

Providing Green Routes in Limerick City

Do you live or work in Limerick City?
Do you regularly travel into the City?



If so you may be interested to know about a package of ideas and initiatives that could be introduced to improve the transportation network in the City. These ideas will help to make the city's roads better for buses, bus users, pedestrians, cyclists, cars and the environment. Limerick City Council would like to implement a series of 4 Green Routes in the City (from the South, East, North and Western suburbs). The following information summarises the ideas that have been identified by Limerick City Council. Please read on to find out more.

A Green Route?

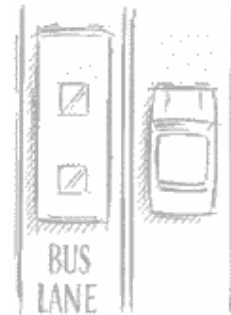
A new concept in traffic management for Limerick designed to provide priority for the efficient movement of passengers by bus. Green Routes aim to:

- improve journey times and the reliability of bus services by providing bus lanes or other engineering measures;
- improve facilities at bus stops, particularly to make it easier for people to get on and off buses;
- introduce new and improved pedestrian crossings;
- provide better facilities for cyclists; and
- also provide improved journey times for emergency vehicles and taxis.

Some Key Terms

Bus Lanes

Bus lanes separate buses from other traffic, enabling them to avoid traffic congestion. By using the lanes, buses have shorter journey times and keep to their timetables. The lanes are clearly marked kerbside lanes which generally operate city bound during the morning traffic peak and outbound during the afternoon traffic peak. Some of the lanes are coloured green for easy identification. Parking or stopping on the lanes is prohibited during the times they operate. Any bus lanes proposed for Limerick City will be time plated whereby outside those hours deliveries and short term parking will be permitted



Clearways

Clearways can increase the operational capacity of a road, which all traffic may use if bus lane controls are not also in place. As with bus lanes, stopping or parking on clearways is prohibited during peak traffic times.

Bus Advance

Bus advance areas enable buses to go to the front of the queue at traffic lights. An extra set of traffic lights, with a special bus signal, is installed about 50 metres before the intersection to hold other traffic back while buses go to the front.

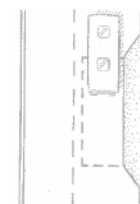


Bus Bypasses

Bypasses are special lanes at intersections that enable buses to travel around traffic stopped at intersections. At some intersections buses will be allowed to travel straight through from a left-turn-only lane, helping them to bypass the queues in other lanes.

Bus Boarder

A bus boarder is the reverse of a bus bay. It intrudes onto a traffic lane making it easier for buses to stop and to move back into the traffic flow.



Why provide Green Routes in Limerick?

Limerick City, like most other urban areas, suffers from traffic congestion as a result of our reliance on the motorcar as our primary means of transport. While new roads, such as the Limerick Southern Relief Road (Tunnel), will help reduce traffic congestion on some roads, traffic levels will increase again if alternatives are not provided. This is particularly the case for traffic entering the City Centre, where additional road capacity cannot be provided and would be unsustainable if it were.

Traffic congestion in Limerick is causing severe delays to buses, with Bus Éireann claiming that the average speed of buses in Limerick is just 10kph (6mph). As a result buses are often late and on some occasions may not turn up at all, for example in a 7-week period earlier this year Bus Éireann lost 978 runs in the Limerick Area. When buses are unreliable, passengers switch to other modes of transport such as the car, thus adding to the traffic congestion – resulting in a vicious circle. Limerick City Council wants to break this cycle by improving the reliability of the city bus routes through the construction of Green Routes. Research and experience has shown that existing and potential bus passengers want:

- Service punctuality and reliability
- Quick journeys at peak times
- Good quality shelters and safe stops; and
- Accurate information.

What is included in a Green Route?

Green Routes address these needs by:

- Providing more shelters and improving the location, lighting, drainage and ease of access to and from bus stops;
- Providing better and more easily understandable information at bus stops;
- Helping to keep buses running to time by providing a series of bus priority measures including dedicated bus lanes, where there is sufficient road space, priority at traffic signals for late running buses, allowing buses to make turns that are prohibited to other traffic and allowing buses to operate through streets prohibited to other traffic.
- Providing more and better crossing points for pedestrians to get to and from bus stops safely.
- Where possible, providing enhancements to the general streetscape, such as better paving and street lighting to improve safety/security and other improvements which will benefit pedestrians and cyclists in the communities along the Green Route.

What will happen if the Green Routes are not implemented?

Failure to implement Green Routes in Limerick may result in the following:

- Continued and increasing levels of traffic congestion throughout the city;
- Increased traffic congestion will lead to more delays for buses, thus making them less reliable and desirable as a mode of transport. This may result in less people using the bus and switching to other modes of transport such as the car;
- Continued impact on the environment as mode transfer to the bus is considered an essential aspect of Ireland's Climate Change Strategy (transport makes up 19% of Ireland's CO₂ emissions – National Climate Change Strategy 2007/2012). It also makes it more difficult for Ireland to reach its Kyoto commitments;
- Failure to invest in public transportation, and in particular transport linkages to RAPID areas, may result in some people becoming disenfranchised in terms of transportation accessibility;
- The following modes will not benefit from the introduction of Green Routes:
 - Emergency vehicles, particularly;
 - Buses from the proposed Park and Ride sites in the County Area;
 - Cyclists;
 - Pedestrians; and
 - Taxi's.



Where are the Green Routes to go?



Limerick City Council in association with Limerick County Council and Bus Eireann has identified Four Green Route Corridors linking the County to the City Centre. The four routes are as follows and are indicated on the attached map:

- Southern Corridor: Linking the completed Green Route in the County Area (St Nessan's Road) to the City Centre;
- Eastern Corridor: Linking the soon to be completed Green Route on the Dublin Road (construction to commence shortly) to the City Centre;
- Northern Corridor: Linking the Moyross Area to the City Centre; and
- Western Corridor: Linking the completed Green Route in the County Area (Ennis Road) to the City Centre.

The Corridors

