



Galway Commuter Coalition
20 Ashe Rd,
Shantalla,
Co. Galway

Public Consultation on the Proposed Bus Gate – Bun a Chnoic / Cnoc an Óir

Introduction

The Galway Commuter Coalition was established in 2022 as a voluntary advocacy group for public transport users, cyclists, and pedestrians in Galway and the surrounding area. The Coalition acts as a unifying voice for commuters in these areas so that they may express their concerns, their hopes, and their vision of a Galway that works for all users of sustainable transport.

We support the introduction of this bus gate as it will allow for an increase in the accessibility of Galway's bus service to vast numbers of previously unserved residents without majorly impacting journey times or reliability for other users of the same route. We would encourage the council to continue with this plan and progress it to completion.

Regarding the Proposed Options

Of the two presented options we are in favour of the retractable bollards as they do not pose difficulty to passage by pedestrians, wheelchair users or cyclists. . Additionally, we believe that they are more visually appealing and less intrusive to the amenity of the neighbourhood.

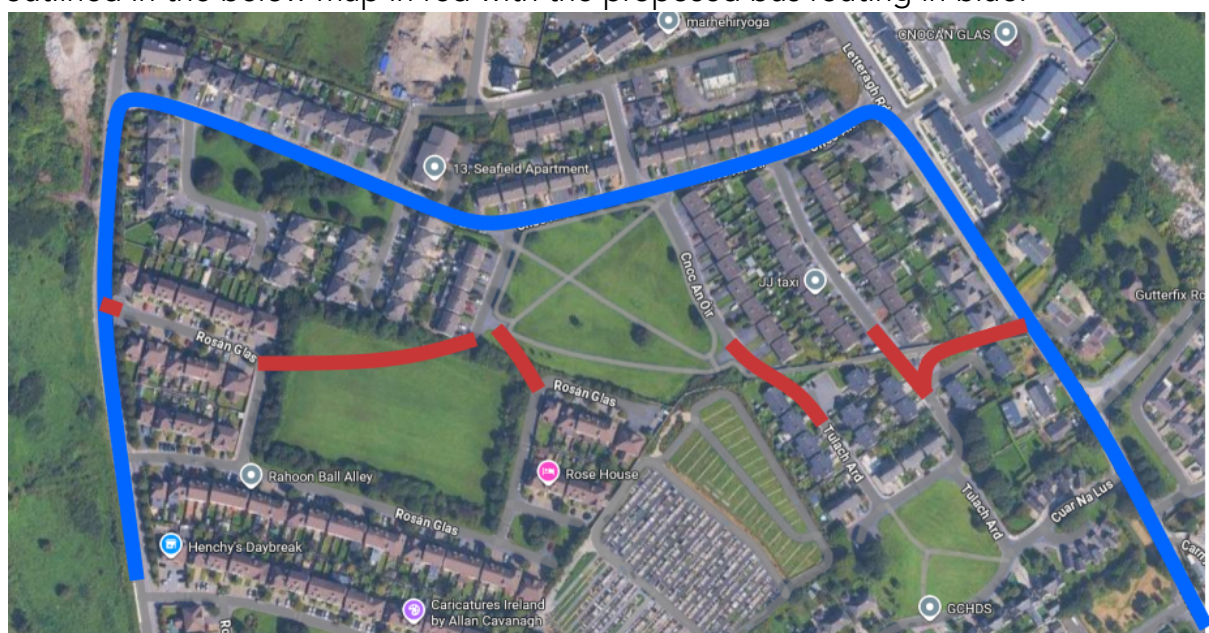
Regarding Traffic Management for the Bus Route

We are concerned that the bus route may run into traffic at the intersection of the Circular Rd and the Western Distributor Rd (image attached). With the alternative routing, the bus would have priority through this junction via the existing bus lanes. To ensure that the proposed route does not adversely impact journey times the council should examine building bus priority measures at this junction.



Regarding Permeability in the Surrounding Areas

The part of Galway that this proposal is located in has recently made some strides in increasing permeability between the various communities. However, there are still some key barriers to walkability present in the area. For the analysis of this proposal the council presented idealised 'catchment areas' in the 400m walkshed surrounding any given bus stop for the 3 route. The presented catchment area represents a large population of unserved communities. However, it fails to account for the effect of barriers to permeability in the surrounding area. These barriers are outlined in the below map in red with the proposed bus routing in blue.



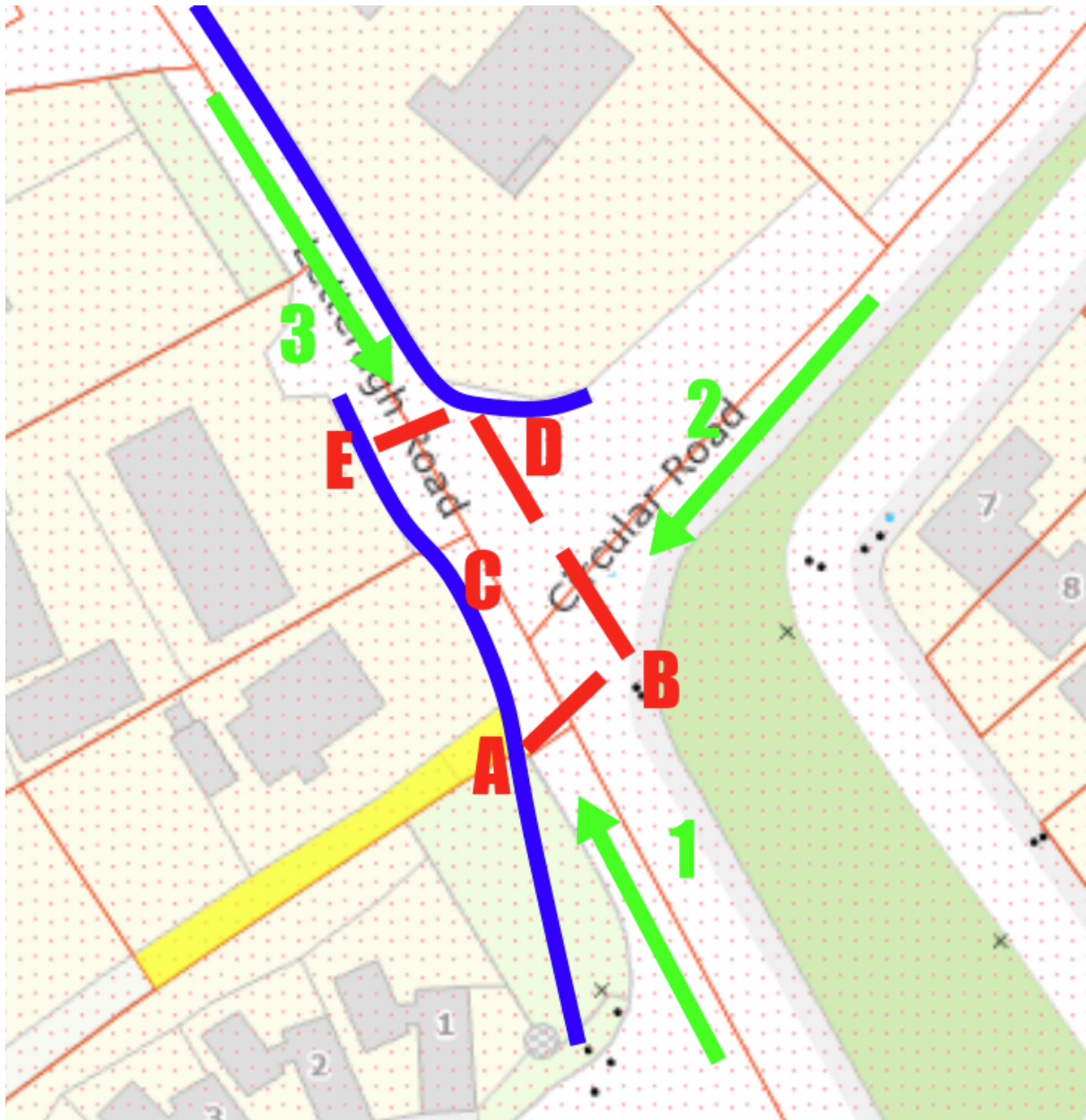
To ensure the scheme achieves its goal of increasing accessibility for local residents to public transportation, these barriers should be removed allowing easy access for the residents to their new bus service.

Regarding Pedestrian Facilities in the Surrounding Areas

Additionally, pedestrian accommodation in the surrounding area is substandard. This will prove a barrier to bus access not just to able-bodied residents but especially to those who are disabled and vulnerable. The council should endeavour to document and rectify this deficit in quality pedestrian infrastructure. To highlight a specific example, the junction of the Letteragh and Circular Rds is extremely dangerous for pedestrians.

We have outlined a list of problems observed with the junction below and attached an image to aid in the identification of points of interest.

- Adjacent to the northbound lane there is no footpath. (Areas marked in blue have no footpath).
 - As a result of this pedestrians must step into the traffic lane to pass by a protruding wall marked as C.
 - South of the junction there is a mud path which is frequently avoided in the rain, leading to pedestrians consistently remaining in the road for an additional 20m. This is also a slip hazard.
- Adjacent to the traffic in direction 3 there is also no footpath for approximately 100m, this is particularly concerning as it is the side of the road that the large scale new developments have been constructed.
- Crossing
 - Crossing from A to B involves stepping out from behind a wall.
 - This is the same as D to E except in this case the traffic is oncoming from direction 3.
 - Crossing from B to D involves walking across 3 lanes. During that time you are mostly hidden from traffic coming down the hill (direction 3) by the corner of a garden. Traffic turning left onto the circular road may not see pedestrians until after they begin their manoeuvre.
- Traffic coming down the hill can only really see the intersection from 60m out and there is a lack of traffic calming measures to ensure drivers are travelling at an appropriate speed for the risk of encountering a vulnerable road user in the carriageway.



Summary

We would welcome the introduction of this bus gate. We believe that it will allow for an increase in the accessibility of Galway's bus service to large numbers of previously unserved residents without majorly impacting journey times or reliability for other users of the same route. We welcome Galway City Council's initiative and applaud them on an excellent scheme that will no doubt improve the lives of countless residents following the introduction of the new network. We would hope that our observations be examined and integrated where possible but hope that they will not delay the implementation of a valuable measure in the city's growing and evolving transport network.