



N19 SHANNON AIRPORT ACCESS ROAD IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

**Preferred Option
Public Consultation
3 December 2021**

Background and Context to N19 Road Improvement

More than just a road

In our Submission, dated 2 December 2020, presented in response to the Phase 2 – Option Selection Public Consultation, we expressed the view that the solution to the N19 road improvement must be delivered by thinking not just of the road but of the opportunity to connect and reinforce Shannon's three key components and its linkage with and influence on the wider region and corridor.

We also suggested that the analysis of options should take account of the land and planning reservation that has been made in the County Development Plan for a rail link to Shannon, given that the planning reservation follows the route of the N19. The concept of developing a North/South Limerick to Ennis/Shannon Airport Suburban Network, as referenced by Irish Rail in its submission to the pre-draft consultation to the preparation of a new County Development Plan 2022 – 2028, and shared with Shannon Chamber, would suggest that any changes that might impact on such a potential rail link be taken into consideration.

Having reviewed the 'Selected Option' presented in this phase of Public Consultation, we, once again, ask the question:

What impact does this selected option have on the planning reservation that is in place for the rail line/spur to Shannon in the existing development plans? This point was included in our submission of 2 December 2020, reference above, but it is not mentioned in the latest documentation for the 'Selected Option'. In contrast, the rail line reservation is included in the Draft Shannon Town Masterplan where it runs along the R471 which is to become the main street.

Observations re Cycle/Pedestrian Path

Shannon Chamber welcomes the fact that dedicated facilities for cyclists and pedestrians are included in the 'Selected Option' and that adequate lighting is being installed on the approach road to ensure safety and security of those who use this road.

We note that the suggested positioning of proposed cycle/pedestrian pathway is below the River Shannon embankment.

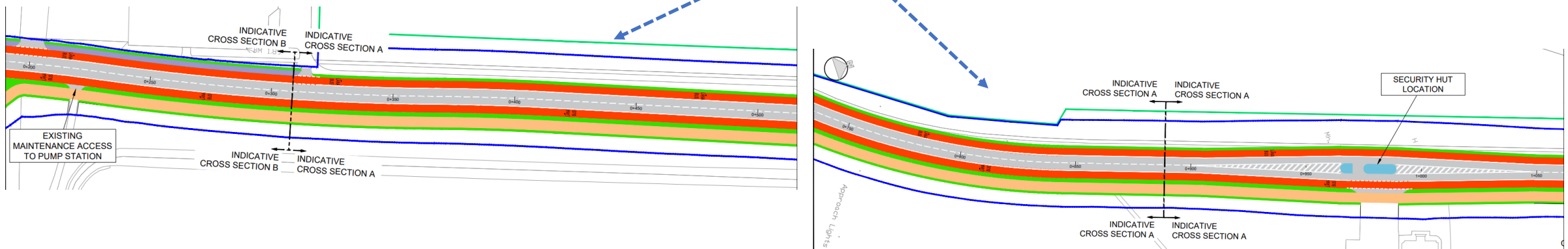
In our December 2020 Submission, we had suggested using the existing pathways and the river embankments to create a combined pedestrian and cycleway close to the N19. Doing so would make use of existing river walks, Shannon Free Zone pedestrian and running tracks, and the existing river embankments which follow the line of the N19. It would also provide an opportunity to start a greenway from the airport doors, making the River more accessible and visible to those arriving/departing Shannon Airport.

Given that the flood relief works are currently underway, we would request that the selected route be linked in some way to the creation of a walkway/cycleway along the top of the embankment and that usage by new transport options, such as eScooters, be accommodated in the final selected option.

Observations re Cycle/Pedestrian Path (continued)

Maps for the road segments between the Knockbeagh Point roundabout (N19-SAARS-DR-CW-O4-0009 and N19-SAARS-DR-CW-O4-0010) and the Airport Avenue entrance to the Shannon Free Zone (SFZ) at Drumgeely (N19-SAARS-DR-CW-O4-0011) show that the existing footpath running next to the airfield security fence will be removed between the Emerald VIP Aviation and Westair Hangars. Given that this already exists, is it not possible to retain the pathway and increase rather than reduce pedestrian options? If extra width is required to facilitate the bus lane, why not realign the footpath closer to the security fence? This side of the road is regularly used by pedestrian aircraft enthusiasts. With no pedestrian crossing between Knockbeagh Point and the SFZ entrance, there is a strong argument for retention of the footpath on this side of the road to complement the cycle/pedestrian pathway on the opposite side.

Selected option eliminates existing footpath on this side of the road



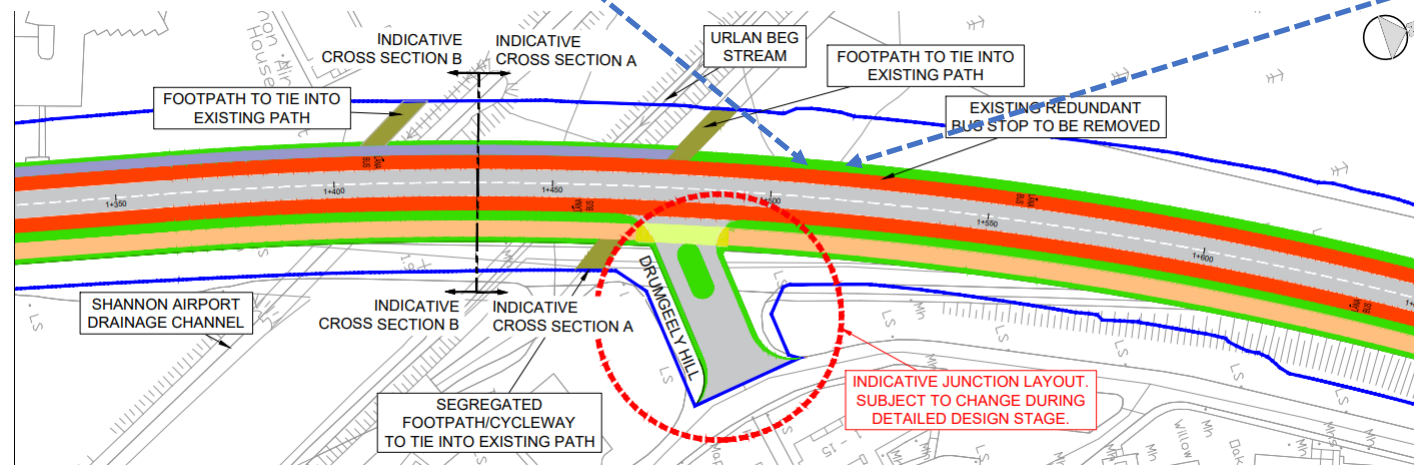
Observations re Cycle/Pedestrian Path (continued)

Map N19-SAARS-DR-CW-04-0011 does not make any reference to the existing pedestrian crossing between the Drumgeely Apartments and the SFZ. This is an important crossing point particularly since it connects directly to a recently installed pedestrian pathway into the SFZ. It should be maintained, particularly since the Chamber's previous suggestion of an overhead pedestrian walkway in this area has not been included in the preferred option.

There is also an argument for enhancing the bus stop in this area as it is closer to SFZ pathways and residential areas across the road with the potential to offer greater footfall for public transport. In contrast, the proposed bus stop location (which is actually in place) near the Westair Hangar is further away from both residential and business areas.

Existing pedestrian crossing should be maintained to encourage use of pathways to SFZ

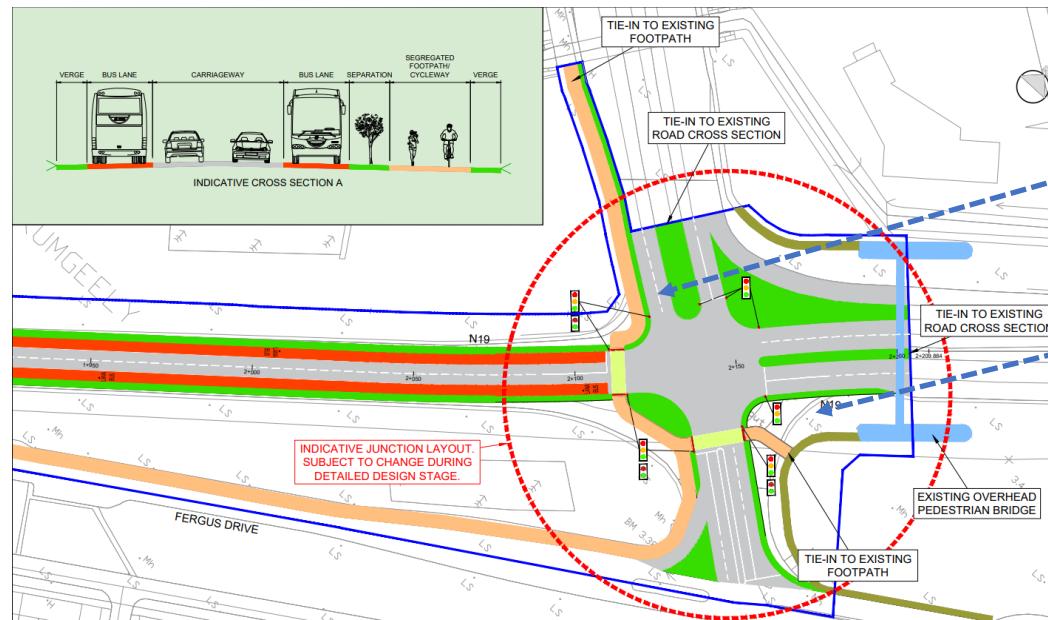
Enhance rather than eliminate existing bus stop to encourage access for SFZ and residential pax.



Observations re Cycle/Pedestrian Path (continued)

Map N19-SAARS-DR-CW-04-0012 proposes traffic lights and pedestrian crossings to replace the existing Drumgeely roundabout main entrance/exit to the SFZ. This is based on the assumption that traffic lights will be more effective in managing traffic flows at peak travel times. Without access to the transport analysis (referenced but not available on the public consultation website) it is not possible to make an informed judgement on this proposal. Great care is needed with this change given the patterns and volume of traffic during early morning and late evening rush hour waves.

The existing pedestrian bridges are well used by commuters to and from the SFZ. Healthy walking pathways are also being introduced around the Zone including in this area between Rineanna House and the sluice gates referenced on the map. Residents have also started to “do the bridges” as a healthy walking route with a roughly 2km circuit from the bridge at this location to the next one (town centre side of SFZ) and back. Alignment of the crossings and pathways with the pedestrian bridge ramps will encourage greater use of these facilities.



Alignment of pedestrian/cycle crossings with existing pedestrian bridge ramps and SFZ pathways will encourage greater use

Road Signage

Shannon Chamber would also request that, when upgrade works are designed and planned, adequate provision be made for signage and related visuals that incorporate all the elements of Shannon - i.e. Shannon Airport, Shannon Free Zone, Smithstown & Shannon Town on approach to Shannon and the latter three on way out from airport.

Such signage to also link in theme of 'Gateway to Ireland's Shannon Region and Wild Atlantic Way'.