# **Vernon Avenue to Clontarf Road.**

# **DCC Coolock to Clontarf Active Travel Scheme.**

# **Early Engagement Report.**

# **January 2025.**

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# **1. Introduction.**

Dublin City Council (DCC), with support from the National Transport Authority (NTA), is advancing plans to create a safer, more inclusive, and sustainable walk-wheel-cycle network as part of its commitment to improving accessibility and mobility for all and reducing carbon emissions.

This ambitious project, aligned with the NTA’s Cycle Network Plan (2022 – 2042) for the Greater Dublin Area, aims to enhance quality of life by increasing access, connectivity, and viable alternatives to private car travel. The initiative seeks to deliver on national and local policy objectives for active travel infrastructure while also fostering vibrant communities and supporting local economies.

Early stakeholder engagement has been central to the process, ensuring that community feedback is integrated into the design from the outset to create a system that directly connects people to key destinations and supports the city’s long-term sustainability goals.

Part of DCC’s Active Travel Network includes the Coolock to Clontarf Active Travel Route (5.1km in length). This is being delivered in 3 phases. This consultation report, prepared by M-CO, will focus on the early engagement process for **Phase 2: Vernon Avenue.**

# **2. The Project.**

**DCC Coolock to Clontarf Active Travel Scheme.**

DCC Active Travel Vision.

Dublin City – Connecting All the People.

Dublin City Council is working to develop a safer, inclusive, and sustainable walk-wheel-cycle network.

A safer and connected active travel network will be achieved by:

Incorporating segregated cycle lanes at suitable locations.

Widening and decluttering footpaths.

Considering the requirements of disabled users.

Promoting biodiversity through tree planting and landscaping.

Engendering social interaction by enhancing communal spaces.

This is a transportation initiative being delivered by Dublin City Council and funded by the NTA.

**NTA Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network 2022.**

Sets out a comprehensive cycle network for development during the period of the Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2022-2042.

**Infrastructure Hierarchy.**

In January 2023, the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) Cycle Network Plan, consisting of the Urban Network, Interurban Network and Green Route Network for each of the seven Local Authority areas comprising the GDA was adopted as part of the GDA Transport Strategy 2022-2042. The Cycle Network Plan identified and determined in a consistent, clear and logical manner, the following cycle networks within the GDA:

The Urban Cycle Network at the Primary, Secondary and Feeder level;

The Inter-Urban Cycle Network, linking the relevant sections of the Urban Network and including the elements of the National Cycle Network within the GDA. The Inter-Urban Network also includes linkages to key transport locations outside of urban areas such as airports and ports; and

The Green Route Network that are cycle routes developed predominately for tourist, recreational and leisure purposes.

**Dublin City Council Active Travel Network.**

Dublin City Council’s Active Travel Network aims to enhance quality of life by connecting all people through the delivery of a walk-wheel-cycle network. This will be achieved by improving access, connectivity and sustainable mobility and will also contribute to a citywide reduction of transport related carbon emissions. During the lifetime of the programme, the active travel network will grow from its existing 10km to a connected network of 310km across the city.

This accords with the Dublin City Council Development Plan (2022-2028) objective SMT09

‘To support the development of a connected cycling network in the City through the implementation of the NTA’s Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan, subject to environmental assessment and route feasibility”

**Significance of the Active Travel Network.**

Why is this project proposed?

Multiple personal and societal benefits

Opportunity for Transformational Modal Shift

Climate action

Building on locally identified goals for the area

**Coolock to Clontarf Active Travel Scheme.**

General Overview

Part of Dublin City Council’s (DCC’s) Active Travel Network includes the Coolock to Clontarf Active Travel Route.

5.1km in length

Delivered in 3 number of. phases:

Phase 1: Gracefield Road to Vernon Avenue commenced design work in 2023.

Phase 2: Vernon Avenue commencing early engagement work Q4 2024.

Phase 3: Clonshaugh Road to Artane Roundabout will commence design work later in 2025

# **3. About the Scheme**

**Phase 2: Vernon Avenue to Clontarf Road**

Vision and Objectives.

The proposed scheme spans 600 meters and connects with Phase 1 of the Coolock to Clontarf scheme at Seafield Road. Its objectives include enhancing pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure, improving the public realm, and fostering urban greening. The plan aims to provide safer crossings, better universal access, dedicated cycling facilities, and improved connectivity to the cycling network. Additionally, it emphasizes creating more civic plazas, integrating sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS), enhancing biodiversity, and improving urban landscapes and habitats.

**What if? – Clontarf Origins of the project.**

A collaborative study conducted in 2021/22, by Brennan Furlong Architects on behalf of the Clontarf Business Association and the Clontarf Residents Association, explored opportunities to enhance public spaces in the area. One of the key proposals was to remove parking spaces in front of The Sheds pub to reestablish a dedicated gathering area for the community.

Additionally, it was suggested to remove 2 to 3 parking spaces at the southern end of Vernon Avenue to create more room for pedestrians, with the added benefit of installing fixed seating and planting to improve the space's appeal.

The study also recommended enhancing the 2007 Public Realm scheme in front of Sandbar by incorporating additional seating to create a more inviting and functional environment for visitors.

A related survey revealed there was strong local support for the proposed improvements to Vernon Avenue, with widespread backing for additional measures to enhance the area including;

Footpath widening

Protected cycle lanes

Cycle parking

Outdoor seating

Commercial/retail deliveries support

**Current Context.**

# **4. Early Studies.**

The following sketches were developed by DCC for the purposes of presentation to stakeholders during the engagement workshops. These five early design iterations, called Early Studies, served as a visual representation of potential improvements, aiming to spark discussion and gather feedback for refining the proposals.

Each Early Study is presented in three rough sketches, one showing the southern end of Vernon Avenue, one showing the middle section, and one showing the northern section.

**Early Study A.**

One-way vehicular traffic, northbound only, shared with cyclists. Contraflow segregated cycle track in southbound direction. Parking reoriented to parallel. Plaza is created to south of Sheds Pub with parking removed in this area. Potential for outdoor dining. Possible enhanced connection to promenade.

**Early Study B.**

One-way vehicular traffic, southbound only, shared with cyclists. Contraflow segregated cycle track in northbound direction. Parking reoriented to parallel. Plaza is created to south of Sheds Pub, parking removed in this area. Potential for outdoor dining. Possible enhanced connection to promenade.

**Early Study C.**

One-way vehicular traffic, northbound only, shared with cyclists from Clontarf Road as far as Nolan’s of Clontarf. Contraflow segregated cycle track in southbound direction along this stretch. Mixed traffic arrangement, with two vehicles shared with cyclists from Nolan’s of Clontarf up to Seafield Road. Parking removed to shops at the south of Vernon Avenue. Plaza is created to south of Sheds Pub with parking removed in this area. Potential for outdoor dining. Possible enhanced connection to promenade.

**Early Study D.**

One way vehicular traffic, northbound only, shared with cyclists. Segregated cycle tracks in northbound and southbound direction. Parking reoriented to parallel. Plaza is created to south of Sheds Pub with parking removed from this area. Potential for outdoor dining. Possible enhanced connection to promenade.

**Early Study E.**

Two-way vehicular traffic, north of Clontarf Park, shared with cyclists. Pedestrianised from Clontarf Park to Clontarf Road. Time plated loading arrangement could be adopted in pedestrianised zone. Plaza is created to south of Sheds Pub with parking removed from this area. Potential for outdoor dining. Possible enhanced connection to promenade.

# **5. Engagement Process.**

The non-statutory, early consultation process included 3 workshops with local stakeholder groups: Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs/DPROs), Clontarf Business’ Association, and Clontarf Residents’ Association. The workshops aimed to provide an opportunity for focused discussions and feedback from the respective groups on the key considerations of the groups they represented. These sessions were facilitated by independent engagement consultant M-CO.

There were 3 workshops held to engage key stakeholders.

**Wednesday 6th November 2024.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| • | Workshop 1: Disabled Person’s Organisations (VVI & Headspace) **Online.** |

Workshop 2: Business’ Association (Approx 10 attendees).

**Thursday 13th November 2024.**

Workshop 3: Residents’ Association (Approx 20 attendees).

**Stakeholder Workshops.**

The workshops were facilitated by M-CO, with members of the Dublin City Council and Jacobs (consultant engineers) project team attending.

The online workshop was attended by representatives from VVI & Headspace. A screen-reader friendly script was issued in advance of this workshop, which detailed the content of the presentation from DCC. Questions were facilitated throughout the presentation, and feedback was captured on relevant design considerations.

The in-person workshops began with the same presentation by DCC, providing an overview of the project’s objectives, the current site context and some early study options. Following the presentation, participants gathered in smaller groups around tables equipped with maps of the site.

In these smaller groups, attendees engaged in discussions with members of the project team on specific challenges and opportunities presented by the scheme. Each group then provided feedback to the larger assembly, highlighting key points and suggestions that emerged from their conversations.

# **6. Summary of Feedback.**

This section provides a summary of the feedback received during the engagement process. The key themes and recurring points raised across all stakeholder meetings are outlined. Support for the options presented during the consultation events varied, with no single option emerging as the clear preference or being excluded from consideration at this stage.

**High Level Hopes and Concerns.**

Hopes and concerns raised across all stakeholder meetings.

**Hopes.**

Improved mobility and accessibility for all users.

Enhanced safety for all users.

Outdoor dining opportunities.

Upgrades to the public realm.

Economic benefits for local businesses through better access

and placemaking.

Reduction of street clutter.

Foster a shift towards greener modes of transport.

Community-oriented design.

**Concerns.**

Parking availability for residents and businesses.

Potential disruptions during the construction phase.

Safety considerations related to e-bikes and scooters on

shared or pedestrian paths.

Risk of increased traffic congestion in the area.

Impact of traffic displacement on surrounding streets.

Striking a balance between making Clontarf more pedestrian and cyclist-friendly while also supporting businesses and maintaining residents' quality of life.

Ensuring any changes don’t discourage visitors and customers

due to perceived inconvenience.

Inadequate connection between Vernon Avenue and the

Clontarf Road car park.

**Issues raised.**

Concerns about displaced traffic impacting surrounding residential

streets (e.g. Castle Avenue, Kincora Road, Belgrove Avenue, Clontarf Park), potentially turning them into rat runs & overflow car parks.

Fear that the loss of on-street parking on Vernon Avenue will negatively affect residents who rely on it. Two houses were identified as not having an option for off-street parking as there isn’t the space available. There is no public on-street parking on Vernon Gardens.

Some businesses are concerned that reduced parking will impact their viability. Clontarf Road car park was considered difficult to access across the busy Clontarf Road.

Nolan’s car park is already generally at capacity but can, at times, provide overflow demand from other businesses on Vernon Avenue.

Key community hubs (e.g., schools, tennis clubs, and the GAA club) need consideration to accommodate potential changes.

Traffic management strategies are needed to address peak times, such as Friday and Saturday nights and pre/post school hours (particularly Holy Faith School), funerals, when congestion and parking demand are at their highest, posing challenges for road safety and accessibility.

Some residents noted that they avoid driving down Vernon Avenue to Clontarf Road due to the difficulty in passing through due to congestion and on-street parking.

**Suggestions.**

Some stakeholders expressed a preference for a two-way mixed traffic system where vehicles are shared with cyclists between Seafield Road and Nolan’s, transitioning to southbound-only traffic from Nolan’s to Clontarf Road. This approach considers the high proportion (75%) of traffic entering/exiting north at Nolan’s.

There was also some support for a filtered permeability arrangement (i.e., no through traffic which allows for a shared space between cyclists and pedestrians, with vehicular access only for deliveries) from the southern end of Vernon Avenue, provided a turnabout facility is implemented, though questions remain about whether there is enough space for this.

It was noted that solutions are needed to encourage parking in the underutilised Clontarf Road car park, such as traffic calming on Clontarf Road, adding more pedestrian crossing points, increasing the number of available spaces and improving pedestrian routes to Vernon Avenue.

Some sought to increase parking on Clontarf Road.

Removing short-term parking fees in the Clontarf Road car park could encourage usage and higher turnover.

A loading bay on Clontarf Road would be essential for businesses if a filtered permeability arrangement is implemented and delivery vehicles would need access up to certain times, with possible weight restrictions being considered.

**Parking and traffic management.**

Recurring points raised during stakeholder meetings

**Issues raised.**

Hostile crossing points on Clontarf Road discourage people from

using the larger car park on the coastal side.

Lack of clear separation between cycling and pedestrian paths

along the east coast trail, especially at junctions, leads to

accidents.

Narrow footpaths and interactions between pedestrians and

electric bikes/scooters create safety concerns; better

enforcement is needed.

Narrow footpaths force pedestrians to spill onto the road during

busy times (e.g., after school).

Residents mentioned that cyclists currently avoid Vernon Avenue

due to safety concerns, particularly in the narrow section

between Kincora Road and Vernon Gardens.

“Shared space” is a misleading term for spaces shared by

pedestrians and cyclists, and can over-look the difficulties these

spaces pose for visually impaired or disabled people.

**Suggestions.**

Some expressed a preference for segregated and protected cycle lanes in both directions instead of shared spaces.

Some proposed that if segregated cycle lanes were to be

implemented, they should be located on the West side of Vernon

Avenue to avoid conflicts with cars at the busy junction turning

into Nolan’s.

Clearer delineation is needed between cyclists and pedestrians,

through distinct paths or varied levels.

**Active travel (walking, wheeling, cycling).**

Recurring points raised during stakeholder meetings

**Issues raised.**

Staggered parking near junctions poses safety risks.

Bollards on Vernon Avenue, though effective in preventing driving

and parking on footpaths, are seen as unattractive street clutter.

**Suggestions.**

Enhance the underused car park on Clontarf Road by improving

crossing points, establishing clear pedestrian pathways, and

introducing traffic-calming measures.

Improve connectivity between Vernon Avenue and the Clontarf

promenade through thoughtful public realm design.

Preserve and enhance the balance between commercial and

residential areas on Vernon Avenue, focusing on the three

identified "commercial zones”.

Adopt a cohesive planning approach that integrates with other

projects, such as the East Coast Trail and Phase 1 of Coolock to

Clontarf Active Travel Route at Seafield Road, to create a

seamless network.

Use the Dublin Port Greenway as a benchmark for high-quality,

world-class development in the area.

Ensure regular maintenance of any public realm upgrades to

retain their quality and functionality.

Introduce more public amenities, such as a toilet, and create

more gathering spaces, like a plaza near the Sheds pub.

Expand outdoor dining opportunities to enhance the area’s social

and economic appeal.

**Public realm design, accessibility and facilities.**

**Issues raised.**

Concerns about similar disruptions happening in Clontarf that

happened during the recent Clontarf to City Centre Scheme at

Fairview.

Emphasis on the need for close consultation with businesses

during the construction phase.

Strong desire to engage again before the design process is

progressed too far.

**Suggestions.**

Pilot initiatives could be implemented to test various options

before finalising decisions.

There was a suggestion for East-West active travel route at

Seafield Road instead of down Vernon Avenue.

**Questions raised.**

How will modal shift expectations be achieved and made

realistic?

Is Vernon Avenue the most appropriate route for the scheme, or

are there better alternatives?

Vernon Avenue works fine as it is, what is the need for change?

At what stage would a trial/pilot of the scheme be appropriate,

and how long should it last to provide meaningful insights?

Should the scheme's boundary be extended to include Belgrove

Road and across Clontarf Road to incorporate the car park and

the East Coast Trail?

What are the primary aims of the scheme, and how will its

success be evaluated?

Can any parking removed from Vernon Avenue be effectively

relocated, possibly to the Clontarf Road car park?

How do we know surrounding streets can cope with capacity

increase in case of re-routing?

**Project process and rationale.**

Recurring points raised during stakeholder meetings

This section is particularly narrow and dangerous for cyclists.

Busy zone –

Nolan’s supermarket.

Hostile environment for pedestrians/not enough crossing points from car park to businesses at southern end of Vernon Avenue.

Difficult for residents on Churchgate Avenue and St Joseph’s Square to turn/reverse out onto Vernon Ave – especially during peak times due to proximity to school.

**Seafield Road.**

Limited space for a turnabout facility at Clontarf Park junction.

Bollards are an eye-sore and street clutter but prevent driving and parking on footpath.

Residents on West side of the road rely on on-street parking.

Busy zone – Holy Faith School.

Key Locations.

# **7. Next Steps**

(Estimated Timeline)

**Q4 2024.**

Early Engagement Consultation

**Q1/Q2 2025.**

* Surveys; topographical, GPR, tree survey, etc.
* Traffic modelling
* Options Selection
* Stakeholder engagement

**Q3 2025 - Preliminary Design.**

* E/AA Screening
* Quality Audit, Road Safety Audit
* Non-statutory public consultation

Q4 2025 - Detailed Design

2026 - Construction

**Appendix 1.**

**Workshop 1: DPOs.**

Summary of key themes and issues raised.

**Issues Raised Design Issues**

“Shared Space” is a problematic term as it does not highlight the

impact of more active modes of transport on disabled persons.

Shared surfaces with no physical segregation or speed mitigation

measures are an issue for disabled persons.

Kerbs that are too low can be mounted by cars and pose a mobility

issue or even a danger to disabled persons.

Existing disabled parking bay – not to standard currently – there are also Sheffield stands right beside, further impeding wheelchair users or others with mobility impairment.

Widened footpaths are not beneficial if they become shared spaces for bikes, e-scooters etc.

Is consideration made of the use of Vernon Avenue and adjoining

streets by Irish Wheelchair Association, CRC, IWA buses – concerns that traffic will not evaporate, rather it will be displaced, for example in Capel Street.

Smithfield surface given as an example of poorly considered surface treatment (cobbled and uneven posing challenges for mobility).

Greater level of detail should be provided in advance of the

engagement in order to facilitate greater preparation for the

participants. Specifically, making hard copies available to

Headspace, and a more thorough script for VVI.

Ensure that sufficient reminders are sent in advance of the

workshop.

Some DPOs prefer the term DPRO.

**Documents Referenced.**

Manual for Accessible Public Spaces - https://vvi.ie/vvimaps/

Centre for Excellence in Universal Design -

https://universaldesign.ie/

2022, Dublin City Council, Duke/Anne Street Part 8, General: -

https://consultation.dublincity.ie/housing/duke-st-anne-st-sth-part-

8/

VVI’s Planners’ Checklist for Accessible Streetscapes -

https://vvi.ie/our-policies/vvi-planners-checklist-for-accessiblestreetscapes/

https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/2015/accessibilityurbandevelopment.pdf

**Issues Raised.**

**Safety.**

Hostile crossing points on Clontarf Road prevent people from using

the larger car park on the coastal side of the road. Lack of clear

separation between cycling and pedestrian paths, particularly at

junctions, causes accidents.

Safety concerns regarding narrow footpaths and interactions

between pedestrians and electric bikes/scooters. Better

enforcement is required.

Narrow footpaths lead people to spill out onto the road during busy

times of the day (e.g. after school)

**Traffic and Parking.**

Concern around the impact of displaced traffic on surrounding

roads (Castle Avenue, Kincora Road, Belgrove Avenue, Clontarf

Park)

Concerns around the loss of on-street parking for homes and

businesses on Vernon Avenue.

Businesses fear reduced parking may impact their viability.

Nolan’s car park is at capacity, yet currently supporting overflow

demand. People park their cars in Nolan’s and walk down to businesses at the end of Vernon Avenue.

Key community hubs (e.g., schools, tennis clubs, and the GAA club)

need consideration to accommodate potential changes.

**Construction Phase Disruptions.**

Disruptions in the recent Clontarf to City Centre Scheme at

Fairview are a concern.

Construction phase should happen in close consultation with

businesses.

**Other.**

Concern that additional traffic in surrounding neighbourhoods

would affect house prices.

**Workshop 2: Business Association.**

Summary of key issues raised.

**Preferences and Suggestions.**

**Road and Traffic Design.**

Some mentioned a preference for two-way mixed traffic system

where vehicles are shared with cyclists from Seafield Road to

Nolan’s, then southbound only from Nolan’s to Clontarf road. A

combination of early study B and C. (75% of cars entering/exiting

going north at Nolan’s is a crucial finding for determining road

direction changes.)

Others preferred a filtered permeability arrangement option (early

study E) at the southern end of Vernon Avenue if a turnabout facility is provided – questions around whether there is enough space for this.

Solutions are needed to encourage parking in the Clontarf Road carpark, for example; traffic calming on Clontarf Road, more crossing points, clear pedestrian routes.

**Cycle Path Design.**

Preference for segregated and protected cycle lanes in both

directions as opposed to shared spaces.

Greater delineation needed between cyclists and pedestrians,

through varied levels or distinct paths.

Pilot initiatives to test different options.

**Questions Raised.**

Is Vernon Avenue the most suitable route for the scheme? Why?

Can parking removed from Vernon Avenue be effectively relocated?

Should the scheme’s boundary expand to include at Belgrove Road and the Square?

What are the aims of the scheme? How do we measure success?

How do we know surrounding streets can cope with capacity

increase in case of re-routing?

**Workshop 2: Business Association.**

Summary of key issues raised.

**Workshop 3: Residents’ Association.**

Summary of key themes and issues raised

**Issues raised.**

**Safety.**

Cyclists avoid Vernon Avenue as it’s currently too dangerous,

especially the section between Kincora Road and Vernon Gardens

which is very narrow.

Some Kincora Road residents avoid driving down Vernon Avenue to get to Clontarf Road as the existing conditions are difficult to

manoeuvre due to congestion and on street parking.

Footpaths are too narrow, and pedestrians are often forced to step

out onto the road, especially during peak times.

**Traffic and Parking.**

Concerns around the impact of displaced traffic and residential

streets becoming rat runs and overflow car parks. (Staff and

shoppers park on surrounding residential streets already – fear that this will worsen)

Fear that one-way system will increase traffic volumes on

surrounding streets.

Concerns around the loss of parking outside houses on Vernon

Avenue that rely on on-street parking.

Hostile crossing points on Clontarf Road prevent people from using

the larger car park on the coastal side of the road. Lack of clear

separation between cycling and pedestrian paths, particularly at

junctions, causes accidents.

Friday and Saturday are particularly busy

**Design Challenges.**

Staggered parking is too close to junctions

Bollards on Vernon Avenue are unsightly street clutter but are

necessary for preventing driving and parking on the footpath.

**Workshop 3: Residents’ Association.**

Summary of key themes and issues raised

**Preferences and Suggestions.**

Make the underused car park on Clontarf Road more attractive by

improving crossing points, establishing clear pedestrian routes and

implementing traffic calming measures on Clontarf Road. Connect

Vernon Avenue to the Clontarf promenade.

If segregated cycle lanes are to be implemented, they should be

located on the West side of Vernon Avenue to avoid conflicts with

cars at the busy junction turning into Nolan’s.

Remove short-term parking fees in Clontarf Road car park to

encourage use and high turnover.

Maintain balance between commercial and residential on Vernon Avenue. Three ‘commercial zones’ identified on Vernon Avenue that need to be protected and enhanced.

A Loading Bay would be needed on Clontarf Road for businesses if a filtered permeability arrangement is implemented.

Delivery vehicles need to be accommodated up until certain times.

Weight limits could be considered.

Connected approach needed that considers how the whole scheme works with the other phases and other projects (East Coast Trail) and creates a joined-up network.

Look to new Dublin Port Greenway for an example of world-class

development – level of quality that DCC and Clontarf should strive

for.

Continued maintenance of any public realm improvements would be essential.

**Questions Raised.**

How will modal shift expectations be achieved and made realistic?

Is Vernon Avenue the most suitable route for the scheme? Are there alternative routes to consider?

Vernon Avenue works fine as it is, what is the need for change?

At what stage would a trial be appropriate? How long would it have to last to be effective?