

Our Ref: 0132_03_00380

28th September 2021

Development Plan Submissions
Cork City Council
Strategic and Economic Development
City Hall
Anglesea Street
Cork T12 T997

RE: Daft Cork City Development Plan – Public Consultation

Submission in respect of the proposed N/M20 Cork to Limerick Project

Dear Sir / Madam,

We welcome the opportunity to make this submission to the public consultation on the Draft Cork City Development Plan 2022 - 2028.

Limerick City and County Council is the Lead Authority for the N/M20 Cork to Limerick Project, working in partnership with Cork County Council, Cork City Council, Transport Infrastructure Ireland and the Department of Transport to deliver the project. In 2020, Limerick City and County Council and Cork City Council entered into an agreement pursuant to Section 85 of the Local Government Act 2021 and Section 14 of the Roads Act 1993 in relation to the N/M20 Cork to Limerick Project.

Barry Transportation and its project partners, WSP and Sweco were appointed in 2019 as technical advisors to progress the planning and design of the project. This submission is made by Limerick City and County Council on behalf of our partners in respect of the N/M20 Cork to Limerick Project.

Project Overview

The N/M20 Cork to Limerick project is a key element in Project Ireland 2040, the Government's long-term overarching strategy to make Ireland a better country for all of its people. The Strategy comprises the National Planning Framework (NPF) to 2040 and the National Development Plan (NDP) 2018-2027. Both documents support the project, identifying that improved accessibility between urban centres of population and their regions is a major enabler for the achievement of balanced regional development.

Outside of Dublin, Cork and Limerick are the centres of the second and third largest clusters of population and economic activity in the country. Despite the fact that the city centres are approximately 100 km apart, there are surprisingly few economic links between them. This is due, in part, to the shortcomings in transport connectivity. National policy establishes a minimum population growth target of 50% by 2040 for both Cork and Limerick cities. The objective is to create accessible centres of scale separate from Dublin, which can act in concert with each other to counterbalance economic growth in the east of the country. The N/M20 Cork to Limerick Project is an identified priority to deliver on these aspirations.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The overarching project objective for the N/M20 Cork to Limerick Project is:

“To enable national and regional planning policies, particularly those supporting the National Strategic Outcomes of the National Planning Framework to promote balanced regional development, through enhanced population and economic growth”.

This is to be achieved by improving connectivity between the cities of Cork and Limerick, and ultimately Galway, by:

- reduced land transport journey times;
- improved journey time reliability; and
- facilitating the safe and efficient movement of people, goods and services on the transport network both now and in the future.

Project Program

The N/M20 project team are currently progressing with Phase 2 (Options Selection) of this project, developing a number of options within the study area, which encompasses the broad N20 corridor via Charleville and Mallow. A map of the Phase 2 study area is enclosed for reference only. Following the public consultation for the shortlisted options held earlier this year, further appraisal and assessment of the shortlisted options will be carried out to identify the preferred option, which is expected to be known in Q1 2022.

Key Considerations

IMPORTANCE OF N/M20 CORK TO LIMERICK PROJECT

The proposed N/M20 Cork to Limerick Project is of strategic and local importance and this should be reflected in the contents of the new Cork City Development Plan.

We note that the Draft Cork County Development Plan for the same period ties the N/M20 project into its ‘Core Strategy’ – its deliver is listed as a strategic project of significance to deliver the Core Strategy of the Plan. This assigns substantial weight to the project in policy terms. By comparison, the Draft Cork City Development Plan does not do this. It would be beneficial if the N/M20 Cork to Limerick project was mentioned as part of the Core Strategy or aligned to it also as a strategically important project.

ZONING MAPS

In Volume 2 Mapped Objectives, draft zoning maps are provided. We note in Map 11 that zonings *ZO 03 Tier 3 Residential Neighbourhoods* & *ZO 10 Light Industry & Related Uses* are shown adjacent to or encroaching onto the existing N20 carriageway and junctions near Blarney / Stoneview. The proposed N/M20 Cork to Limerick Project is considering options that would involve the improvement and widening of the existing N20 along this section. It would be prudent to ensure that future zonings are appropriately set back from the existing N20 transport corridor to protect its strategic importance.

REFERENCES TO N/M20 CORK TO LIMERICK PROJECT

The table below includes suggested minor changes to the Draft Cork City Development Plan to provide consistency in references to the N/M20 Cork to Limerick Project.


Page / Section	Current text	Proposed text
Volume 1 Written Statement / 108 / Table	<i>M20 Cork to Limerick</i>	<i>N/M20 Cork to Limerick</i>
132 / 4.1.32 Heading	<i>M20</i>	<i>N/M20</i>
132 / 4.1.32	<i>The N/M20 Cork to Limerick Road Improvement Scheme...</i>	<i>The N/M20 Cork to Limerick project...</i>
132 / 4.1.33	<i>The N/M20 Cork to Limerick scheme will provide...</i>	<i>The N/M20 Cork to Limerick project will provide..</i>
132 / 4.1.34	<i>The N/M20 Cork to Limerick scheme will provide...</i>	<i>The N/M20 Cork to Limerick project will provide..</i>
132/ 4.1.34	<i>The scheme development is currently at Phase 2 Option Selection. Four emerging routes have now been identified with a preferred route due to be selected in 2021.</i>	<i>The project is currently at Phase 2 Option Selection. A number of Options have been identified with a Preferred Option due to be selected in early 2022.</i>
132 / 4.1.36	<i>The scheme development is currently at Phase 2 Option Selection. Four emerging routes have now been identified with a preferred route due to be selected in 2021.</i>	<i>In addition to road-based improvements, a series of rail-based improvements are also being examined and are discussed in preceding sections of this chapter.</i>
Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report / 113 / Objective 7.10	<i>(a) Blarney Business Park Extension: To provide for a high-quality extension to Blarney Business Park using the existing access to the Park. Any proposed development needs to safeguard the M/N20 (navy) route option which traverses part of the land until such time as a preferred route is chosen and the requirement lapses if the navy route is not identified as the preferred route.</i>	<i>(a) Blarney Business Park Extension: To provide for a high-quality extension to Blarney Business Park using the existing access to the Park. Any proposed development needs to safeguard the M/N20 (Green or Navy) options which traverses parts of the land until such time as a preferred option is chosen.</i>

Conclusion

In summary, we welcome the opportunity to contribute to the public consultation for the Draft Cork City Development Plan. The N/M20 Cork to Limerick project is a priority national project which will deliver significant strategic regional, city and local community benefits. It is important that this project is placed on an appropriate policy footing in the new Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028. We trust that appropriate consideration will be given to the contents of this submission and we look forward to the continued advancement of the project in positive partnership with Cork City Council.

If you require any further information or clarification regard this submission, please do not hesitate to contact Jari Howard, N/M20 Project Coordinator on 061 951000 or by email at info@midwestroads.ie. Further information regarding the N/M20 Cork to Limerick Project is available at www.corklimerick.ie.

Yours sincerely


 Brian Kennedy
 Director of Transportation and Mobility
 Limerick City and County Council