in turn removes the potential requirement to encroach past the existing boundary wall at this location and removes the previously proposed impact to the existing trees and green space at this location.

In the PRO, island bus stop layouts have also been incorporated as the preferred arrangement for bus stops where they interact with a cycle track where space is available. Where space is constrained, cycle movement through bus stop locations would be managed through the provision of signage and markings, tactile paving and alignment changes to the cycle track. These proposals have been developed with pedestrian and safety in mind, with particular attention given to the safety of mobility impaired users.

A review of bus stop locations has been carried out as part of the design development for the scheme. This exercise was carried out to optimise the performance of the bus services on the CBC by reducing the journey time of the bus service, increasing the walking catchment of the bus stops and ensuring that key trip attractors located along the route are sufficiently covered within the catchment of bus.

This review was undertaken on the basis of a number of best practice guiding principles including consistent spacing of bus stops, locating stops in close proximity to junctions and pedestrian crossings, and spatial requirements for bus shelters and other bus stop infrastructure.

## 4 Summary of the Main Issues Raised

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This section consolidates the key issues raised in the public consultation process in both the second and the third non-statutory public consultations. The Authority will seek to establish the validity of the concerns, the potential consequences for the project, and how best to address the issue and /or mitigate the negative impact. Below is a summary of the key issues raised in the second and third non-statutory public consultations ranked in order of response mentions. Irrespective of the count, all submissions were considered equally to assess the concerns of all people making responses. These issues were then taken on board as part of the refinement of the Preferred Route design.

While a variety of matters were raised in the submissions within the second non-statutory public consultation, the key issues identified in relation to the draft PRO (as detailed in Section 2 of this report) were:

1. Cyclist Safety;
2. Pedestrian Safety;
3. Supportive of the Scheme;
4. Vehicular Access to Properties;
5. Removal of Trees;
6. Increased Air & Noise Pollution;
7. Devaluation of Property;
8. Protected Structures;
9. Loss of Parking; and
10. Traffic Issues.

Similarly, while a variety of matters were raised in the submissions within the third non-statutory public consultation, the key issues identified in relation to the updated draft PRO (as detailed in Section 3 of this report) were:

1. Cyclist Safety;
2. Pedestrian Safety;
3. Supportive of the Scheme;
4. Vehicular Access to Properties;
5. Removal of Trees;
6. Increased Air & Noise Pollution;
7. Devaluation of Property;
8. Protected Structures;
9. Loss of Parking;
10. Traffic Issues; and
11. Location of Bus Stops

## **Appendix A**

### **Summary of Issues Raised by Route Section (Second and Third Public Consultations)**

## Section 1: Nutley Lane to Strand Road



**Figure 6: Section 1 Nutley Lane to Strand Road**

The main comments observed within Section 1 include:

- A public body noted support for the removal of the slip-lane at the junction between Merrion Road and St Vincent's University Hospital entrance and suggested enhancing the public realm at this location;
- Residents were concerned about land acquisition along Merrion Road. Concerns raised included significant costs, loss of architectural heritage and symmetry, negative impact on the community, loss of mature trees, reduction of garden area, reduced privacy, increased noise levels, increased vibrations, reduced safety crossing the road, reduced parking, property devaluation, impact on protected railings, impact on health due to reduced air quality;
- A submission raised concerns that the stretch between the Nutley Lane and Strand Road had many instances where cycle lanes crossover bus stops. It was suggested that private parking could be reduced, and traffic lanes could be minimised in order to facilitate segregation between cyclists and bus stop users;

- Concerns were raised about trees being removed along this section of the bus corridor. Some submissions suggested that this section would experience a disproportionate loss of trees (10% of the total tree loss across the scheme) and requested that alternative measures be explored, in order to minimise tree loss;
- An interested party suggested the introduction of a left slip lane from the Merrion Road onto Strand Road, to reduce build-up of cars on the Merrion Road. To facilitate this provision, it was suggested that the bus and cycle lane eastbound could be merged;
- Concern was expressed over the layout of major junctions of this section, particularly at St. Vincent's University Hospital and Elmpark Green Campus (cycling off a straight-line route). Concerns were also raised about the cycle tracks along Merrion Road (between Mount Merrion Avenue and the Merrion Gates junction) being too narrow. Suggestions were expressed in relation to the downscaling of the junction in proximity to the Merrion Gates junction (removal of long-right turn lane to Merrion Gates);
- Residents were concerned about the area of Merrion Village between the Merrion Gates junction and St Vincent's University Hospital, particularly regarding portions of the gardens/railings, forming the frontage of protected structures, subject to land acquisition to accommodate the layout;
- It was suggested to extend the single inbound lane from the Merrion Gates junction, where signal controlled priority is to be provided, as far as the junction of Herbert Avenue/Merrion Road, as well as potentially introducing a single outbound lane with signal controlled priority (in addition to the inbound) from the traffic lights at Herbert Avenue to opposite the Elm Court Apartments;
- Concerns were raised about the proposed parking bays on Merrion Road (close to house no. 254 to 256 Merrion Road) as the proposal would require the removal of two trees;
- Concerns were raised about the removal of inbound and outbound bus stops (No 477 and 423) serving the residential area of Merrion Village;
- Submissions raised concerns about the new bus stop in the vicinity of the Merrion Gates junction, and the shared space arrangement, posing it is dangerous for pedestrians;
- Submissions expressed concerns in relation to the area of Strand Road with regard to the redesign of the Merrion Gates pedestrian access and the contraflow cycle lane at the Merrion Gates junction (referring to pedestrian and cyclist safety);
- Concerns were raised about the configuration of the Elmpark Green Campus - Merrion Road junction, suggesting it would exceed its capacity under current traffic volumes. Concerns regarding the impact of the reduction of traffic lanes, the access arrangements to the Elmpark Green Campus. A submission noted the indicated removal of pedestrian crossing across the entrance of the development;



- A resident's association raised concerns about traffic safety issues in relation to access and egress to/from premises including the Merrion Gates Medical Centre, Our Lady Queen of Peace Church, St. John's House Nursing Home, private residences, and St Vincent's University Hospital;
- A submission raised a concern over what was interpreted as a lack of a right turn at the Merrion Gates junction (suggesting such a proposal would lead to motorists attempting to access the Strand Road using the entrance to Elm Court, Estate Avenue, Herbert Avenue, St. Vincent's University Hospital, or Merrion Village apartments as U-turn opportunities) [*noted in responses above that there appears to have been a misinterpretation of the proposals, as the right turn is not proposed to be removed*];
- Concerns were expressed in relation to the removal of parking spaces as a result of the road widening at Merrion Road, both on-street and where driveways may be impacted; and
- Concerns were also expressed about potential environmental issues (air quality, noise and light pollution) in relation to the proposed removal of trees and gardens as a result of the widening of Merrion Road.

## Section 2: Strand Road to Booterstown Avenue



**Figure 7: Section 2 Strand Road to Booterstown Avenue**

The main comments observed within Section 2 were:

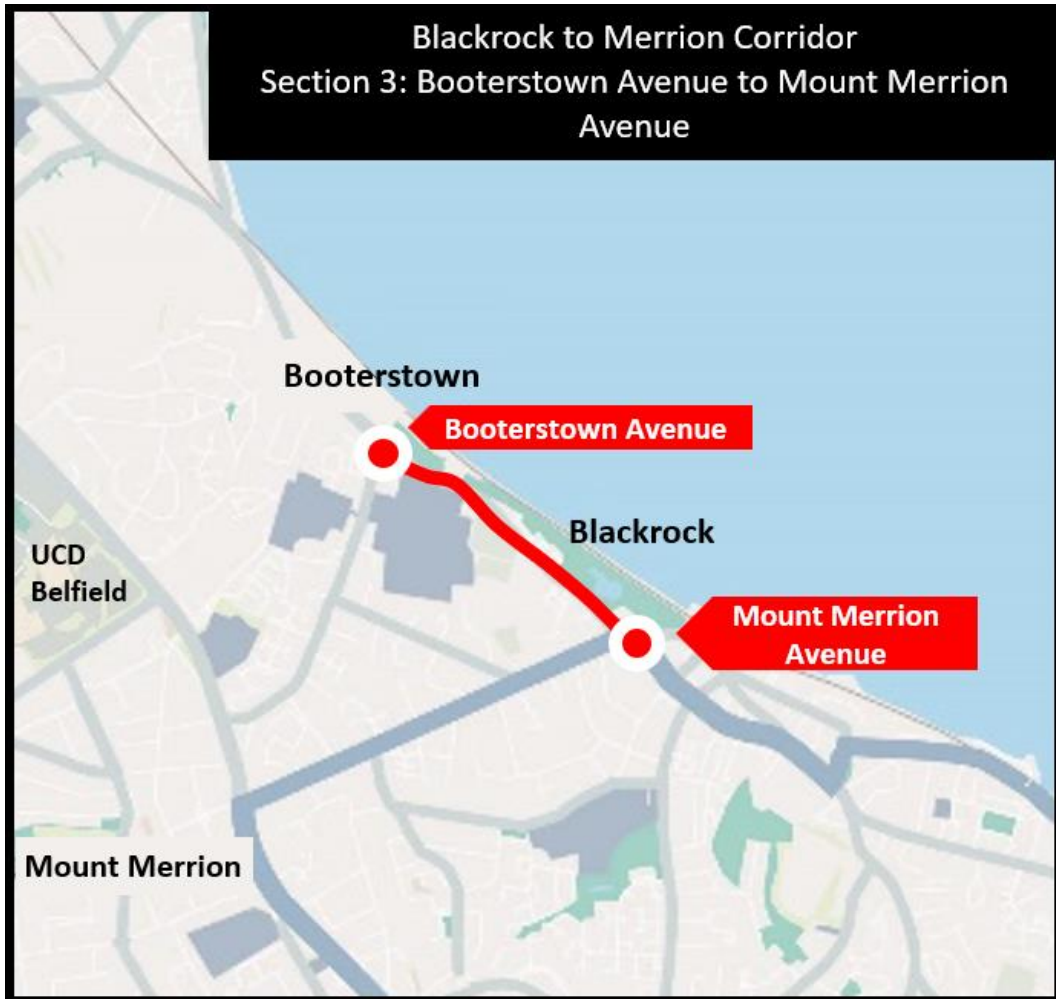
- Commuters and cyclists along the route requested a buffer be provided between the road and the two-way cycle track which runs between the Strand Road and Booterstown Avenue;
- A public body suggested signage and maps could be included on the two-way cycle track between the Strand Road and Booterstown Avenue, to provide clear instructions for cyclists using the route;
- A public body raised concerns that the footpath between the Strand Road and Blackrock Park is excessively narrow on the coastal side, and requested the footpath be extended in width;
- A submission suggested providing a Dutch Style junction at Elmpark Green Campus in order to provide further protection for cyclists;
- Concerns were raised over a number of proposed changes to the junction of Elmpark Green Campus and the Merrion Road, including a reduction of length of the right turn into the development, removal of the left turn lane into the development, reduction in the quantum of general traffic lanes passing the development, changes to the signalling at the junction, and changes to the pedestrian lights from staggered crossings to a single phase crossing;

An organisation has requested they be provided with detailed traffic assessments, the light signalisation plan, an explanation for the two-way cycle track opposite the development, landscaping proposals, and the impact on access arrangements during construction;

- A submission raised concerns that the proposed junction at Elmpark Green Campus, might not be capable of facilitating future vehicular demand, and requested that increased future potential capacity be facilitated at the junction;
- A business was concerned over land acquisition at their site on the Merrion Road opposite Elmpark Green Campus and requested any land acquisition be minimised at the site. In order to facilitate this, the business requested the alignment of the CBC be reviewed, and the two-way cycle track be reduced to one-way on both sides of the road;
- A business requested the two-way cycle track be reduced to one-way on both sides of the road in order to reduce the potential for conflicts between cyclists and vehicles exiting and entering the site;
- A business requested that proposed access to a proposed development be incorporated into the BusConnects designs, and suggested that this has been the case with other similar developments;
- A landowner raised concerns about proposed changes to the boundary between Merrion Road and Llandaff Terrace, and about proposed land acquisition, which could impact access to Llandaff Terrace. The landowner requested that proposals be re-examined, for an alternative solution;
- A resident requested that at Belview Avenue the bus stop be converted to a bypass, in order to protect cyclists at this location;
- A business on the Merrion Road requested they be provided with detailed plans and design specifications showing the exact location and extent of proposed works as soon as they are available, and are also provided with enough time to counter a response to proposed plans and design specifications;
- A public body suggested that at the T Junction at the end of Trimleston Avenue, the cycle lane or bus lane, or both be facilitated to bypass on the southbound side of the junction, as they suggest this has been proposed elsewhere;
- A public body requested confirmation on whether there is a proposed right turn ban into the southern arm of St Helen's Road;
- A resident requested that the 'set down' area located at the bottom of Booterstown Avenue be converted to loading bays for local businesses;
- A public body suggested that at the T Junction at the end of Booterstown Avenue, the cycle lane or bus lane, or both bypass on the southbound side of the junction, as has been proposed elsewhere;
- Concerns were expressed about the potential increase in traffic generated by the introduction of the bus lane from Trimleston Avenue to the Merrion Gates junction;

- Concerns were expressed about pedestrian and cyclist safety in relation to the layout proposed in the section from Booterstown Avenue to Strand Road. Concerns were mainly related to the cycle track located between the footpath and the car parking and the space for opening car doors adjacent to the cycle track (particularly outside St. Mary's Boys National School);
- Concerns were raised about the loss of parking at the junction of Booterstown Avenue and Rock Road, opposite the Old Punchbowl;
- Concerns raised about car parking spaces changing to 'set down only' on the Rock Road;
- It was suggested to close one entrance at St. Helen's Road onto the Rock Road to increase safety for pedestrian and cyclists; and
- A landowner expressed concerns about the proposed relocation of the Bus Stop 425 on the Merrion Road as it could impact the future access of the proposed development.

### Section 3: Booterstown Avenue to Mount Merrion Avenue



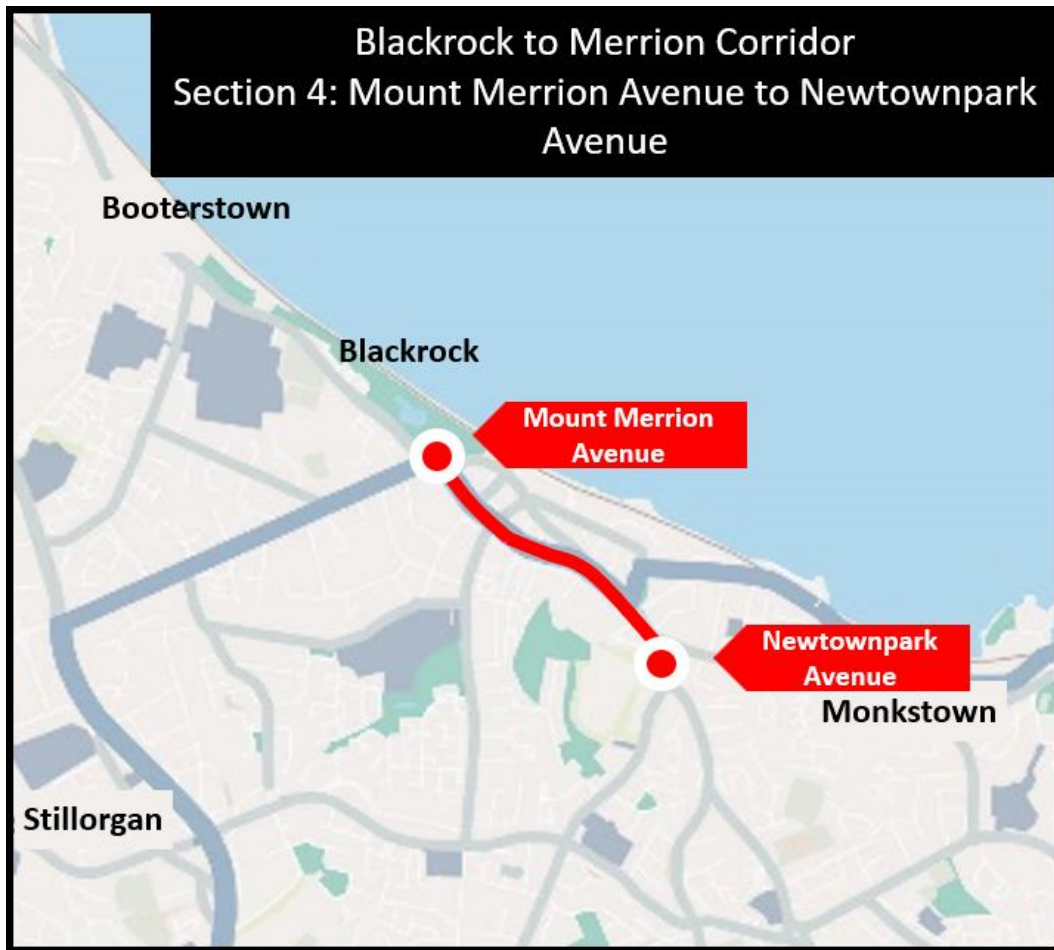
**Figure 8: Section 3 Booterstown Avenue to Mount Merrion Avenue**

The main comments observed within Section 3 include:

- A commuter along the route requested that the right-hand turn for vehicles travelling from the city centre (southbound) towards Blackrock, into Blackrock College be removed in order to protect cyclists travelling northbound;
- A resident living opposite Blackrock College was concerned that realigning the road at this location on the Rock Road could cause safety concerns for pedestrians. Residents were supportive of land acquisition at Blackrock College in order to increase footpath width;
- Residents were concerned with the replacement of railings at Blackrock College following proposed land acquisition at the school, and requested the railings be replaced with similar furnishings;
- Residents were concerned with potential loss of parking at Seafort Parade, and requested the park wall be moved back in order to facilitate large vehicles turning on the road, in addition to no loss of parking spaces;

- A resident requested that the bus stops at Blackrock College and Phoenix Terrace be converted to bypasses, in order to protect cyclists at both locations;
- A business requested that BusConnects facilitates the change of access to their site, with the purpose of mutual benefits for both BusConnects and the business;
- A commuter along the route requested the right-hand turn for vehicles travelling from the city centre (southbound) towards Blackrock, into Castledawson be removed in order to protect cyclists;
- Support was provided for the removal of slip lanes at Mount Merrion Avenue;
- A commuter requested that the 2 exit lanes from Mount Merrion Avenue onto the Rock Road be reduced to 1 exit lane in order to facilitate cycle tracks on both sides of Mount Merrion Avenue;
- A private group suggested moving the cycle tracks at the Mount Merrion Avenue junction further away from the road, located through the green/ public space;
- A public body suggested that at the T Junction at the end of Mount Merrion Avenue, the cycle lane or bus lane, or both bypass on the southbound side of the junction, as has been proposed elsewhere; and
- Concern was raised about the cycle tracks outside Blackrock College which they considered to be too narrow. Other concerns were raised about the Rock Hill junction (no need for dedicated left and right turn lanes on Rock Hill at this junction) and the Mount Merrion Avenue Junction.

## Section 4: Mount Merrion Avenue to Newtownpark Avenue



**Figure 9: Section 4 Mount Merrion Avenue to Newtownpark Avenue**

The main comments observed within Section 4 include:

- A private group requested the relocation of the bus terminus from Blackrock Dart Station to Booterstown Dart Station. It was suggested that this measure would improve pedestrian safety in Blackrock Village, particularly on Bath Place, facilitate future route frequency increases and be consistent with the Blackrock LAP. This provision would however require a redesign revision of the junction at Booterstown Avenue;
- A business on the Frascati Road in Blackrock requested that the BusConnects plans be updated to include the existing and updated access arrangements at their site, rather than the previous access arrangements;
- A public body noted that the left turn from Frascati Road into the shopping centre at the Rock Hill junction is currently banned in order to remove conflict between motorists entering the shopping centre and cyclists;
- A number of submissions suggested either eliminating or reducing the length of the right turn lane from Frascati Road onto Rock Hill in order to facilitate a bus stop bypasses southbound opposite the Frascati Centre;

- Cyclists and commuters along the route requested that the bike lanes outside the Frascati Shopping Centre and Blackrock Shopping Centre include protective kerbs or buffers (e.g. tree planters) between the cycle tracks and general traffic lanes in order to protect cyclists from potential conflicts with vehicles;
- A submission requested the access from Georges Avenue onto Frascati Road be closed off in order to protect cyclists travelling south bound. It suggested that vehicles would be directed onto the Frascati Road either by Carysfort Avenue or Rock Hill;
- A commuter requested that the 2 exit lanes on Carysfort Avenue be reduced to 1 exit lane in order to facilitate cycle tracks on both sides of the road;
- A politician requested bus priority signals be made compatible with all-phase green lights for pedestrians at the junction between Frascati Road and Carysfort Avenue;
- A public body raised concerns that the outbound bus stop, located just past Carysfort Avenue is too close to Carysfort Avenue;
- A submission requested that the left turn onto Sweetman's Avenue from Frascati Road be blocked in order to protect cyclists at this junction; another submission requested that the left turn from Sweetman's Avenue onto Frascati Road be blocked in order to protect cyclists;
- A submission requested that the continuation of Temple Road in Blackrock onto the main road of Temple Road be blocked, with vehicles instead having to utilise the junction between Frascati Road, Temple Road and Barclay Court in order to protect cyclists;
- A politician requested bus priority signals be made compatible with all-phase green lights for pedestrians at the junction between Frascati Road and Barclay Court;
- A submission also requested the junction between Temple Road and Craigmore Gardens be converted to a tabletop, in order to elevate cyclists from general traffic;
- A submission requested that cyclists be continually facilitated to turn left from Temple Road onto Newtown Avenue, rather than being directed by the general traffic light signals;
- A submission requested that the 2 exit lanes from Newtown Avenue onto Temple Hill be reduced to 1 lane in order to facilitate a cycle track in both directions;
- A resident was concerned about the removal of parking spaces in the Blackrock area;
- A private group suggested that the junction layout at St Vincent's Park is dangerous as currently planned;
- A submission suggested moving the outbound bus stop at Montpelier Place onto Monkstown Road and moving the inbound bus stop further inbound to provide a bus stop bypass;



- A submission requested that the 2 exit lanes from Monkstown Road onto Temple Hill be reduced to 1 lane in order to facilitate a cycle track in both directions;
- The resident group and other individual residents expressed concerns in relation to St. Vincent's Park regarding: proposed road widening and felling of trees in St Vincent's Park estate ; bus stop relocation and introduction of a bus lay-by in proximity to St. Vincent's Park (asking for the bus stop remaining in its current location or relocated further north); unnecessary expenses for moving the bus stop and for the construction of a new lay-by bus stop (removal and reconstruction of the wall on the boundary of St Vincent's Park estate); relocation of the wall, removal of trees and potential impact on aesthetics; potential reduction of acoustic absorption in proximity to the N31 and the R113; potential increased noise and air pollution and impact on people's health due to the bus stop positioning; potential visual impact on houses as a result of the road being elevated above houses; potential increase of CO2 emissions due to trees felling; the potential impact on security; the apparent lack of information about the intervention (in relation to reasons for the location of the new stop, costs of moving the stop, evaluation of alternative locations, impact on land taken, visual, environment and privacy impacts, pedestrian crossing and entrance to the park);
- An individual resident of St. Vincent's Park expressed concerns suggesting that there was lack of consultation (engagement with residents of St Vincent's Park and potential lack of sufficient information), the pedestrian right of way (concerned about the removal of the pedestrian entrance), and the loss of green space and pedestrian safety (concerned about the removal of trees and a parcel of grassed land to enable the introduction of the lay-by and concerned about the changes to the position of the boundary wall of St Vincent's Park). Concerns were also raised on the location of the bus stop located in proximity to the pedestrian crossing (considered unsafe);
- A private group was concerned about the location of the bus terminus at Blackrock Dart Station in relation to safety issues on Bath Place (carriageway deemed to not be suitable). Suggested to move the bus terminus to Booterstown Dart Station; and
- It was recommended to add cycle lanes at the junction of Temple Hill and Newtown Avenue to future-proof this link into the design of the corridor. Additionally, concerns were expressed about the bus stop outside the Frascati Shopping Centre on the Frascati Road inbound, considered too busy to be suitable for a shared space bus stop;

## Entire Scheme

The main comments observed include:

- A submission raised a concern that the system would be extremely costly and there was potential that the system would not be used. The resident suggested implementing a system to encourage use;
- A public body suggested planting could be installed at the median area along the route, particularly on Merrion Road, between Nutley Lane and Elmpark Green Campus at locations where the cross-section is not constrained;
- Concerns were raised along the entire route, over the number of trees to be lost;
- Another submission suggested that there was no need for the scheme along this corridor, as there was already a quiet cycle route, along the strand road and an efficient bus service provided on the N11;
- A group of residents expressed concerns about the costs necessary to run a 24/7 bus lane service;
- A resident was generally concerned about the motor vehicle drivers abuse of bus lanes, the prohibited-turns at junctions and the junctions traffic signals. Suggested that the installation of junction CCTV cameras as a solution to the problem (Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) enabled). In addition concerns were raised about the bus-stop location and the scheme design in relation to bike users, junctions with toucan-crossing control (suggested to add them), cycle track widths (considered 'unacceptably hazardous' with a 1.5-2.0m width), transition nodes (considered too many) and lack of consideration for a range of bicycle types in use (standard bikes, cargo-bikes etc.); and
- General concerns were also expressed in relation to cycle surfaces (to comprise a safe and efficient design) and in relation to junctions' design in terms of time for road crossing for pedestrians and cyclists.