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Eastern Transport Plan 2035

CONSULTATION DRAFT OCTOBER 2026

In Partnership with:

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
Ards and North Down Borough Council
Belfast City Council
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Mid & East Antrim Borough Council

Ministerial Foreword

The Eastern Transport Plan (ETP) 2035 sets out our collective vision for a more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient transport network across the eastern region of the North of Ireland.



It represents a significant step forward in how we plan and deliver sustainable transport infrastructure. Developed in close collaboration with five local councils, Antrim and Newtownabbey, Ards and North Down, Belfast City, Lisburn and Castlereagh, and Mid and East Antrim, this Plan is a testament to the power of partnership between central and local government. It aligns with the Local Development Plans and supports the delivery of shared objectives for growth, connectivity, and environmental stewardship.

At its heart, the ETP is about people. It seeks to rebalance our transport system in favour of active travel and public transport, reduce carbon emissions, improve air quality, and create healthier, safer and more accessible communities. It is informed by extensive public and stakeholder engagement and underpinned by a robust Integrated Sustainability Appraisal to ensure that our ambitions are both socially and environmentally responsible.

This Plan is not just a blueprint for infrastructure, it is a commitment to future generations. It recognises the challenges we face, from climate change to social inclusion, and sets out practical, phased interventions that will make a real difference in how people move, live, and thrive.

Together, we can deliver a transport network that connects communities, supports economic growth, and enhances the quality of life for everyone across the region.

LIZ KIMMINS
Minister for Infrastructure

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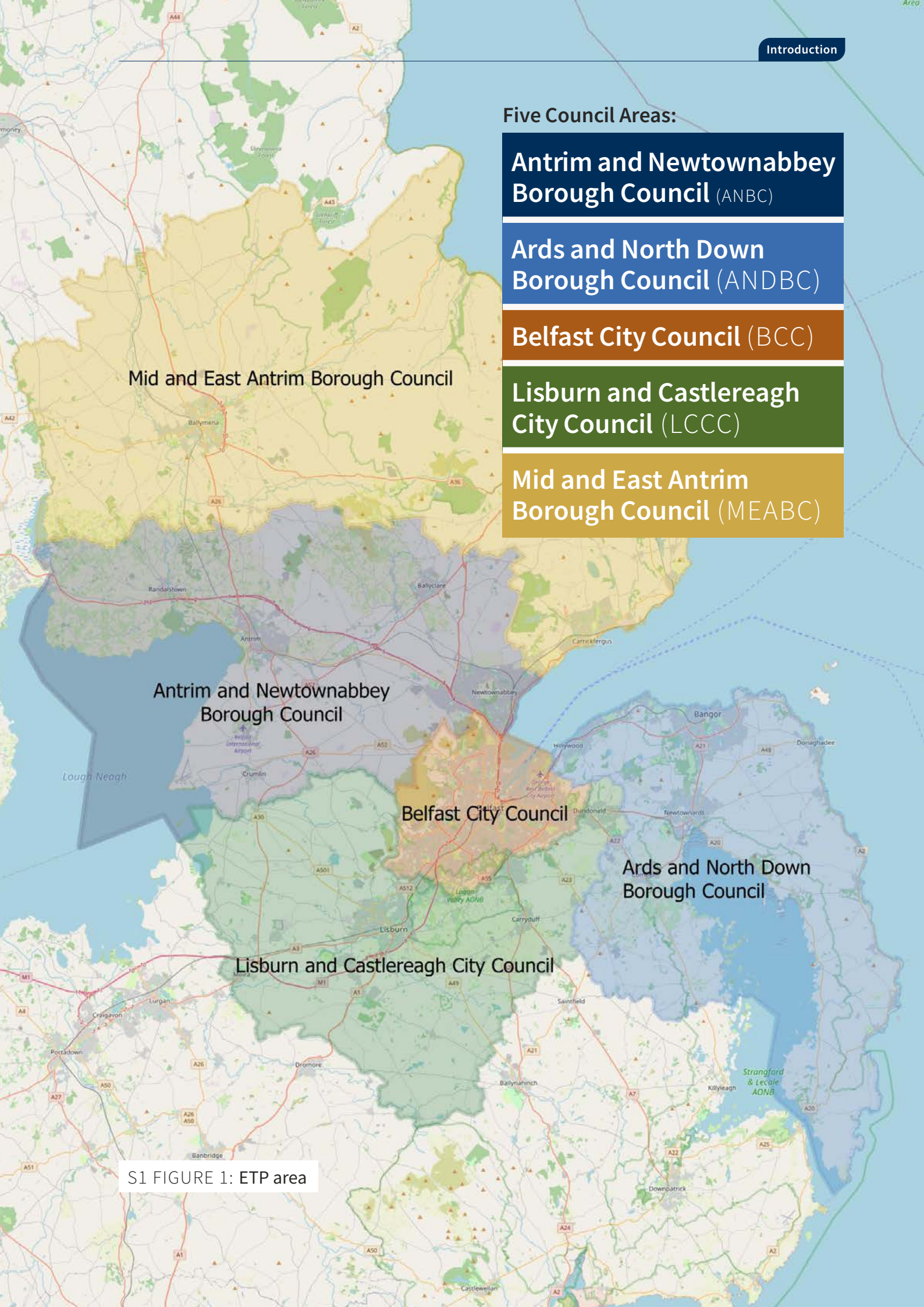


01 Introduction

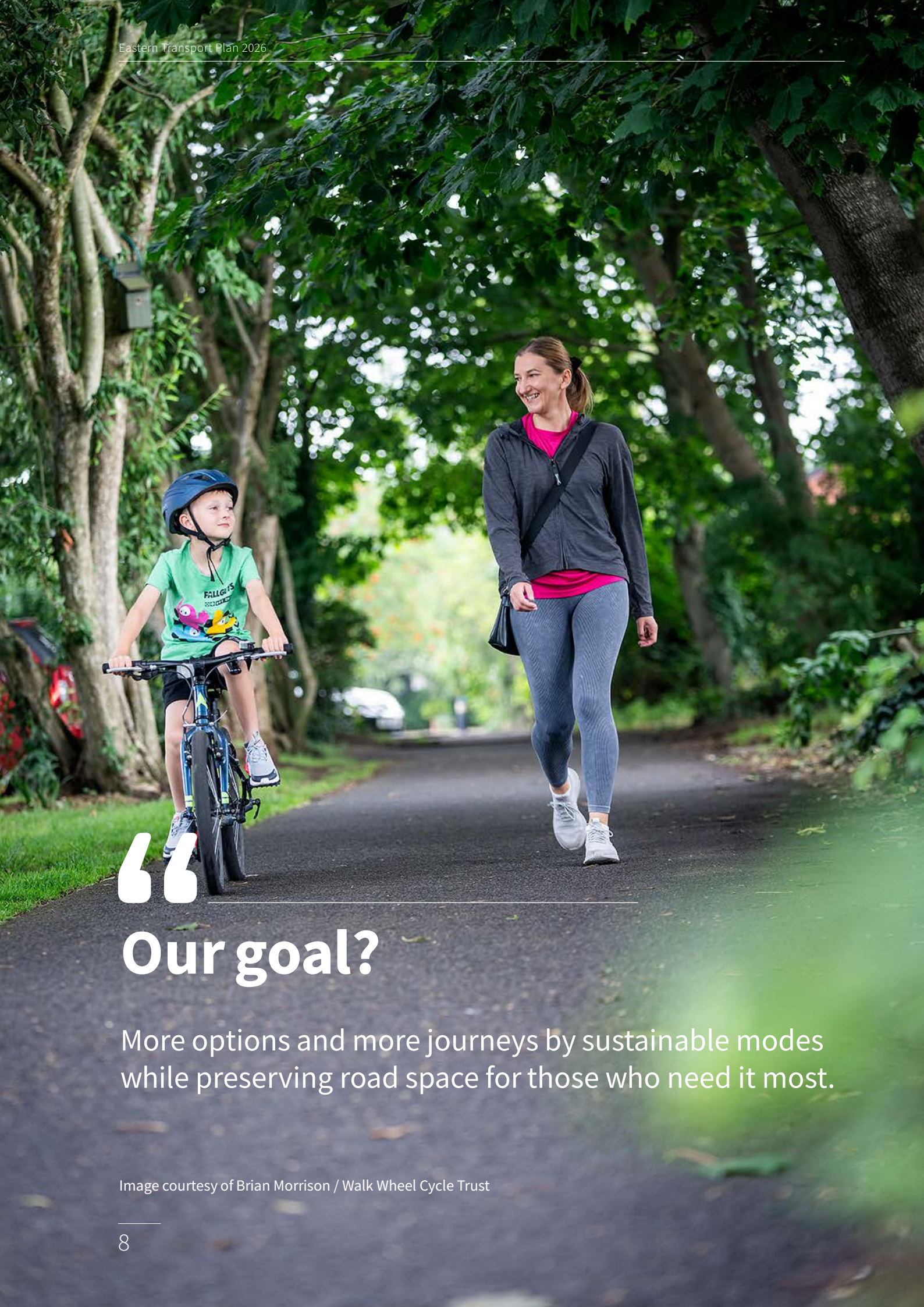
The Eastern Transport Plan (ETP) 2035 sets out a bold proposal for a re-imagined and transformed transport network that will expand travel choices and better connect communities to the people, services and opportunities they rely on.

The ETP is one of a series of plans that, taken together, will translate our long-term vision for a smarter, greener transport system, as set out in **Transport Strategy 2035,** into a detailed map of our future transport network. When finalised, the Plan will cover five council areas:

Image courtesy of Brian Morrison / Walk Wheel Cycle Trust



S1 FIGURE 1: **ETP area**



Our goal?

More options and more journeys by sustainable modes while preserving road space for those who need it most.

Image courtesy of Brian Morrison / Walk Wheel Cycle Trust

Why It Matters

Population and economic growth are on the horizon, and with it, pressure on a transport network already stretched to its limits in places. In Belfast and other urban centres, peak-time congestion is now at a critical stage, in that it is becoming unsustainable to manage in an efficient way. Even minor incidents can bring the system to a standstill, exposing its lack of resilience. Expanding roads isn't the answer: in addition to being costly, it causes severance, encourages greater car use, and is disruptive and environmentally damaging. Without bold action, transport risks becoming a barrier to progress.

Our Ambition

The ETP is about unlocking choice, connecting communities, and creating a network that works for everyone. By supporting Local Development Plans (LDPs), it identifies the infrastructure and services needed to deliver new homes, jobs, and services sustainably. **Our goal? More options and more journeys by sustainable modes while preserving road space for those who need it most.**

What Does "Sustainable" Mean?

Sustainability isn't just about the action on climate change; it's about having the ability to deliver growth over the long term without causing lasting harm. That means it's also about the built environment, the economy, and equity. In the ETP, sustainable transport means **active travel** (walking, wheeling and cycling) and **public transport** (bus, coach, bus rapid transit and rail). These modes reduce emissions, require less space, support economic growth, promote healthier lifestyles, and strengthen communities. By embracing them, we can grow our economy while protecting our environment and improving quality of life.

The Big Picture

Every journey switched to sustainable transport frees up road space and makes the network work better for everyone.

Together, we can build a transport system that supports growth, safeguards the built and natural environment, and connects people to opportunity.

1.1 The Transport Strategy 2035

Our Strategic Priorities are that Transport:

01 Is Resilient and Sustainable

02 Supports Connected and Inclusive Communities

03 Is Safe and Healthy

04 Supports Green Growth

The Transport Strategy 2035 sets out a clear vision for a transport system that enables economic growth, strengthens regional balance, and enhances connectivity for Northern Ireland. The strategy is developed around four Strategic Priorities for Transport, each of which contribute to United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Under each strategic priority there are a range of transport measures. They do not operate in isolation, rather they will work together to holistically achieve the Transport Vision for 2035.

Together, the Transport Strategy's measures set the overarching direction of travel for changes to transport policy and interventions to 2035. The ETP aligns with the Strategic Priorities of the Transport Strategy 2035 and directly actions the relevant transport measures identified by the Strategy.

MEASURE **RS02**

The Department will support and promote the use of the Transport Emissions Model (TEM) and other Departmental tools to quantify emissions and support the monitoring, evaluation and appraisal of transport policies, ensuring evidence-led decisions and effective prioritisation of carbon reduction measures.

MEASURE **RS05**

The Department will apply the Vision and Validate approach in the planning and development of the transport system.

Measures RS02 and RS05 reflect the Department for Infrastructure's (DfI) commitment to transitioning from traditional transport planning practices to modern, evidence-based approaches designed to deliver greater benefits for our region. Measure RS02 outlines the Department's three-pronged strategy for reducing the carbon impact of transport: switching to cleaner fuels, shifting travel modes, and reducing overall journey demand. While the transition to zero and low emission vehicles (ZEVs and LEVs) remains central to this approach, encouraging modal shift and shortening journeys are equally important. These measures represent the most sustainable solutions, delivering not only significant reductions in tailpipe emissions but also wider environmental, social, health, and economic benefits. By easing congestion, improving air quality, and enhancing public health and wellbeing, they create a more resilient and livable region.

The ETP focuses on opportunities to deliver against the latter two prongs of the approach: shifting modes and reducing journeys.

Measure RS05 commits the Department to moving away from outdated transport planning methods which have historically reinforced the status-quo of private vehicle use. The Vision and Validate approach places the focus on the movement of people and goods rather than vehicles and ensures that appropriate sustainable transport measures are considered at the outset of Plan development. The ETP adopts the suggested place and movement focused approach that will ensure that transport interventions to be delivered within the Plan period align with the vision of the Strategy.

1.2 Local Development Plan Context

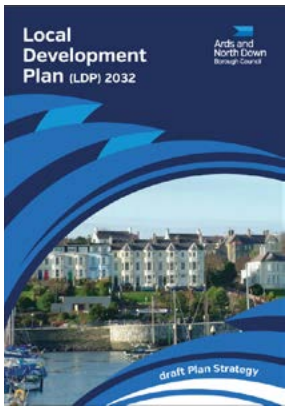
The transport plans are being prepared by DfI in parallel with the Local Development Plans (LDPs) prepared by the councils. The ETP supports the preparation of Local Policy Plans (LPP) for each of the five council areas. The integration of land-use and transport planning processes provides a unique opportunity to combine the shared objectives of central and local government.

The LDP process involves Councils publishing Plan Strategies which set policy for their areas and outlines potential levels of growth, areas for development and their uses without being specific about individual zonings and locations. Similarly, DfI produced Transport Studies which identified potential local transport measures which would be needed for each council area. In this way the processes took account of each other. In particular, DfI has sought to 'steer' new development towards sustainable locations. This was done whilst also identifying the broad types of measures which may be needed to deal with existing and potential new development to deliver wider social and environmental objectives.

In the final stage in the LDP process, the Councils' Local Policies Plans indicate designated zonings for specific land-uses and the Transport Plan include consideration of these zonings when identifying and testing future transport interventions. The plans complement each other in terms of both locational detail and policy detail. The plans cross refer to each other, for instance new transport schemes which require planning protection will be included in the LPP while the ETP will recommend schemes required to facilitate land use zonings.









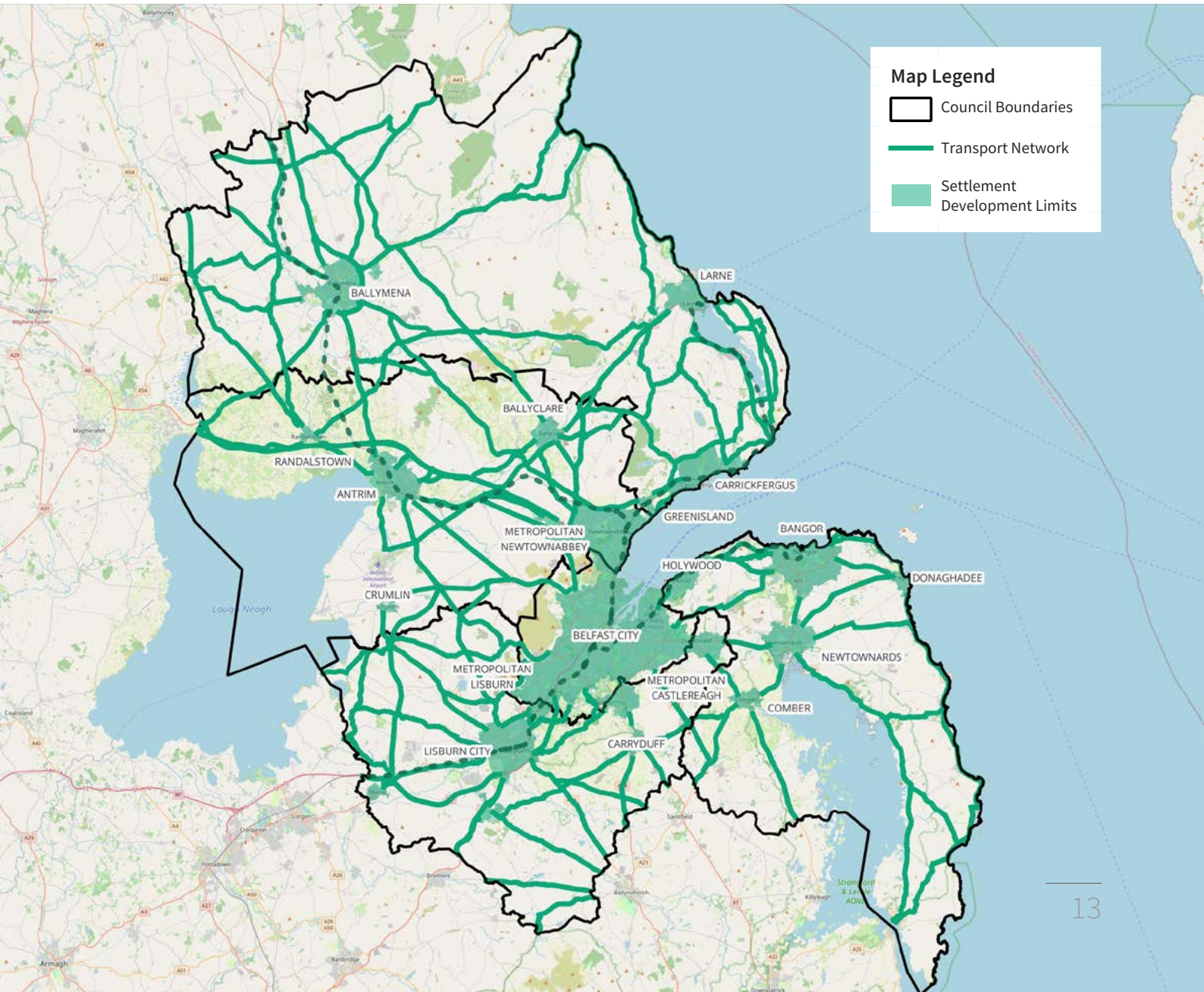


1.3 ETP Scope and Phasing

Due to the varied delivery timescales for the five LPPs, ETP 2035 has been developed and published in iterative phases to align with the publication of each council's LPP. With each iterative publication, a new chapter is added to the ETP to cover the respective council area, as outlined below.

Within each council / boundary area, primary consideration has been given to the transport network within the main urban settlements (those with a population of 5,000 or more, as defined by NISRA). Outside of these settlements, only those A-roads and B-roads that do not form the Regional Strategic Transport Network (RSTN) have been within the scope of this transport plan. Motorways and other regional transport links that comprise the RSTN are within the scope of the Regional Strategic Transport Plan (RSTP). The scope of the ETP transport network is shown in Figure 2.

S1 FIGURE 2: **Transport Network within the ETP Area**



Belfast City Centre Transport Plan	Focuses on interventions proposed within Belfast City Centre.	Chapter 3
Metropolitan Area Transport Plan	Covers proposals for the continuous built-up area spanning outwards from Belfast City Centre. The area covers parts of: • Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council (ANBC); • Belfast City Council (BCC); and • Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC).	Chapter 4
Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Transport Plan	Presents proposals for the ANBC area that lies beyond the Metropolitan Area. Consideration has been given to all areas within this bound ary, however the main settlements reviewed in detail during Plan development include: • Antrim • Ballyclare • Crumlin • Randalstown	Chapter 5
Ards and North Down Borough Council Transport Plan	Presents proposals for the ANDBC area. Consideration has been given to all areas within this boundary, however the main settlements reviewed in detail during Plan development include: • Bangor • Comber • Donaghadee • Holywood • Newtownards	Chapter 6

Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council Transport Plan	Presents proposals for the LCCC area that lies beyond the Metropolitan Area. Consideration has been given to all areas within this boundary, however the main settlements reviewed in detail during Plan development include: • Carryduff • Comber • Lisburn City • Moira • Royal Hillsborough	Chapter 7
Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Transport Plan	Presents proposals for the MEABC area. Consideration has been given to all areas within this boundary, however the main settlements reviewed in detail during Plan development include: • Ballymena • Carrickfergus • Greenisland • Larne	Chapter 8

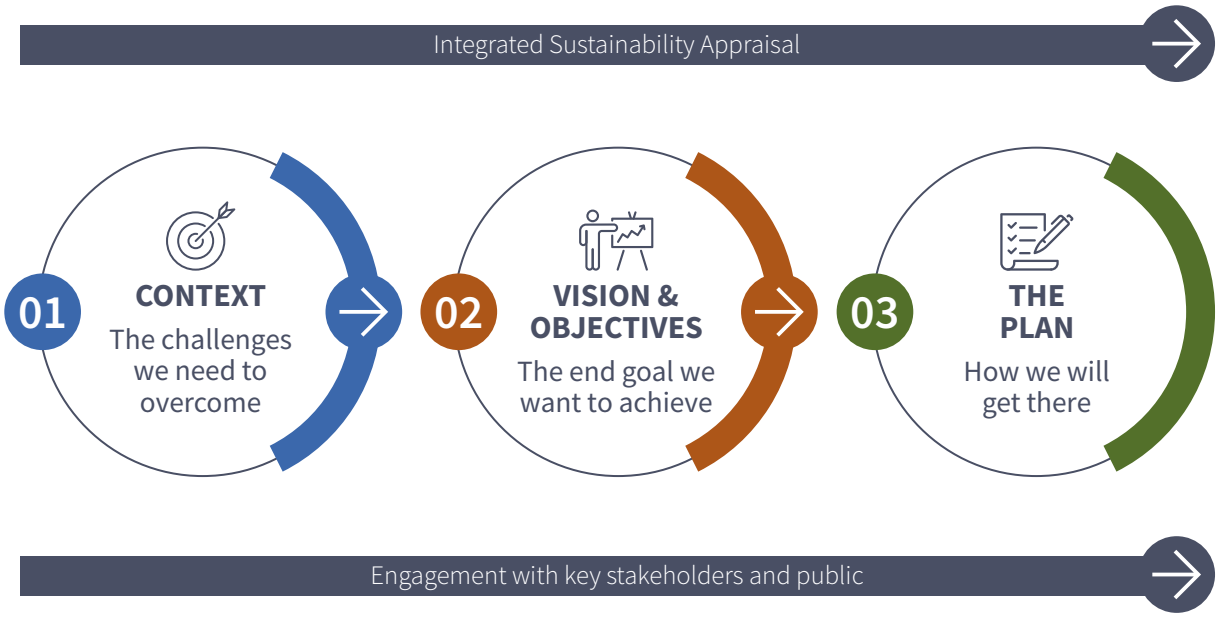
1.4 Approach to ETP Development

In line with recommendations made through the Transport Strategy 2035 a **'Vision and Validate'** approach to the development of ETP 2035 has been employed. This proactive approach starts by agreeing a future aspiration or **'Vision'** of what we are trying to achieve followed by checks or **'Validation'** of what types of future transport measures will enable the vision.

The starting point for the development of ETP 2035 was a review of the existing transport context, including identifying the challenges to be overcome. The existing context has been reviewed at an ETP-wide level, as well as on an area-by-area basis. Details of the area-specific challenges and opportunities are presented in the relevant sections of this Plan.

Following confirmation of the challenges to overcome, the end goal that should be worked towards was identified; this includes an aspirational, overarching long-term Vision for the ETP and a set of policy Objectives. Aspirational changes to the transport networks of individual towns and cities within the ETP area have also been established in consultation with the relevant Council and other key stakeholders. These are presented in the relevant sections of this Plan and in accordance with the Transport Strategy 2035 follow a Place and Movement Framework (PMF) approach, described further in section 2.5.6.3.

S1 FIGURE 3: **ETP approach**



This approach was then used to guide the identification of a range of transport measures. These have been refined through testing using appropriate appraisal tools and checks against the overarching ETP Vision and Objectives, ultimately resulting in 'The Plan' to 2035.

Prepared in parallel to the Plan development, an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) has also been undertaken. The ISA independently appraises the ETP policies and recommendations through an environment and society focused lens to ensure that the resulting Plan is environmentally and socially equitable and responsible.

An extensive programme of engagement, both with key stakeholders and the public, has run alongside and fed into ETP development. Feedback from key Departmental stakeholders, other interested parties and the public has ensured that the ETP proposals are appropriate, achievable and aligned with the needs of transport users.

ISA approach

As part of the ETP development process, there has been extensive research done into the environmental and social impacts of this policy documents development. In line with statutory guidance, both the ETP and its proposed schemes have been studied extensively to ensure that they all comply with the necessary legislation and ensure that both people and the environment are not adversely affected by the proposals.

The ISA ensures the integration of sustainability appraisal is applied to all aspects of the ETP. It has been an iterative assessment process which has informed the ETP as it developed to ensure that potential significant effects arising from ETP are identified and assessed.

The ISA ensures ETP meets all legislative requirements, to address:

- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004;
- Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) (required by the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (1995/380), as amended by The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019); and
- Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA), as required by section 75 (1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and as informed by the Rural Needs Assessment (required under the Rural Needs Act Northern Ireland 2016).

A Health Impact Assessment, while not a statutory requirement, is also considered as part of the ISA process, which is considered good practice and in keeping with promoting healthy and safe communities.

The ISA and HRA can be found at Annex A. The assessments within them make clear that significant positive effects are anticipated to arise from ETP proposals, if they are delivered in accordance with the identified ETP Guiding Principles (see section 2.5.7). All ETP Plan proposals will seek to reduce or avoid adverse environmental, economic or social impact where possible; this will be a key consideration during the further development and design of the proposals within the Plan period.

Engagement approach

Taking on board the views of stakeholders and the public has been central to the development of the ETP. Engagement with key technical stakeholders and collaborators has been undertaken continuously throughout ETP development, including close liaison with each of the Councils' LDP teams.

In addition, several phases of public engagement, starting with the ETP Launch, have been timed to coincide with the publication of each iterative version of the ETP and corresponding council's LDP. Further information about the results of the Launch are documented in the Launch Engagement Report (Eastern Transport Plan 2035 – Supporting Documents | Department for Infrastructure).

The findings of all other public engagement exercises will be used to inform the further development of the ETP, ensuring that the long-term Vision and individual scheme proposals presented for each council area meet the needs of transport users across the region.



Image courtesy of Brian Morrison / Walk Wheel Cycle Trust



02

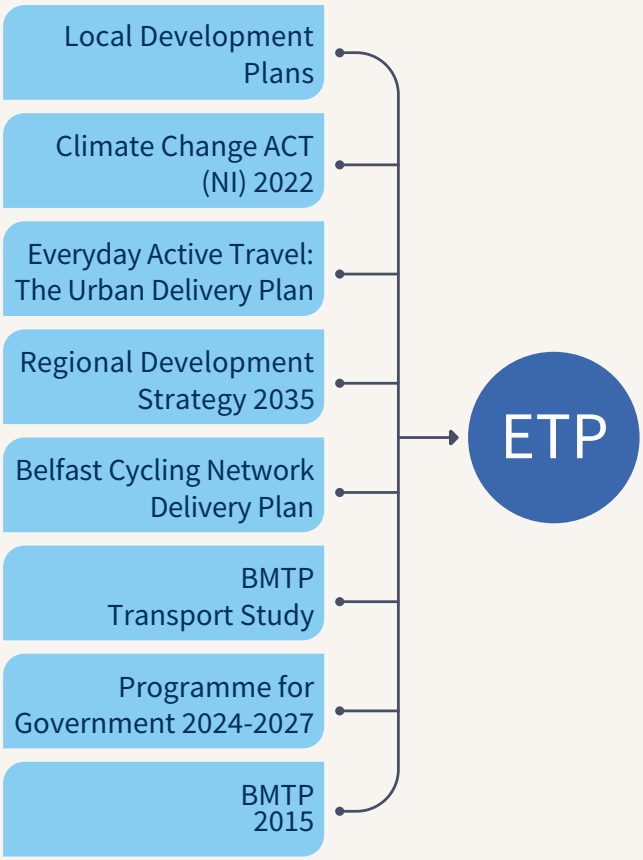
ETP Vision, Objectives and Guiding Principles

Image courtesy of Brian Morrison / Walk Wheel Cycle Trust

2.1 Overview

To ensure that the individual priorities presented in this transport plan will complement each other and work towards a shared long-term goal, an overarching vision and associated objectives were defined in consultation with stakeholders and the public. These have guided optioneering through the transport plan's development; all recommendations made through this transport plan have been assessed against these objectives to ensure strategic fit.

S2 FIGURE 4: **Policy Context**



2.2 Policy Context

The vision and objectives have been informed by DfI's wider policy direction, as set out in the Transport Strategy. This draws themes from the overarching policies included across many other relevant policy documents, including the Programme for Government, Climate Change Act and Regional Development Strategy, as depicted in Figure 4.

ETP's vision and objectives also take account of the LDP objectives of the five councils, as well as reflecting on key challenges and opportunities confirmed during the Public Launch exercise.

2.3 Wider Context

In addition to the key policy drivers, the ETP vision and objectives also consider the role that transport plays across a range of other areas. Investment choices in our future transport systems are not simply about getting people from A to B, an effective transport network can also support in the delivery of transformative changes across many other areas of society.

2.3.1 Transport and Social Inclusion



Transport plays a crucial role in connecting people to jobs, education, leisure activities and other opportunities, however not everyone can access the transport network in the same way.

Increasing the choice of transport options available via the ETP and eliminating barriers to use will help improve access and deliver benefits for all and reduce transport poverty.

2.3.2 Transport and Health



Active modes of transport including walking, wheeling and cycling provide some of the easiest and cheapest ways to get more active, improve fitness and wellbeing (both physical and mental) and become healthier, however our existing transport infrastructure may not always encourage use of these modes as a natural or attractive mode choice. Building exercise into travel is a time efficient way to increase regular exercise which can help to lower the risk of chronic diseases such as heart attacks, strokes and diabetes, whose treatment are a substantial cost to the government's health budget. Chronic air pollution has also been shown to have links between dementia and cognitive decline. All of which has social impacts, particularly for the elderly and their families[1].

The ETP aims to support **increased uptake in active modes of transport** including walking, wheeling and cycling.

2.3.3 Transport and Road Safety



Some transport users are more vulnerable to being involved in collisions and being more seriously injured, for example children or people with reduced mobility. Design improvements and speed reductions can create a safer transport network for all. The most recent Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy to 2030[2]: Annual Statistical Report 2024[3] shows that in 2023 there were 71 fatalities, a 5% increase against the 2014-2018 baseline. In 2024 there were 880 serious injuries, which is 17% above the 2014-2018 baseline. The number of children Killed or Seriously Injured (KSIs) was 83, 17% above the 2014-2018 baseline, while the number of young people (192) KSIs was four fewer than the 2014-2018 baseline.

The ETP aims to reduce the number of collisions involving vulnerable road users across the Plan area.

1 Air pollution: cognitive decline and dementia - GOV.UK
2 Road Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2030 | Department for Infrastructure
3 Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy to 2030 Annual Statistical Report 2024 | Department for Infrastructure

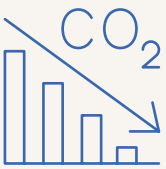
2.3.4 Transport And Personal Safety

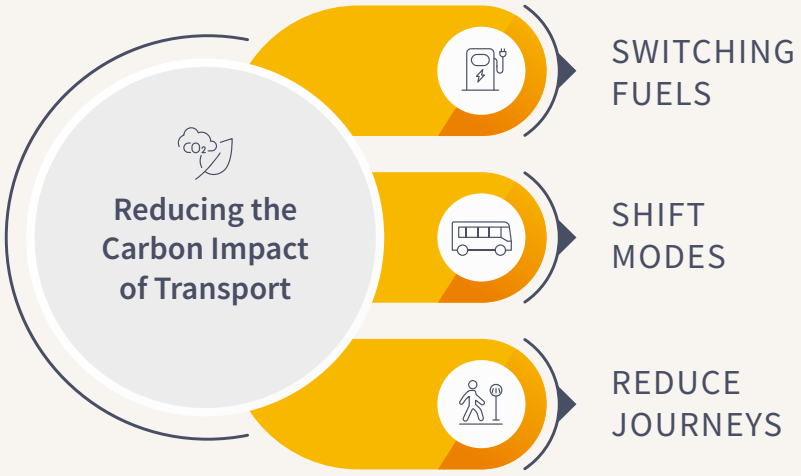


Personal safety and people's perceptions of safety can also be directly impacted by the design of the transport network. Concerns around personal safety, particularly for women and girls, can be heightened during hours of darkness. The safety and security of all transport users should be embedded within the design of streets and public spaces. Taxis, reliable and well used buses and associated waiting facilities help to ensure everyone gets home safely and without concern.

The ETP aims to help everyone feel able to get home safely.

2.3.5 Transport and Climate Change





Transport is the region's second highest emitter of carbon. Northern Ireland has a legally-binding target of cutting emissions to net zero by 2050, meaning that the carbon emissions associated with transport need to be reduced significantly. The Department are rapidly progressing measures that will support the transition towards ZEVs. However, as part of the three-pronged approach to reducing the carbon impact of transport, focus also needs to be placed on seeking opportunities to encourage a switch towards sustainable transport modes and reducing journeys or travel distances. In 2021, 69% of all journeys were made by car[4]. By providing additional and enhanced sustainable travel options to people, the greater the propensity for a modal shift and the lower the overall carbon footprint associated with transport will be.

4 Travel Survey for Northern Ireland (TSNI) in-depth report 2021 | Department for Infrastructure

The ETP aims to support a reduction in carbon emissions from transport through provision of opportunities to shift mode or reduce travel distances, supporting a transition towards net zero. The ETP will also support complementary climate adaptation initiatives.

2.3.6 Transport and the Environment



As well as carbon emissions, many motorised vehicles emit other pollutants, including particulate matter which can impact upon air quality. Poor air quality is a particular concern within towns and cities where high volumes of traffic through areas of high footfall (such as local neighbourhood areas as well as towns and city centres) can have negative impacts upon people's respiratory health. The Alzheimer's Society has found that exposure to a high level of air pollution increases a person's risk of developing dementia, as well as contributing to other long-term conditions. There are currently Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in place within the ETP area to try and monitor and tackle air quality concerns. Without intervention, air quality may deteriorate further.

The impacts of transport construction and operation on biodiversity and habitats needs also to be considered. The proposals made within the ETP will need to be subject to further appraisal and design development work. Implementation of any individual scheme will be progressed following appropriate guidance and alignment with relevant planning requirements. This could include, where appropriate, Environmental Impact Assessment, Habitats Regulation Assessment or assessments such as Health Impact or Equalities Impact. Environmental management plans should also be developed ahead of construction.

The ETP aims to protect the region's air quality and habitats.

2.3.7 Transport and the Economy



Transport is crucial for economic growth through helping people to access jobs, attracting and retaining employers to the region, unlocking development sites for businesses and housing, as well as boosting tourism, trade and connectivity. In addition to moving people, the transport network enables the movement of goods and services. Efficient and uncongested transport networks reduce travel time and costs associated with the movement of goods and people and uplift the productivity and efficiency of businesses. For the purposes of economic growth, this is vital to ensuring the ETP area and Northern Ireland remains economically competitive and connected.

The ETP aims to support housing and employment growth across the region.

2.3.8 Transport and Resilience



With the existing transport network close to capacity at peak times in some areas, there is a lack of resilience in the network. As a result, incidents or accidents, such as broken down vehicles, can cause delays leading to economic, social and environmental impact. For this reason and with extreme weather events becoming more frequent, it's important that the transport network is resilient. Increasing the number of travel options available in the region will strengthen the network's resilience. Ensuring that our transport network comprises high standards of infrastructure, supported by regular maintenance will help to protect against damage and degradation.

The ETP aims to improve the resilience of the region's transport network.



Image courtesy of Brian Morrison / Walk Wheel Cycle Trust

2.4 ETP Vision and Objectives

The overarching ETP Vision and Objectives capture the key ambitions for the region and have been used to assess each proposed ETP transport intervention to ensure that every measure put forward by the Plan helps to work towards this cohesive and transformational ambition for change.

The Vision and Objectives were agreed following stakeholder and public engagement in 2023.

The ETP Vision is to:

Deliver an integrated and re-balanced transport network in favour of sustainable, efficient modes, which connects communities creating an accessible, inclusive, safe and prosperous economic region by delivering carbon reduction, improving air quality, enhancing the built and natural environment and facilitating healthy and sustainable travel choices over unnecessary private car travel.

The Vision is supported by Seven Objectives:

01	Reduce travel distances by promoting safe, inclusive and connected neighbourhoods, supported by integrated planning.
02	Deliver a reduction in carbon emissions by increasing accessibility for all to jobs, services and recreation by sustainable travel modes.
03	Promote healthy and inclusive communities by developing safe sustainable travel modes that respect the local built and natural environment.
04	Reduce unnecessary use of the private car by implementing effective demand management measures.
05	Improve air quality and the environment by encouraging the use of sustainable travel modes and vehicles which utilise sustainable fuels.
06	Enhance the resilience and safety of the transport network to support the economy and meet the challenges of climate change.
07	Support the efficient, sustainable movement of goods and people and enhance connectivity to regional networks including access to airports and ports.

2.5 Role of the Transport Modes

Throughout this transport plan, proposals are presented on a mode-by-mode basis. Over recent years, transport planning practitioners have considered the adoption of a 'sustainable transport hierarchy' when developing transport interventions across transport networks. The Hierarchy of Transport Modes places the needs of active modes and sustainable transport modes over private cars in terms of precedence on the transport network. However, it is challenging to apply this approach consistently across an entire transport network. This approach does not allow flexibility to acknowledge that in some instances provisions for bus movements, for example, may need to be more prioritised over cyclists as a result of transport demands in that area.

This transport plan acknowledges that all forms of transport have an important role to play in delivering against our ETP Vision. As a result, and in line with the Transport Strategy, this transport plan is taking a more flexible approach to consideration of modal hierarchies. Rather than applying a uniform hierarchy across the Plan area, a series of bespoke hierarchies have been developed to help to ensure that the right modes are prioritised in the right places across the region's network (see section 2.5.6.3 for more detail).

The following sections summarise the importance of each transport mode and provide an overview of the existing levels of use across the ETP area.

S2 FIGURE 5: **Hierarchy of Transport Modes**

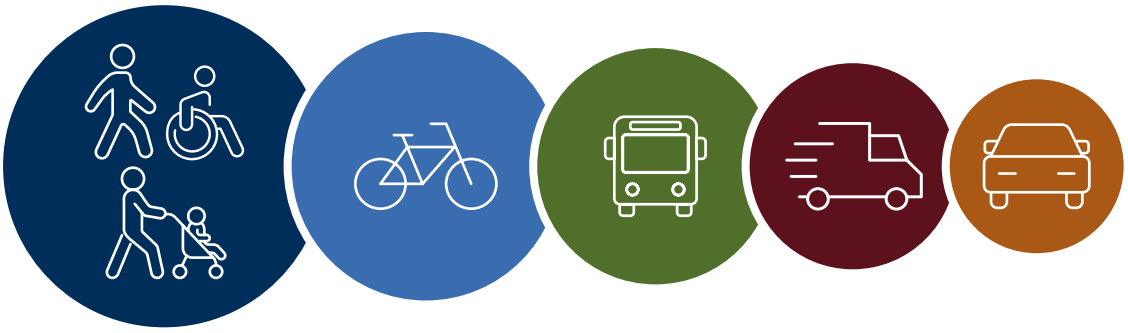




Image courtesy of Brian Morrison / Walk Wheel Cycle Trust



Supporting Health and Wellbeing

Walking and wheeling is one of the most popular and time-efficient forms of physical activity. Combining travel by this mode into daily routines helps to provide health benefits to people and the National Health Service through a reduction in cardiovascular diseases.

Reducing Congestion

The 2021 Census indicates that over 54% of journeys to work that were less than 2km were made by car as opposed to 33% which were made on foot. If more people decided to make these short commutes by walking or wheeling, the number of cars on our roads could be reduced.

Supporting Economic Growth

Better environments for walking, wheeling (and cycling) are shown to encourage people to spend more time in our local high streets and town centres therefore spending money to support the economy.

Reducing the Individual Cost of Transport

Walking and wheeling is a free mode of transport, which if used in place of alternative modes regularly, can reduce the costs associated with travel. For some households it could also reduce the need for one or more vehicles, leading to direct financial savings.

2.5.1 Walking and Wheeling

The term “walking and wheeling” refers to walking, running, or wheeling unaided, as well as using any kind of mobility aids such as electric wheelchairs, mobility scooters or walking frames. People pushing prams or buggies are also included in this definition, as well as other modes such as scooting, skateboarding, and rollerblading/roller skating. Walking and wheeling as a mode of travel provides an essential local mobility option for people travelling to and from their homes, education, work opportunities and local services. Travel by walking and wheeling also provides wider benefits to the individual, society, the local environment and wider economy[5].

Existing pedestrian infrastructure varies in terms of its provision and quality across the ETP area. Statistics show that walking is less safe than travelling by car[6], particularly across the Antrim and Newtownabbey, Ards and North Down and Mid and East Antrim council areas suggesting issues with existing footpaths and crossing facilities.

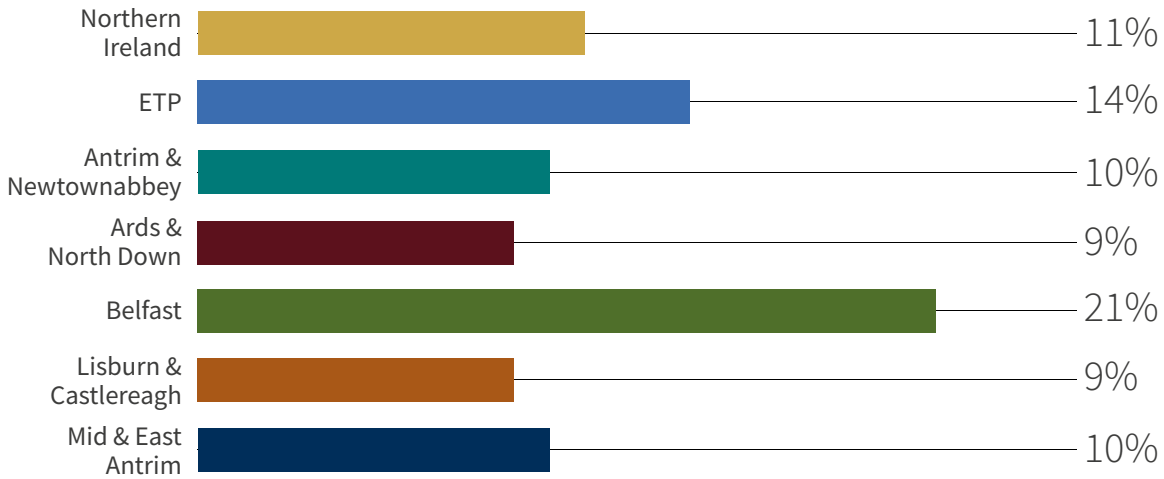
At the 2011 Census[7], the proportion of the population choosing to travel to work and study on foot varied by council area, as shown in Figure 6. The proportion of people doing so within the more urban area of Belfast is much higher than exhibited in the predominantly more rural council areas. Although the current uptake of walking and wheeling may be lower across rural council areas, the demand for improved walking and wheeling facilities is high across all councils. When asked as part of the 2023/2024 Continuous Household Survey (CHS)[8], “Would you be likely to walk any

journeys you have to make that are up to 2 miles/3kms?", between 59-80% respondents from all five ETP council areas answered "Yes". The CHS explores challenges related to active travel uptake further. When asked "Are you satisfied with the current situation for walking and walkers in your local area at present?", 34% of respondents answered "No", citing challenges around poor and cluttered footpath conditions, high levels of traffic and insufficient or indirect provision crossings and routes as being the most common challenges. These challenges were also echoed in feedback received during the ETP Launch engagement exercise.

The Engagement also confirmed strong agreement with the role of walking and wheeling in supporting stronger communities, with 78% of respondents agreeing "that access to opportunities should be possible by convenient, safe and affordable active travel (walking, wheeling and cycling options)".

Delivery of high-quality walking and wheeling infrastructure is therefore important at all locations on the network. Achieving this would be a step towards developing the balanced transport network that is accessible to all residents within the ETP area.

S2 FIGURE 6: **Mode Share for Travel to Work or Study by Walking**

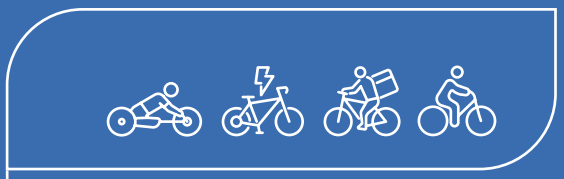


5 Helping people through the cost of living crisis and growing our economy (Sustrans, 2022): https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/11397/cost-of-living-report.pdf

6 Annual collisions statistics indicate that pedestrians are disproportionately involved in road incidents compared to the number of trips they account for.

7 Note that 2011 Census is quoted due to the impact of COVID lockdowns on travel behaviours recorded at the 2021 Census.

8 Walking and Cycling in Northern Ireland 2023/2024 (DfI, 2024): https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/walking-and-cycling-research



Supporting Health and Wellbeing

Cycling is an easy and effective way to improve physical and mental health. Cycling for leisure or as a mode of transport helps individuals to maintain a healthy weight, boost cardiovascular fitness, and lower the risk of chronic diseases.

Adaptability

Cycles can be adapted and purchased with a variety of options, including batteries and the ability to fold. Adding flexibility and multimodal journeys.

Supporting Economic Growth

Investment in active travel infrastructure can deliver substantial economic returns. Bike friendly environments attract more residents, visitors, and developers, making communities more vibrant and commercially successful.

Access to Opportunity

By giving accessible travel options to people, especially those who cannot drive or do not have access to a car, we ensure that everyone has the freedom to move around easily and independently.

9 EAPC standards and legal requirements (Updated 10 December 2024) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/electrically-assisted-pedal-cycles-eapcs/electrically-assisted-pedal-cycles-eapcs-in-great-britain-information-sheet

10 Transport Statistics Great Britain (DfT, 2016)

11 Market share of e-bike unit sales in the United Kingdom from 2015 to 2029 (Statista, 2025): https://www.statista.com/statistics/1475070/e-bike-market-share-united-kingdom/

2.5.2 Cycling

Cycling refers to users of pedal cycles but not motorbikes. The definition includes electrically assisted pedal cycles (EAPC)[9] and non-standard cycles, such as adapted cycles (cycles or tricycles, specially adapted for use by disabled people), cargo cycles and recumbents.

Cycling is relatively low cost compared to the private car and faster than wheeling and walking. It is well suited for shorter, everyday journeys of less than five miles, which accounts for two out of three everyday journeys[10]. The range of types of bicycle, such as folding units, also provide a means to integrate active travel with public transport to enable longer journeys. EAPCs, which are becoming more common[11], provide unique ways to increase not only the speed of journeys but also the distance that users can travel comfortably for everyday trips, especially over hilly terrain. They also present an attractive option to occasional cyclists, along with those who may have physical ailments that would have otherwise prevented them from cycling[12].

Increased uptake of cycling can provide benefits to individuals, as well as supporting wider ambitions for the region. This is demonstrated through the increasing volume of literature that suggests that improvements to active travel, including cycling can have positive impacts on a local economy including improved footfall, reduced congestion within urban areas and increased amounts of physical activity per week[13].

As the smallest type of road legal vehicle, bicycles can travel with minimal user effort

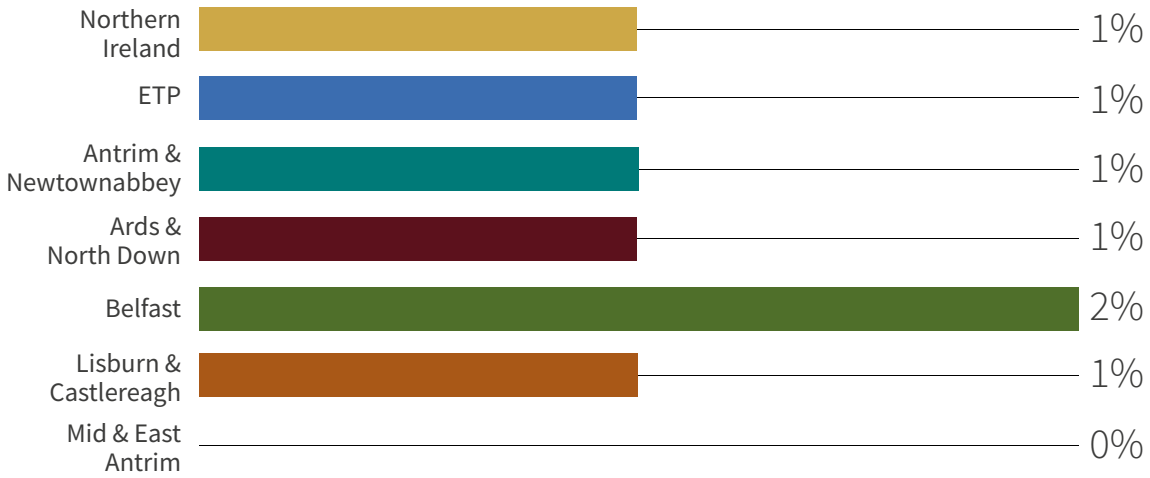
at speeds of 15.5mph, especially those that are powered by electricity. Despite this, the 2011 Census indicates that cycling within Northern Ireland is low compared to the rest of the United Kingdom. Regional variation in cycling levels is also present, as shown in 2011 Census[14] data in Figure 7.

The reasons for the low uptake in cycling are varied. The availability and quality of cycle infrastructure may be a factor; most settlements outside of city and town centres have poor provision of cycling infrastructure including limited traffic free cycling routes. The 2023/24 Continuous Household Survey (CHS) found a lack of cycle lanes and too much traffic to be the leading reasons why people were unsatisfied with existing conditions for cyclists in their areas. A potential consequence of the lack of dedicated infrastructure, evidence suggests that cyclists are disproportionately involved in road traffic incidents across the ETP area.

However, with over one third of journeys in Northern Ireland being less than two miles long, and two thirds are less than five miles long[15], there is an opportunity for cycling to become a practical and attractive option for many people. This is further evidenced by responses to the ETP Launch, which found that over 23% of respondents would like to cycle to work in the future.

Improving the provision of safe, reliable, and accessible cycle infrastructure will help to encourage more people to embrace healthier alternatives and create more vibrant places where traffic congestion and air quality are less of an issue and our streets feel safer and more pleasant for everyone.

S2 FIGURE 7: **Travel to Work or Study by Cycling**



12 Who uses e-bikes in the UK and why? (Steve Meila and Caroline Bartle, 2023) https://www.sciencedirect.com/org/science/article/pii/S1556831822000715#:~:text=For%20journeys%20that%20are%20too%20long%20for%20riding%20a%20conventional%20bike

13 Active travel: Trends, policy and funding (UK Parliament House of Commons Library, 2020): https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8615/

14 Note that 2011 Census is quoted due to the impact of COVID lockdowns on travel behaviours recorded at the 2021 Census.

15 Active Travel Delivery Plan (DfI, 2024): https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/consultations/infrastructure/consultation-document-active-travel-delivery-plan.pdf

Micro-mobility

Micro-mobility refers to a range of small, lightweight vehicles operating at speeds typically below 25 km/h (15 mph) and driven by users personally.

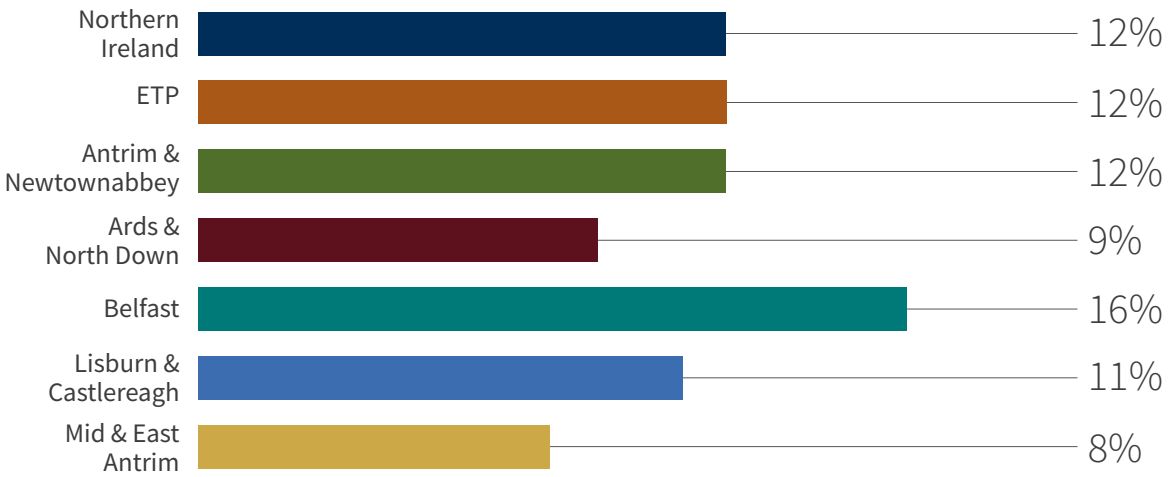
Personal light electric vehicles such as electric scooters or electric skateboards cannot be used on public roads or footways in NI.

While these personal mobility vehicles could contribute to more sustainable travel choices for people, there are also concerns about their safe introduction for the rider and other road users. The Department will continue to monitor emerging trends in this area and any future policy decision regarding their future role as part of the transport system will be subject to broad stakeholder engagement.

Bus, Coach and Bus Rapid Transit

Buses and coaches form the cornerstone of public transport provision within Northern Ireland. There are a variety of service types operated by Translink and a range of private providers that serve local and cross-border demands for the region, providing frequent connectivity across multiple routes. The ETP area has seen significant levels of investment over the last ten years, including at Belfast Grand Central Station, which acts as a new hub for regional bus and coach services, as well as the introduction of the Glider in 2018. The Glider represents a step-change in service provision. As a bus rapid transit (BRT) solution, it provides enhanced service frequencies and reliability, modern tram-style vehicles supported by high levels of bus priority along its routes and off board ticketing.

S2 FIGURE 8: **Travel to Work or Study by Bus**



16 KPMG, The economic impact of local bus services (2024): https://www.cpt-uk.org/media/couiyy5y/240902-economic-impact-of-bus-final.pdf
17 Buses and Economic Growth, Summary of Report by the University of Leeds, ITS (2021): https://www.cpt-uk.org/media/prpjezjj/25-1.pdf
18 www.cpt-uk.org
19 Translink Passengers Have Their Say (Translink, 2024): https://www.translink.co.uk/customer-satisfaction-results
20 Note that 2011 Census is quoted due to the impact of COVID lockdowns on travel behaviours recorded at the 2021 Census.

Bus, Coach and BRT as a mode of transport can provide a practical and comfortable alternative to private car use for everyday journeys. Investment in buses can bring benefits to individual travellers as well as delivering support to local economies[16] [17]. This can unlock up to £4.55 in local benefits for every £1 invested[18].

Translink customer satisfaction surveys undertaken over Spring-Summer 2024[19] found that 86% of passengers rated Translink-operated public transport services as either 'good' or 'excellent'. Regional Goldliner and Ulsterbus services all scored above 90% on overall satisfaction with most recent journey, Glider scored 86% and Metro bus services scored 71%; this indicates an overall positive baseline in terms of bus and BRT provision but also highlights some areas for improvement. Considering Metro services alone, punctuality (65%), frequency (75%), and value for money (74%) are highlighted as the areas for greatest improvement. The survey identified that these are the areas that passengers rate as the things that matter most to them.

Despite the majority positive opinions of existing bus passengers, overall bus / BRT still makes up a low proportion in terms of mode choice for journeys to work or study, as seen in Figure 8 (2011 Census[20]). The ETP will enhance the offer to existing bus users and improve the attractiveness of bus use for those who currently choose to travel by other modes for their regular journeys.



Access to Opportunities

Buses provide affordable and accessible transportation options for everyone, including those who do not have access to private vehicles. This ensures that people from all income levels can reach essential services, as well as employment and educational opportunities.

Reducing Congestion

Buses use road space more efficiently as they can carry many more passengers compared to private cars. A single bus can replace up to 75 cars on the road, significantly reducing the number of vehicles and easing congestion.

Supporting Economic Growth

Every £1 in investment in alterations that give buses priority over other traffic on the roads, higher service frequencies, and lower fares, have been estimated to generate at least £4.55 in economic benefits.

Reducing Carbon Emissions

Buses generally produce fewer carbon emissions per passenger compared to cars, making them a more environmentally friendly option for transportation.



Efficiency

Rail is one of the most efficient ways to transport significant volumes of passengers. Rail is also space efficient, which means it can deliver high-capacity, transport corridors that require less land, and generate less noise/air pollution than roads.

Safe

Rail, with it's isolated, direct networks are typically considered to be one of the safest modes of public transport to use, with fewer accidents compared to road travel.

Reducing carbon emissions

Enhancing access to rail services can support reducing the carbon impacts associated with road transport.

21 All-Island Strategic Rail Review, Department of Transport and Department for Infrastructure (2024): https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/infrastructure/final-report-of-the-all-island-strategic-rail-review-31july2024.PDF

22 Public Transport and Journey Planning in Northern Ireland 2023/24, (DfI, 2024): https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/system/files/publications/infrastructure/public-transport-statistics-ni-23-24-infographic.pdf

23 Translink Passengers Have Their Say (Translink, 2024): https://www.translink.co.uk/customer-satisfaction-results4

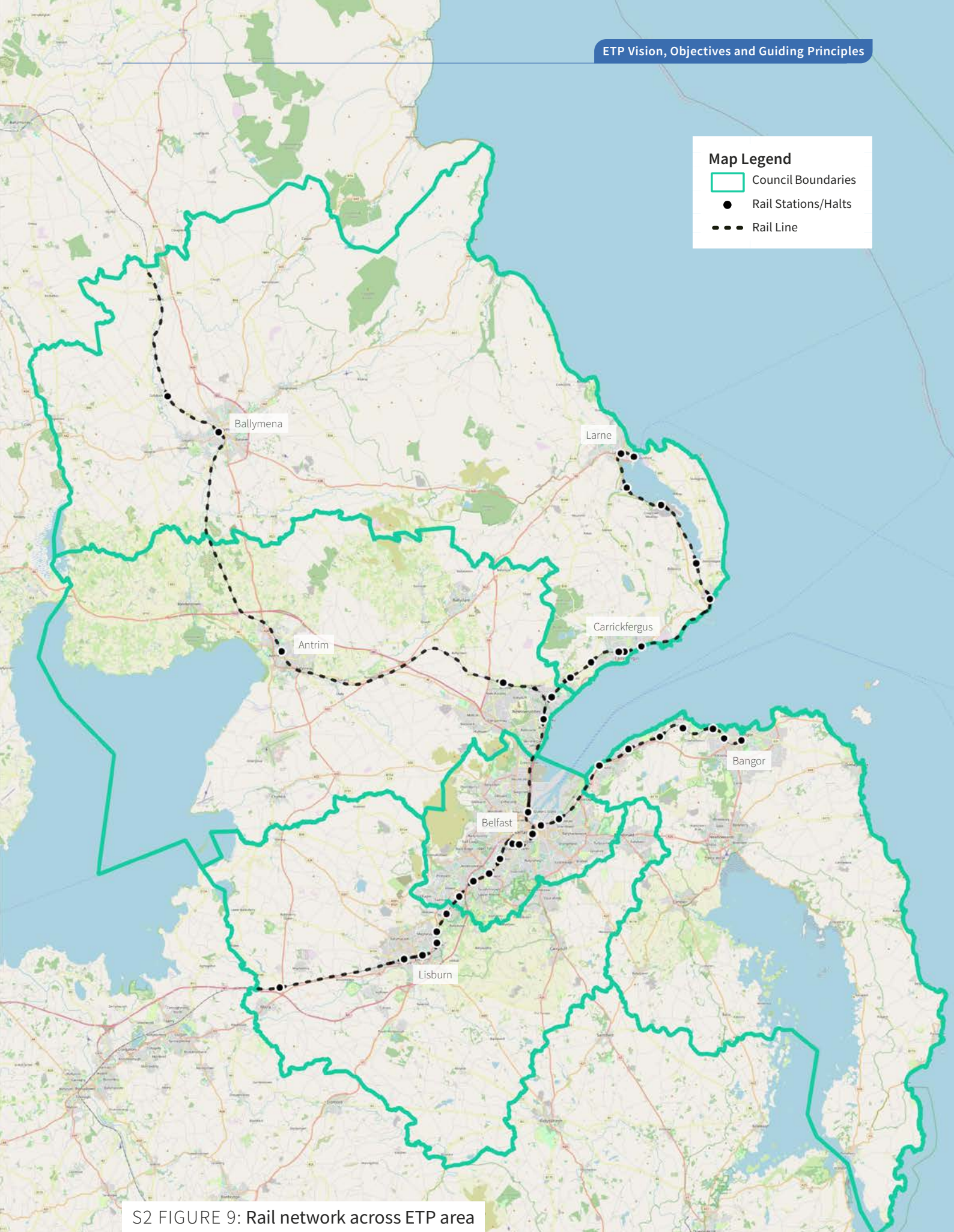
24 Note that 2011 Census is quoted due to the impact of COVID lockdowns on travel behaviours recorded at the 2021 Census.

2.5.3 Rail

There are six rail lines within Northern Ireland and **all bar one, the Portrush Line**, originate within and journey from the ETP area. These provide services across the region as well as cross-border services to Dublin. As well as providing a crucial transport option for users, the rail network brings wider benefits[21].

In 2023/24, 13.8 million passenger journeys were recorded across the NI rail network, representing a 7.1% increase from the previous calendar year[22]. This number is marginally lower than pre-pandemic levels, but it does follow a similar rate of recovery as Great Britain. The 2024 customer satisfaction surveys[23] found that 96% of passengers rated their overall satisfaction with NI railways as 'good' or 'excellent', however rail continues to represent a minor proportion of overall mode share, as shown in Figure 10 (2011 Census[24]).

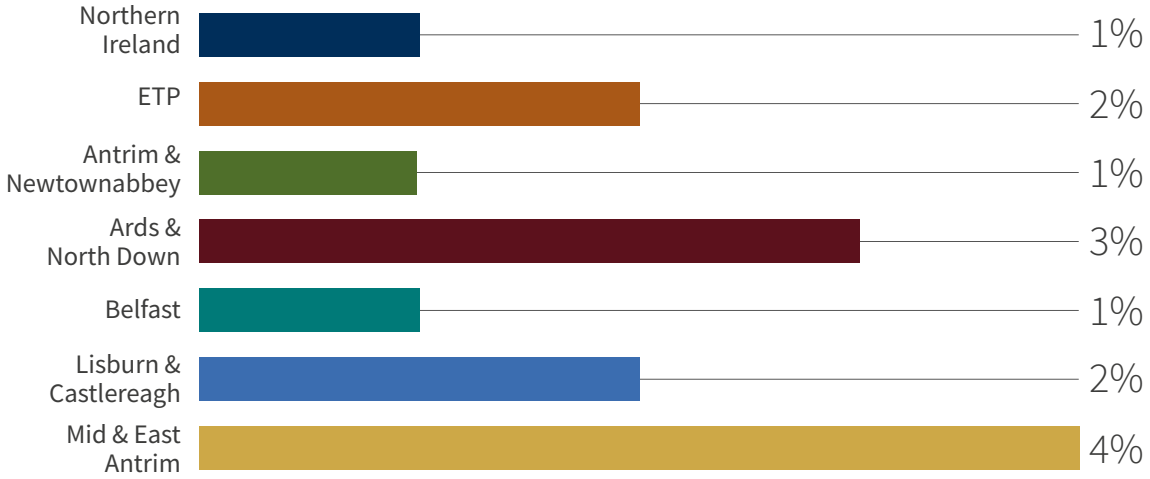
Within the local context, the 41 rail halts across the ETP area help connect towns and cities to each other and beyond, improving public transport options for commuting and leisure trips. Currently, rail services in this region are focused exclusively on passenger movement, not freight. Rail infrastructure is inherently less flexible than other transport modes. Rail lines are fixed, making it difficult to adapt routes to changing population patterns or emerging economic hubs. In contrast, bus networks can be expanded or rerouted with relative ease, offering greater adaptability. Enhancing rail services involves high construction costs and requires significant ongoing financial subsidy and maintenance costs.



S2 FIGURE 9: **Rail network across ETP area**

For these reasons, rail is best suited for longer, regional journeys between large population centres rather than the short, local movements that are the focus of this transport plan (the RSTP will consider strategic rail links in further detail). ETP interventions will therefore aim to maximise the use of the existing rail network by improving access to stations and introducing complementary public transport measures such as improving the quality and safety of first- and last-mile journeys as well as unlocking improved integration between modes.

S2 FIGURE 10: **Travel to Work or Study by Train**



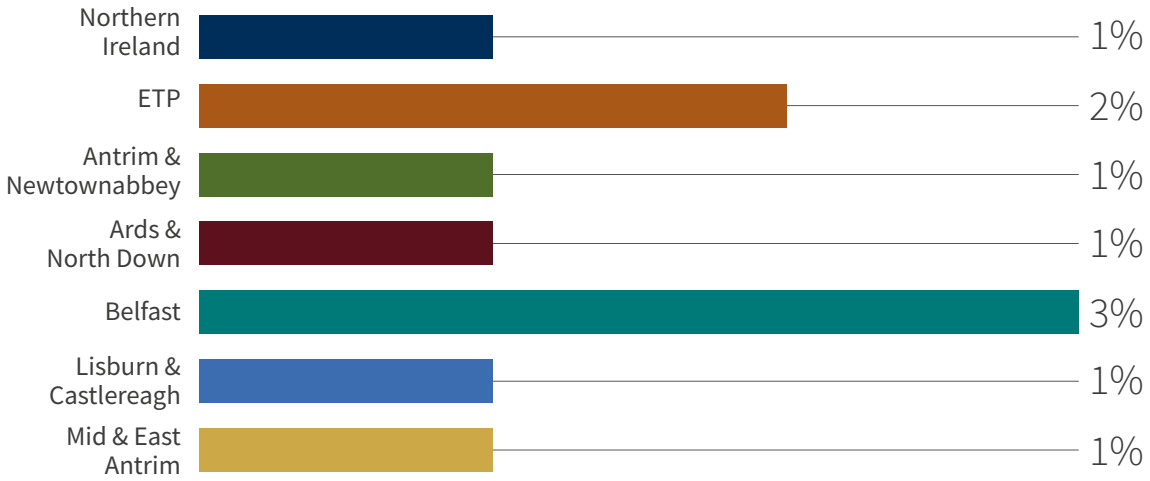
2.5.4 Taxis

Taxis provide an important and flexible form of transport, providing a door to-door option for trips that are difficult to efficiently offer by other modes. They can be of particular importance for people with disabilities and older people who may not have easy access to private cars or public transport, as well as forming an important part of the tourist and nighttime economy across the region. Taxis are a less common choice of mode for travel to work or study; accounting for less than 2% of these trips across the ETP area (Figure 11 - 2011 Census[25]).

As of 2023 there were over 6,900 registered taxis across the whole of Northern Ireland within 1.3 thousand businesses, of these over one quarter were located within the wider Belfast area[26].

ETP recognises the important role that taxis play and looks to enhance the ability for people to safely and conveniently access taxis at key destinations, including overnight when public transport options may be more limited.

S2 FIGURE 11: **Travel to Work or Study by Taxi**



25 Note that 2011 Census is quoted due to the impact of COVID lockdowns on travel behaviours recorded at the 2021 Census.
26 DfI Driver, Vehicle, Operator, and Enforcement Statistics - 2023-24 - Quarter One (DfI, 2023): https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/dfi-driver-vehicle-operator-and-enforcement-statistics-2023-24-quarter-one

2.5.5 Motorcycles and mopeds

At the end of 2024, there were 23,000 licensed motorcycles in Northern Ireland, representing 1.8% of the total number of licensed vehicles. As outlined in the Transport Strategy 2035, these motorcycles, and mopeds, have a role to play in reducing the impact of traffic, particularly in urban areas where they take up less parking and storage space. On the road, they are regarded as a private motorised vehicle which takes up less space than a car. While they have the advantage of access to bus lanes, they are required by law to drive and queue within general traffic and operate at similar speeds to cars. They still require significant road space where bus lanes aren't available and at junctions.

While motorcycles and mopeds will be considered alongside cars they will benefit from interventions such as expanded bus lane provision which can improve journey times and reliability for these modes. By including these modes in the plan, the ETP aims to create a more inclusive and efficient transport system that accommodates a range of travel preferences while maintaining safety and sustainability objectives.

Separately, the Department will continue to improve motorcycle awareness among other road users and promote safe driving practices for all to improve motorcycle safety.

2.5.6 Car

Over 89% of households within the ETP area have access to a car or a van[27]. Car is the dominant mode of transport used throughout the ETP area, accounting for over 59% of trips to work and study at the 2011 Census[28]. The popularity of car use is a function of factors such as its comfort, convenience, and flexibility, particularly in rural areas where alternative transport options may be more limited. Historic trends towards road building and disjointed land use planning have helped to increase car dominance on the region's transport network.

However, car dominance (including low or zero emission vehicles) can lead to significant problems including those related to congestion, pollution and road safety. Car use is also one of the most expensive modes of transport costing approximately £3,500 to operate in 2024 including taxes, fuel and insurance. This costs approximately 46% more than ten years earlier[29].

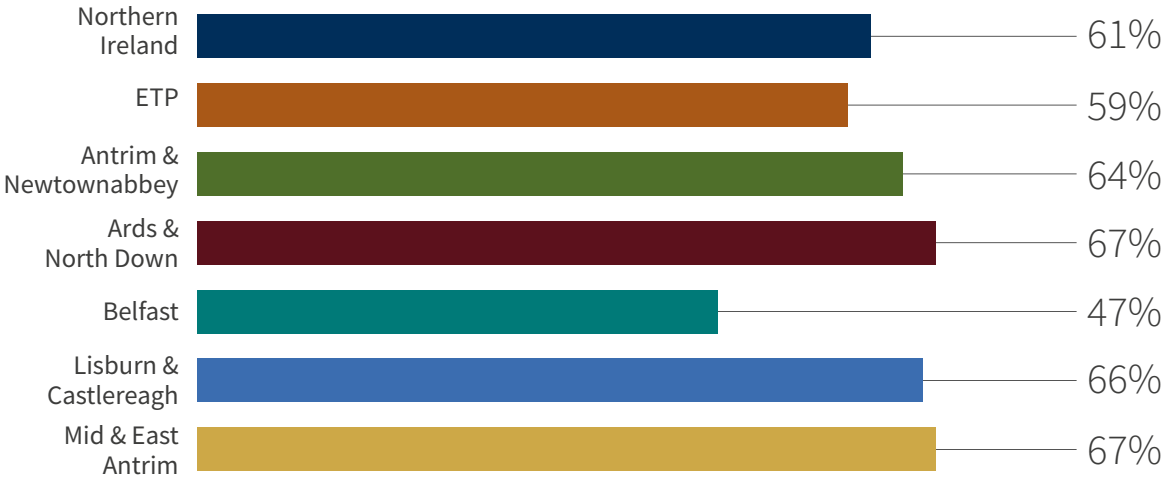
Furthermore, as confirmed through the ETP Launch survey, there are a large proportion of people who would like greater choice for their journeys, rather than always relying on driving. When asked to consider how they would like to travel in the future, only 19% of people identified that they would like to travel to work by car, with people instead favouring active travel and public transport options.

It's also important to acknowledge that for some people, driving is not a realistic option for them due to factors such as cost, age or

disability. Vehicle ownership trends indicate that the poorest households are more than four times as likely to have no access to a car as the wealthiest (across the UK[30]). The relatively large upfront and ongoing maintenance costs associated with owning a car partly explain this gap.

The ETP acknowledges that car travel will always have an important and in some instances necessary role to play for the transport network; it would be unrealistic for the active travel or public transport network to effectively cater for the vast and varied travel demands of residents and visitors. However, to realise the environmental, social and economic ambitions and to ensure that everyone has access to opportunity, regardless of vehicle ownership, it will be necessary to rebalance the transport network in a way that increases the availability of fast and reliable public transport options and enhances the safety and attractiveness of active travel options. This will enable more people to live comfortably without a car or to choose to leave their cars at home more often, while also ensuring that car travel can remain an option for those journeys that cannot be accommodated by other means.

S2 FIGURE 12: **Travel to work or study by Car**



27 KS701NI: Method of Travel to Work (Resident Population) 2011
28 Note that 2011 Census is quoted due to the impact of COVID lockdowns on travel behaviours recorded at the 2021 Census.
29 Car Ownership: Evidence Review (National Centre for Social Research, 2024) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6781339100e3d719f19217f1/dft-car-ownership-evidence-review.pdf
30 Trends in households without access to a car (The Health Foundation, 2024): https://www.health.org.uk/evidence-hub/transport/transport-trends/trends-in-households-without-access-to-a-car

2.5.6.1 Zero and Low Emission Vehicles

As acknowledged by the Transport Strategy 2035, a shift towards zero and low emission vehicles is a critical element to reducing carbon emissions from transport. Responsibility for the policy and regulation of zero emission fuels, and the associated infrastructure, is spread across many public bodies. While at present, zero and low emission vehicles make up a very small proportion of the vehicle fleet across the region[31], the Department are currently collaborating with others to accelerate the phasing out of new non-zero emission cars, vans, motorcycles, scooters and Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs).

Department officials independently collaborate with key stakeholders right across the Transport sector including with government departments, local councils, and industry to ensure coordinated action on the decarbonisation of Northern Irelands transport and promoting the transition to zero-emission vehicles. The subject of provision of dedicated infrastructure for zero and low emission vehicles is therefore not within the scope of this transport plan. It is also important to note that a switch to zero or low emission vehicles whilst positive for reducing carbon emissions, will need to be supported by reductions in overall vehicle trips if we are to reduce congestion, lessen the impact on the built environment and improve safety.

2.5.6.2 Freight

Almost all of NI's freight is moved by road and this will not change significantly in the Plan period. Businesses and consumers will therefore continue to rely on efficient, reliable, safe and resilient connections between ETP towns and cities and our gateways to Ireland, Britain and the rest of the world. The ETP area incorporates key freight facilities servicing all of NI. Belfast and Larne Ports are the principal gateways for container traffic and roll-on/ roll-off services to/from GB and wider afield, whilst Belfast International Airport and Belfast City Airport also provide air freight access for parcel services and goods requiring short delivery timeframes.

While the scale, timings and future growth of these movements is primarily of relevance to the RSTP, a high volume of last mile freight movements, which represent the final stage of a product's journey, will happen on the local transport network within the ETP area. As well as light- and heavy goods vehicle (LGV and HGV) movements, provision also needs to be made for safe and suitable loading and unloading activities across the ETP network. During development of ETP proposals, the potential to enhance conditions for LGVs and HGVs has therefore been considered throughout.

2.5.6.3 Place and Movement Framework

When considering a vision for the future transport network it is important to reflect on the dual role that roads and streets often play.

31 Electric and Ultra-low emission vehicles: Public survey results (Northern Ireland Assembly, 2021): https://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/raise/publications/2017-2022/2021/infrastructure/4621.pdf

They facilitate both the 'movement' of people and goods by various modes of transport, as well as providing 'places' for people to spend time and undertake activity within.

The Transport Strategy identifies nine categories of area type (Figure 14) against which, a bespoke modal hierarchy has been defined for this Transport Plan. The modal hierarchies aim to reflect the varied 'movement' and 'place' needs of each area type in a way that will equitably balance the needs of different transport modes.

For simplicity, the modal hierarchies defined for each category consider only the main modes of walking and wheeling, cycling, bus and motorised vehicles. This can refer to Goods Vehicles of all varieties, Taxis, Motorcycles and also Cars.

The PMF categories have been applied across the ETP transport network to confirm priorities by travel mode and geography. An example of this, showing the categories applied to a fictional transport network is shown in Figure 13.

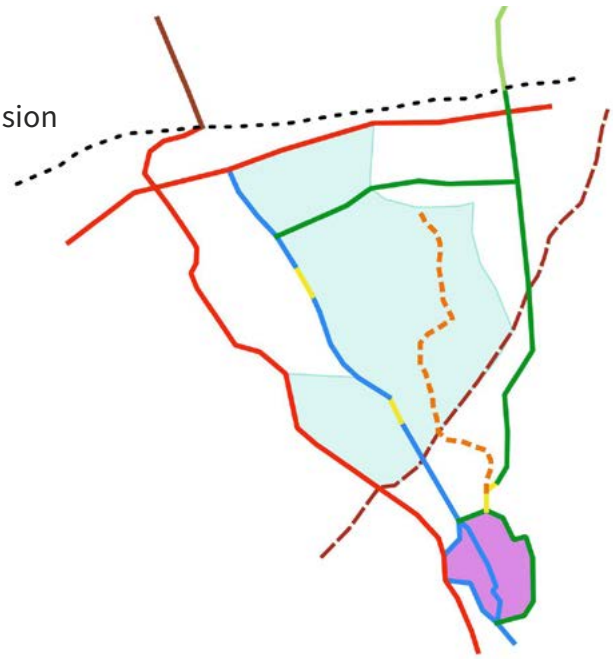
The spatial application of the PMF represents the long-term, aspirational vision for change to the region's transport network. These are presented and described throughout the Transport Plan as the 'Vision PMF' for each respective part of the ETP network.

In defining the Vision PMF for each part of the transport network, ETP is committing to ensure that any changes made to the transport network within the Plan period align with the defined modal hierarchies.

This includes:

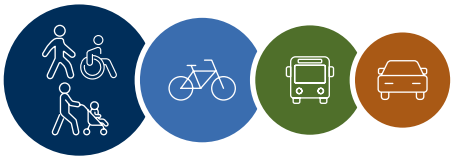
- Any transport schemes identified as part of this Transport Plan will align with the modal hierarchy defined for that part of the network through the relevant Vision PMF; and
- Any other changes to the transport network identified after the publication of this Transport Plan should be developed in accordance with the relevant Vision PMF.

S2 FIGURE 13: **Example PMF Vision**

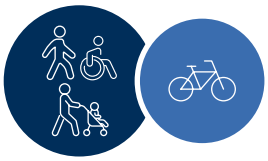


S2 FIGURE 14: **Place and Movement Framework – Area Types**

PEOPLE PLACES



TRAFFIC FREE ROUTES



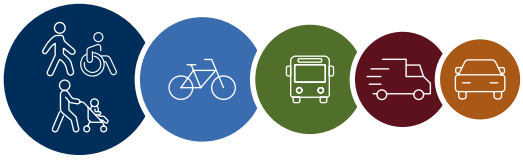
PEOPLE AND MOVEMENT PLACES



CITY AND TOWN CENTRES



CONNECTING MOVEMENT ROUTES



QUALITY MASS MOVEMENT ROUTES



URBAN STRATEGIC MOVEMENT ROUTES



RURAL MOVEMENT ROUTES



REGIONAL STRATEGIC MOVEMENT ROUTES



Neighbourhood areas including residential streets. Sustainable transport hierarchies may promote walking/ wheeling and then cycling, followed by public transport and then private vehicles.

Traffic free transport routes facilitating active travel connections, including greenways. As with all active travel infrastructure, these will consider the needs of the most vulnerable road users first.

Mixed use places that serve the local community. Sustainable transport hierarchies will need to reflect the character of the area and may generally promote walking/wheeling and then cycling, followed by public transport and then private vehicles.

Destination places that also facilitate high volumes of delivery and access movements. Sustainable transport hierarchies will seek to support economic vitality and placemaking. This may promote walking/ wheeling and then cycling, followed by public transport and then private vehicles. The access needs of disabled people and businesses will remain important considerations.

Routes that faciliate connecting movement within settlements. Sustainable transport hierarchies will need to reflect the character of the area and the function of the network, balancing the promotion of active travel and public transport while maintaining vehicle movements.

Routes that facilitate high volume of movement into urban areas, focused on public transport. Sustainable transport hierarchies may seek to give greatest priority to public transport. The requirements of other road users will need to reflect the character of the area and the function of the network, balancing the promotion of active travel, while maintaining vehicle movements.

Routes that are part of the Strategic Transport Network and are located within settlements and therefore facilitate both local and strategic movement. These will continue to provide private vehicle movements with public transport priority and active travel measures provided where it is appropriate.

Routes that connect settlements but are not part of the Strategic Transport Network. These will continue to provide private vehicle movements with public transport priority and active travel measures provided where it is appropriate.

Routes that are part of the Strategic Transport Network. They are the primary road network connecting main settlements and gateways These will continue to provide for public transport and private vehicle movements (particularly the movement of goods/ freight) with active travel infrastructure only where it is appropriate.



2.5.7 Guiding Principles

The following sections expand on the nine PMF categories, confirming the modal hierarchy to be applied for each and outlining examples of how transport interventions can be shaped to support the relevant modal priorities.

People Places

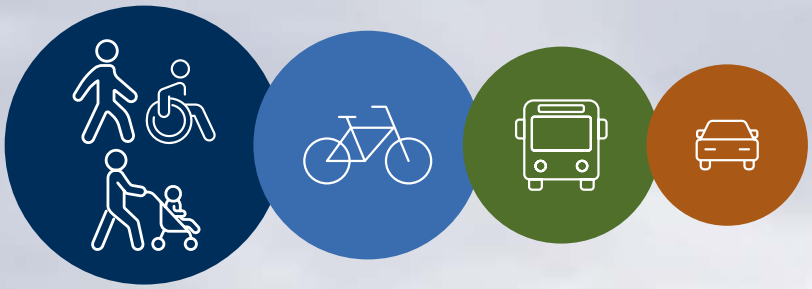
People Places are defined as "**neighbourhood areas including residential streets that prioritise active travel**". On the whole, they cover the majority of the existing and planned residential areas across the ETP area.

Figure 15 presents an illustrative example of how a future People Place could look and feel. The ETP contains specific scheme proposals that align with these People Place guiding principles, outlined throughout the Plan documentation.

It is neither necessary nor realistic to expect that this can be achieved uniformly across all streets categorised as People Places as part of this ETP. However, by setting the PMF, ETP is committing to ensuring that any other transport interventions that come forward in these areas within the Plan period (to 2035) prioritise **walking and wheeling** above all other modes, followed by **cycling, public transport** and finally **car**, in line with the defined People Places modal hierarchy.

People Places

Neighbourhood areas including residential streets that prioritise active travel



S2 FIGURE 15: **Illustrative example of a People Place**



Cycle-friendly streets



Liveable neighbourhoods in London



Traffic management



High quality public realm, including green, community-focused spaces to walk, wheel, rest and play.

Low speed car and van movements are permitted for access to homes and services.



S2 FIGURE 16: **Example People Place BEFORE**



S2 FIGURE 17: **Example People Place AFTER**

Figure 16 illustrates some of the existing challenges that can impact on our residential streets which are a result of design choices that favour car movements and parking over the needs of pedestrians and cyclists. Figure 17 reimagines this street in line with People Places guiding principles that should be considered to work towards the defined modal hierarchy.

Guiding Principles for People Places:

Traffic speeds should be a maximum of 20mph to discourage rat running and to ensure that streets are safer for use by all, including children and cyclists;

- Footways should be clear of clutter, overhanging vegetation and pavement parking;
- Pedestrian movements should be prioritised over cars at junctions including provision of accessible crossings and realigned, raised, dropped and tactile kerb lines;
- Gaps in the cycle network should be closed through creation of safe, quiet and well-signed routes through residential areas;
- Access to bus stops and rail stations should be made easier via walking, wheeling and cycling;
- Parking should be carefully managed, releasing road space for use for alternative purposes, including reducing, relocating or carefully managing on-street parking provision to reduce conflict between modes and discourage pavement parking;
- Localised traffic management systems, such as making streets one-way, introducing traffic calming measures or modal filters should be considered where they can safely improve permeability for pedestrians and cyclists and reduce instances of rat-running; and
- Loading and unloading restrictions should be carefully managed to ensure business needs are met without compromising the character of the street.



Image courtesy off Brian Morrison / Walk Wheel Cycle Trust

Traffic Free Routes

Traffic Free Routes are defined as **"traffic free transport routes facilitating active travel connections, including along greenways"**. This category includes existing routes such as the Comber Greenway and the Lagan Towpath. Opportunities to unlock new or extensions to existing Traffic Free Routes have been sought during the development of the ETP. These newly identified or expanded links are included within this category.

The single defining feature across both existing and proposed Traffic Free Routes is that they are wholly free from the movement of vehicular traffic (with the exception of mobility aids).

Figure 18 presents an illustrative example of a successful Traffic Free Route. It is acknowledged that the routes included within this category vary widely in nature from costal foot and cycle paths to inner-city footways.

It is neither necessary nor realistic to expect that the changes outlined in this example can be achieved uniformly across Traffic Free Routes. The ETP contains specific scheme proposals that align with these Traffic Free Routes guiding principles, outlined throughout the Plan documentation.

Additionally, by categorising these areas as such, ETP is committing to ensuring that any other transport interventions that come forward in these areas within the Plan period (to 2035) improve conditions for **walking, wheeling** and **cycling**, in line with the defined modal hierarchy

Traffic Free Routes

Traffic free transport routes facilitating active travel connections, including along greenways.



No car access along route.

High quality foot and cycle paths, separated where possible.

Convenient access and wayfinding to wider transport network, including other active travel links, bus and rail services.

S2 FIGURE 18: Illustrative example of a Traffic Free Route



Aerial View of the Connswater Community Greenway, an Active Travel Route in Belfast

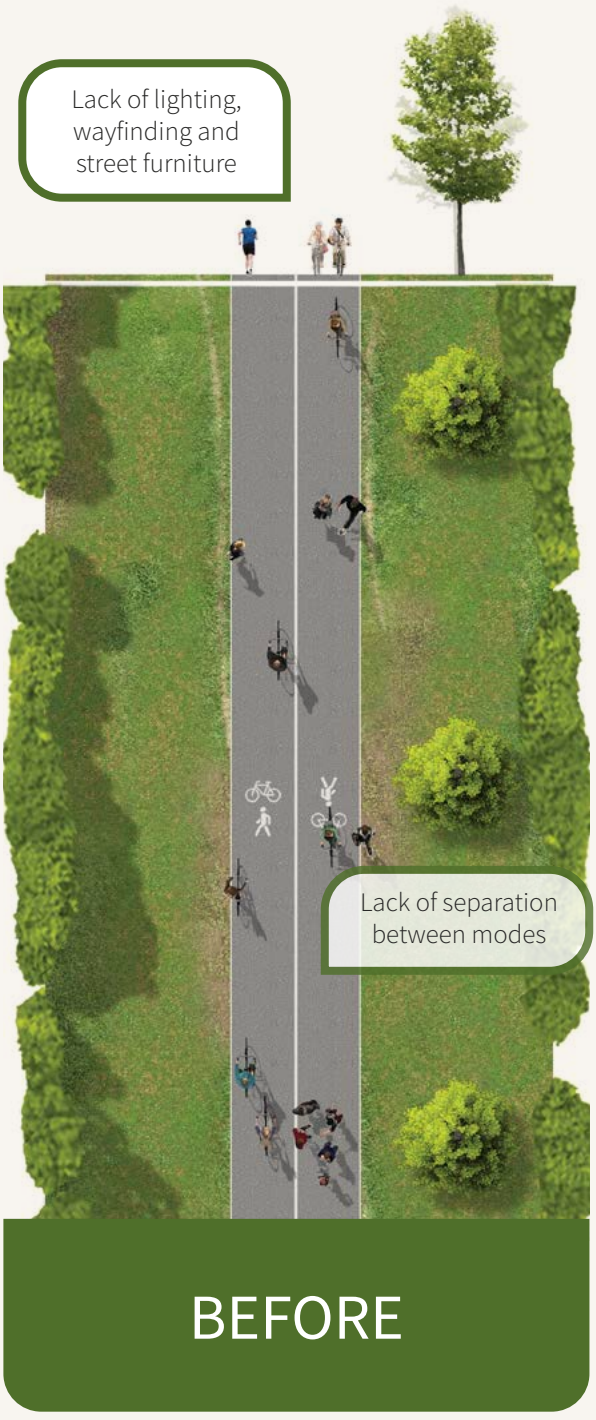


Active Travel Route, Mogeely Trailhead: Midleton to Youghal Greenway, Co. Cork

High quality, accessible, community-focused spaces to walk, wheel, rest and play are created along the route.



Active Travel Route, Cycle Path, Drenthe, Netherlands



S2 FIGURE 19: **Example Traffic-Free Route BEFORE**



S2 FIGURE 20: **Example Traffic-Free Route AFTER**

Figure 19 illustrates some of the existing challenges that can affect Traffic Free Routes caused by design choices that do not take the safety and comfort of pedestrians and cyclists in mind. Figure 20 outlines measures that should be considered during the design of changes to or new Traffic Free Routes, including:

Guiding Principles for Traffic Free Routes:

- Delineating separation between pedestrians and cyclists where necessary;
- Or safe, shared spaces with walking & wheeling where appropriate to the nature of the route;
- Introducing high quality path surfaces, appropriate to the use of the route;
- Introducing wayfinding to enable users to be able to access the routes easily, and use the routes to access other key destinations;
- Adding public realm features including benches, cycle parking facilities to improve journey experience; and
- Adding sensitive lighting and other security features introduced as required.


BUS
AND
LANE

People and Movement Places

People and Movement Places are defined as **"Mixed use places that serve the local community"**. Working with the Councils in the ETP area, People and Movement Places have been identified in locations where there are already a mixture of services and facilities on offer to the local community. ETP seeks to enhance access to the services already on offer in these locations, encouraging people to increase the number of trips they make by walking, wheeling or cycling rather than relying on car use to meet their everyday needs.

Figure 21 presents an illustrative example of a People and Movement Place. In this example, the proposed People and Movement Place falls on a route with a high need for bus priority infrastructure (see Guiding Principle for Quality Mass Movement routes), hence a balance is needed between the road space given over to bus lanes and opportunities to maximise footways and other active travel focused measures.

Where bus priority is not such a requirement, it would be recommended that the People and Movement Place focus further on measures such as provision of widened footways and provision of cycle lanes.

DfI has worked closely with the ETP area councils to identify suitable locations for transport intervention relating to this category. Within these locations ETP is committed to ensuring that any transport interventions that come forward in these areas within the Plan period (to 2035), prioritise **walking and wheeling** above all other modes, followed by **cycling, public transport, light and heavy goods vehicles** and finally car, in line with the defined People Places modal hierarchy.



S2 FIGURE 21: Illustrative example of a People and Movement Place



Alternative View: In areas where physical space is more limited, shared bus and bike lanes may be required.

High quality, two-way bus lanes and priority at junctions. Accessible stopping and waiting facilities with accurate real-time information displays.



Andersonstown Road, Belfast

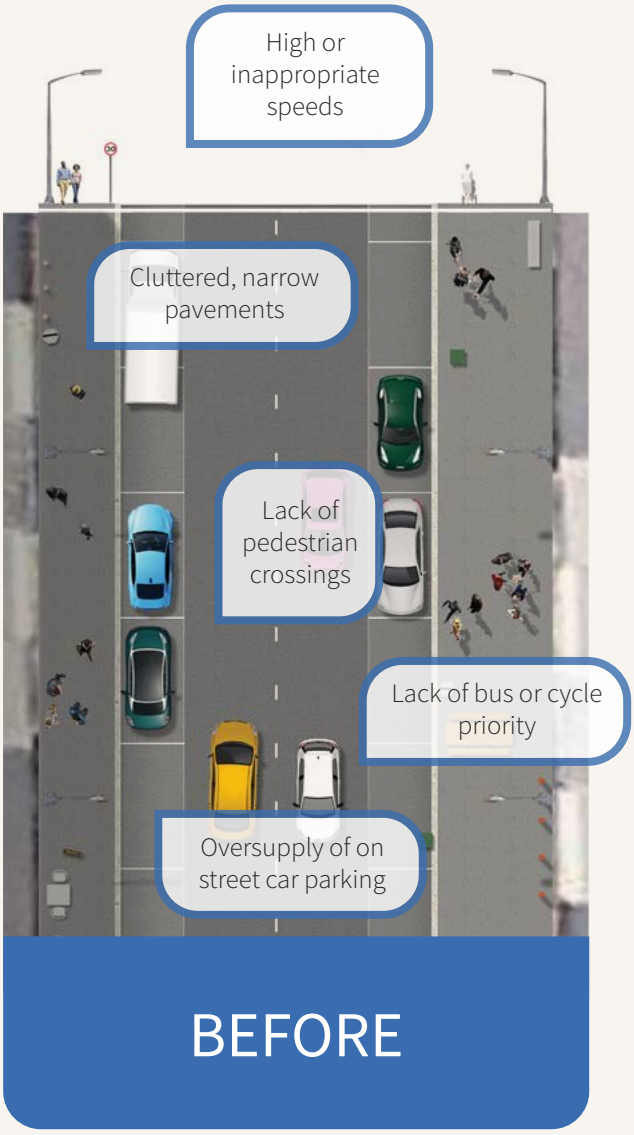
Gateway features to signify transition into neighbourhood area.

Cycle lanes where space permits, otherwise bikes have shared access to bus lanes.



High Street Area in Kirkham, Preston

One lane of low speed car traffic in each direction.



S2 FIGURE 22: **Example People and Movement Place BEFORE**



S2 FIGURE 23: **Example People and Movement Place AFTER**

Figure 22 illustrates some of the existing challenges that can affect these local community locations caused by road design choices that favour car movements and parking over the needs of walkers, wheelers, cyclists and buses. Figure 23 reimagines this area and includes measures that promote the modal priority, including:

Guiding Principles for People and Movement Places:

- Slowing traffic speeds to a maximum of 20mph to ensure that streets are safer for use by all;
- Increasing and improving provision of walking, wheeling and cycle crossings, prioritising the movements of sustainable modes over cars;
- Prioritising walking, wheeling movements over cars at junctions including provision of accessible crossing and realigned, raised, dropped and tactile kerb lines;
- Reallocating road space for placemaking and / or sustainable modes away from use by general traffic or for parking;
- Widening footways with redefined textures / surfacing that are distinct from the road carriageway;
- Ensuring that footways are clear of unnecessary street furniture clutter and overhanging vegetation;
- Providing facilities for cycling and cycle storage where needed;
- Enhancing access to the bus network through provision of high quality, accessible waiting facilities and passenger information; and
- Carefully managing loading and unloading restrictions (including time limited) to ensure business needs are met without compromising the character of the street.



Image courtesy of Hastings Group Hotel

City and Town Centres

City and Town Centres are destination places that also facilitate high volumes of access. By their very nature, the majority of city and town centres consist of mixed use areas, serving a wide range of people and purposes.

Figure 24 presents an illustrative example of a centre. It is not expected that all city and town centres across the ETP region will be treated uniformly. It is acknowledged that local needs will influence the type of interventions required to deliver the Plan objectives.

Within these locations, ETP is committed to ensuring that transport interventions that come forward in these areas within the Plan period (to 2035), prioritise walking and wheeling above all over modes, followed by cycling, public transport, light and heavy goods vehicles and finally car, in line with the defined modal hierarchy.

City and Town Centres

Destination places that also facilitate high volumes of access



Convenient access and wayfinding to wider transport network, including **bus** and **rail** services.

High quality multi-use streets that prioritise **pedestrians, cyclists** and **public transport.**

High quality connecting streets that accommodate a number of uses and create safe and attractive places to **walk, wheel**, rest and play.

S2 FIGURE 24: Illustrative example of a City and Town Centre



Town Square in Katowice, Poland



Amagertorv Public Square, Copenhagen



Altstadt Benshiem Town Centre, Germany

Low speed **car** and van movements are permitted in some areas for access to homes and services.

Loading and unloading restrictions and managed Blue Badge parking. **Car parking** supply to be carefully managed.

Guiding Principles for City and Town Centres

- High quality multi-use streets that prioritise pedestrians, cyclists and public transport;
- Slowing traffic speeds to a maximum of 20mph to ensure that streets are safer for use by all;
- Carefully planned traffic management systems, including the potential for one way routing, to ensure that vehicle movements do not dominate the location;
- Reallocating road space for placemaking and / or sustainable modes away from use by general traffic or for parking;
- Prioritising walking, wheeling movements over cars at junctions including provision of accessible crossing and realigned, raised, dropped and tactile kerb lines;
- Increasing and improving provision of walking, wheeling and cycle crossings, prioritising the movements of sustainable modes over cars;
- High quality connecting streets that accommodate a number of uses and create safe and attractive places to walk, wheel, rest and play;
- Convenient access and wayfinding to the wider transport network, including bus and rail services;
- Carefully managing loading and unloading restrictions (including time limited) to ensure business needs are met without compromising the character of city or town centre.

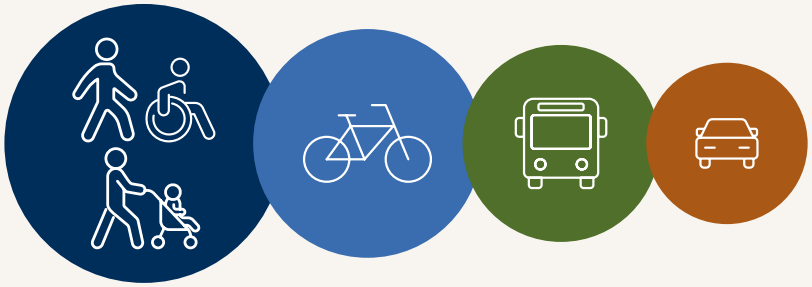




Image courtesy of Brian Morrison / Walk Wheel Cycle Trust



Image courtesy of Brian Morrison / Walk Wheel Cycle Trust

Connecting Movement Routes

Connecting Movement Routes have been defined as "**routes that facilitate connecting movements throughout urban areas**".

Roads in this category help to facilitate access movements within towns and cities, while also accommodating active travel and bus movements as required.

Figure 25 presents an illustrative example of ETP's vision for Connecting Movement Routes. It is not realistic to expect that this can be achieved uniformly across all streets categorised as Connecting Movement Routes as part of this ETP. However, by categorising specific locations within this category, ETP is ensuring that any transport interventions that come forward in these areas within the Plan period (to 2035), prioritise **walking and wheeling** above all over modes, followed by **cycling, public transport, light and heavy goods vehicles** and finally **car**, in line with the defined modal hierarchy.

Connecting Movement Routes

Routes that facilitate connecting movements throughout urban areas.



S2 FIGURE 25: Illustrative example of Connecting Movement Route



Alternative View: In areas where physical space is more limited, shared lanes may be required.



Oxford Road, Manchester



Approaching Brooklyn Bridge, New York

On street parking is limited.



S2 FIGURE 26: **Example Connecting Movement Routes BEFORE**



S2 FIGURE 27: **Example Connecting Movement Routes AFTER**

Figure 26 and Figure 27 present before and after illustrations of potential Connecting Movement Routes, where the 'after' changes enhance facilities for active modes. Considerations that should guide the development of any other interventions on these routes include:

Guiding Principles for Connecting Movement Routes:

- Provision of high-quality accessible crossings and realigned, raised, dropped and tactile kerb lines;
- Footways should be clear of all unnecessary types of clutter and overhanging vegetation;
- Cycle lanes and / or priority should be accommodated where required, in alignment with wider cycle plans;
- Where buses are in operation, buses should be given priority at key junctions or where space permits the introduction of targeted bus priority measures;
- Where they are required, bus waiting facilities should be of high quality, with stop/halt and platform designed on a place-by-place basis, addressing accessibility and passenger demand considerations;
- Traffic speeds should be carefully considered to enhance safety;
- On-street parking should be removed or carefully managed to free up space for alternative uses; and
- Loading and unloading facilities should be carefully planned and managed, including the introduction of timed restrictions.



Photo credit: Translink

Quality Mass Movement Routes

Quality Mass Movement Routes have been defined as "**routes that facilitate high volume movement into urban areas, focused on public transport**".

These align with existing bus corridors serving the greatest level of demand across the area. In classifying these corridors as Quality Mass Movement Routes, ETP is committing to ensuring that the needs of buses are the foremost consideration when designing changes to the transport network in these locations.

Figure 28 presents an illustrative example of a desirable Quality Mass Movement Route. It is envisaged that these routes will include substantial provision of bus lanes, bus priority at junctions, and high-quality waiting facilities, helping to unlock improvements to bus journey times, reliability and passenger experience.

The Plan proposes specific schemes that will work towards this vision and by defining the corridors, ETP is committed to ensuring that any additional transport interventions that come forward in these areas within the Plan period, prioritise the needs of **public transport** over other modes, followed by **walking and wheeling, cycling, light and heavy goods vehicles and car** in line with the defined Quality Mass Movement Routes modal hierarchy.

As per the example presented in Figure 28, where necessary, appropriate and possible, provision of cycle lanes should also be considered where space permits.

Quality Mass Movement Routes

Routes that facilitate high volume movement into urban areas, focused on public transport.



S2 FIGURE 28: Illustrative example of a Quality Mass Movement Route



Alternative View: In areas where physical space is more limited, shared bus & bike lanes may be required.



Glider facilities in Belfast

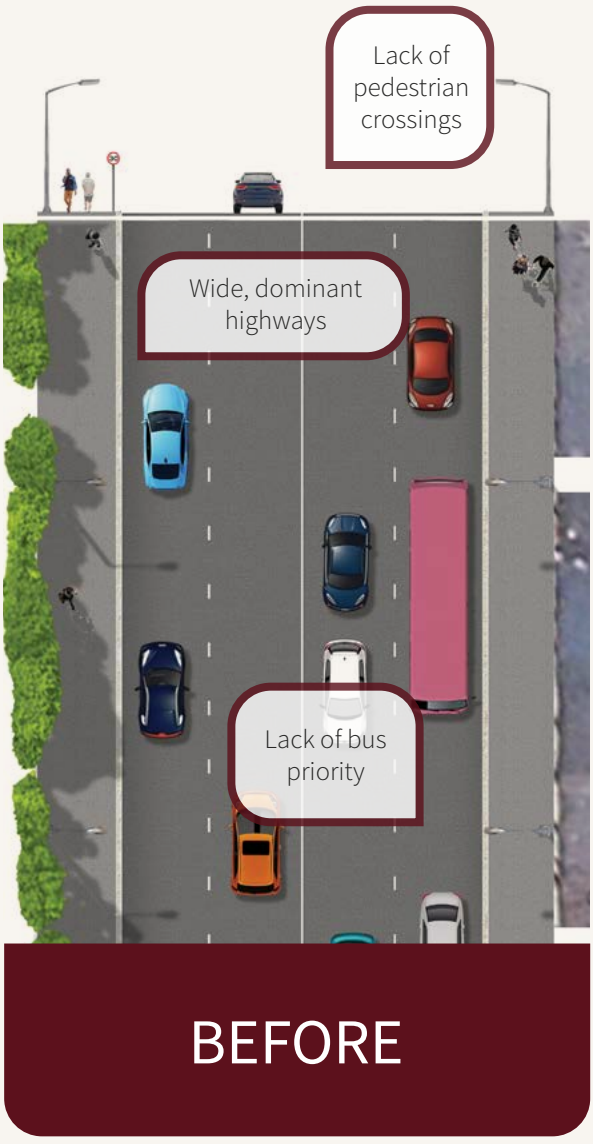
One lane of low speed car traffic in each direction.



Bus priority in London

High quality, two-way bus lanes and priority at junctions.

Limited on-street parking with allowance for blue badge spaces.



S2 FIGURE 29: **Example Quality Mass Movement Routes BEFORE**



S2 FIGURE 30: **Example Quality Mass Movement Routes AFTER**

Figure 30 imagines a future Quality Mass Movement Route and compares it to an existing corridor (Figure 29), where buses have to mix with general traffic and therefore can be subject to extensive delays leading to slow journey times and poor reliability. Principles to guide the development of transport interventions on Quality Mass Movement Routes within the Plan period include:

Guiding Principles for Quality Mass Movement Routes:

- High-quality, continuous bus lanes should be provided for as much of the route as possible, of widths suitable to their use, the nature of the street and that align with appropriate standards;
- High quality waiting facilities should be provided, with stop / halt and platform designed on a place-by-place basis, addressing accessibility and passenger demand considerations;
- Introduction of bus priority measures at signalised junctions;
- Cycle lanes should be accommodated where required, in alignment with wider cycle Plans;
- Provision of higher quality accessible crossings and realigned, raised, dropped and tactile kerb lines;
- Bus and cycle lanes should be accommodated through reallocation of road space away from general traffic and parking rather than impacting upon footways or land outside of the existing carriageway, unless unavoidable;
- Traffic speeds should be carefully considered to enhance safety; and
- Loading and unloading facilities should be carefully planned and managed, including introduction of time limited restrictions.



Urban Strategic Movement Routes

Urban Strategic Movement Routes have been defined as **"routes that facilitate movements between the local and regional transport network".** Roads in this category form a crucial part of the wider transport network, helping to facilitate access movements between the strategic transport network (inter-town/city) and the local transport network (intra-town/city).

The guiding principles for these routes have been developed to ensure that the transport network can continue to operate efficiently, while unlocking additional road space for sustainable modes to form a more integral part of the wider transport network.

In response to this, the modal hierarchy for Urban Strategic Movement Routes places the needs of active travel modes (**cycling** and **walking and wheeling**) lower than the needs of vehicular movements including **public transport, light and heavy goods vehicles** and **car**. There will be exceptions to this general rule where targeted active travel and enhanced bus priority are deemed appropriate. However, on the whole, Urban Strategic Movement Routes will focus on enabling the efficient movement of people and goods.

Figure 31 presents an illustrative example of a successful Urban Strategic Movement Route. It is not realistic to expect that this can be achieved uniformly across all streets categorised as Urban Strategic Movement Routes as part of this ETP.

Urban Strategic Movement Routes

Routes that facilitate movements between the local and regional transport network.





S2 FIGURE 31: Illustrative example of a Urban Strategic Movement Route

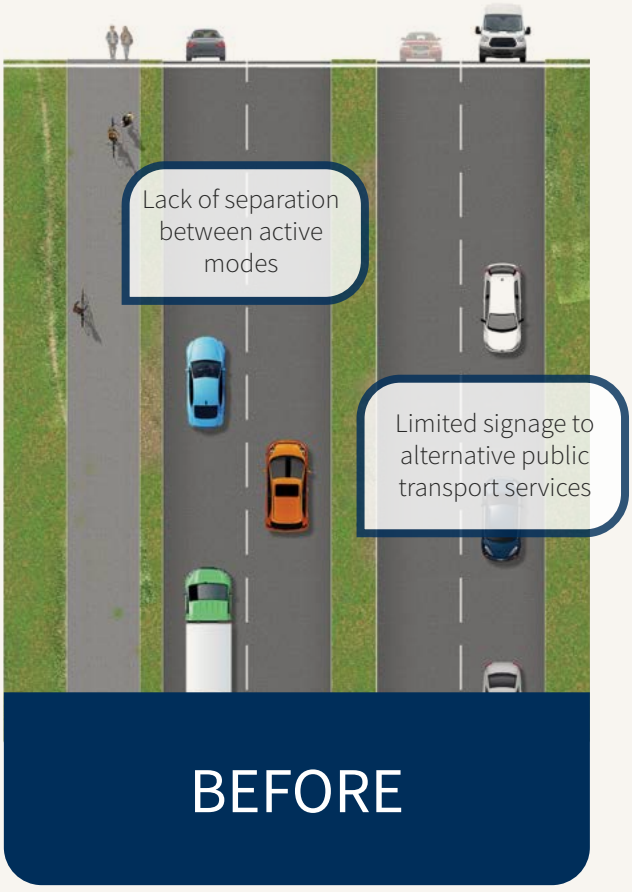


Auckland Central Motorway

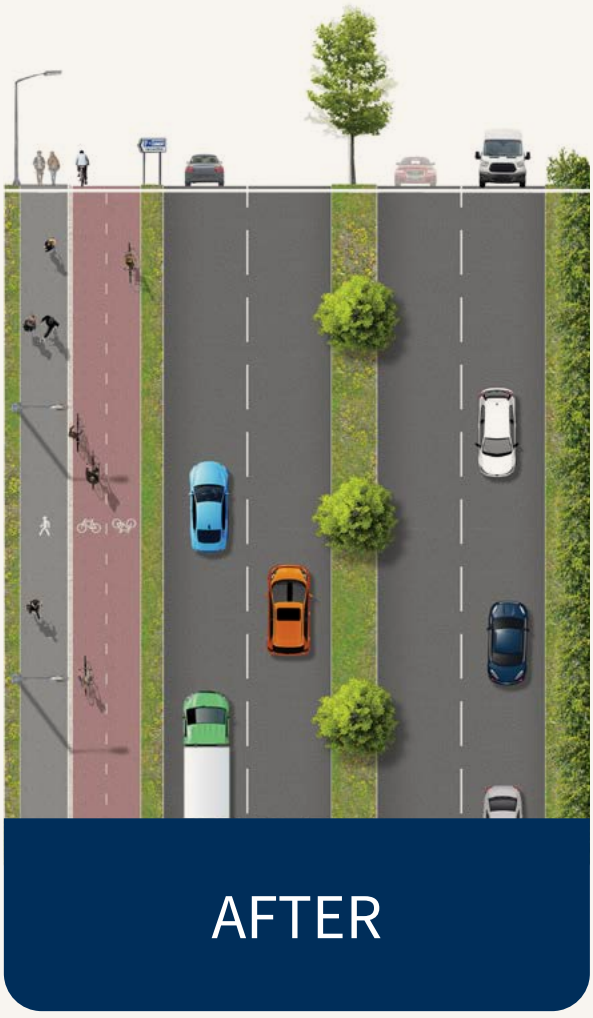


Strategic Route in Sydney

Strategic car, long distance bus and rail, and freight trips are accommodated on high capacity, high speed strategic road and rail network.



S2 FIGURE 32: **Example Urban Strategic Movement Routes BEFORE**

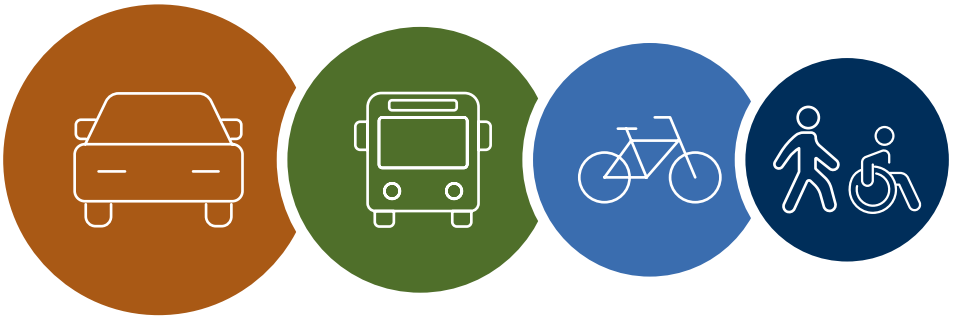


S2 FIGURE 33: **Example Urban Strategic Movement Routes AFTER**

Figure 32 Illustrates some of the existing challenges on strategic streets caused by road design choices that affect the needs of pedestrians and cyclists. Figure 33 reimagines this street and repurposes the modal priority, including:

Guiding Principles for Urban Strategic Movement Routes:

- Traffic speeds should reflect the nature and type of the road;
- Targeted bus priority (including for Park & Ride services) should be considered, for example at key junctions;
- Park & Ride sites should be strategically located adjacent to Urban Strategic Movement Routes to facilitate modal interchange for onward connection;
- Provision, including high quality crossings, for walking, wheeling and cycling should be provided where required particularly where other roads intersect with an Urban Strategic Movement Route.



Rural Movement Routes and Regional Strategic Movement Routes

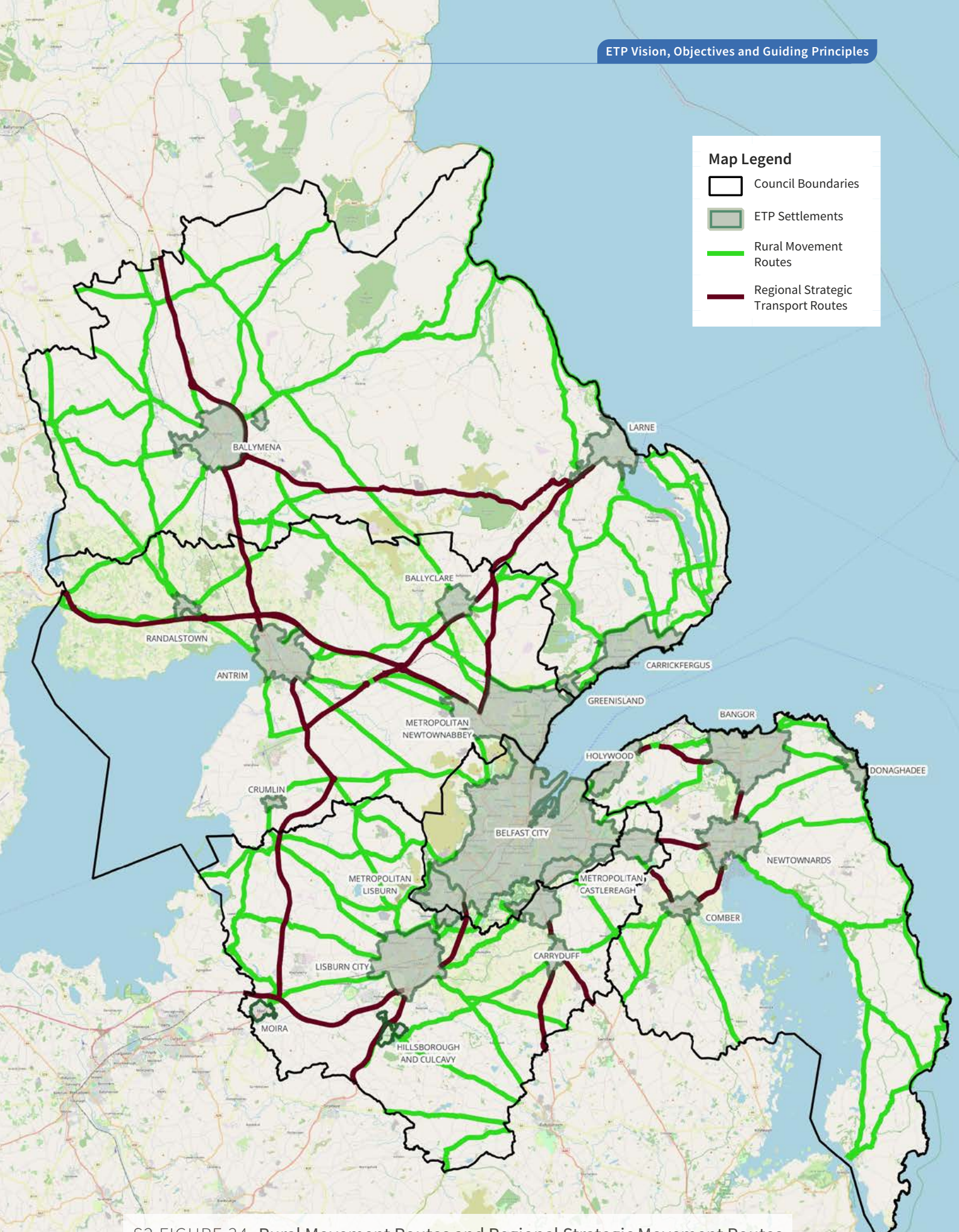
Rural Movement Routes and Regional Strategic Movement Routes represent the remaining motorways, A-roads and B-roads that connect between settlements across the ETP area (Figure 34).

Rural Movement Routes represent "routes that connect settlements but are not part of the Regional Strategic Transport Network (RSTN)".

Regional Strategic Movement Routes are those that form "the primary road network connecting main settlements and gateways".

The Regional Strategic Movement Routes are defined within and are the subject of the RSTP. The RSTP is therefore responsible for the confirmation of interventions proposed to fall along these routes, with the exception of where an RSTN route intersects an ETP settlement, at which point it is of dual interest to both the RSTP and ETP.

On both Rural Movement Routes and Regional Strategic Transport Routes, the efficient movement of motorised vehicles and goods, including **buses, cars and delivery vehicles**, is of primary importance. While ETP is unlikely to identify significant changes to any of these parts of the network, any changes that are identified, either through ETP or elsewhere, should consider measures that enable efficient and safe movement of vehicles and goods and targeted improvements to meet the needs of pedestrians and cyclists where needed.



S2 FIGURE 34: Rural Movement Routes and Regional Strategic Movement Routes

2.6 Enforcement and Management

2.6.1 Introduction

The ETP consists of a combination of measures which seek to rebalance the region's transport networks to improve the attractiveness and use of sustainable modes and reduce unnecessary use of the private car. As a result, the delivery of the ETP will enhance accessibility whilst delivering health and safety improvements and supporting the wider economy. As part of this rebalance there are a significant number of schemes which will deliver a reallocation of road space away from the private car and effect changes to the modal hierarchy. In urban locations, the ETP will require users to adapt their behaviour to the designs implemented in line with the Place & Movement Framework (PMF).

Inevitably therefore, issues concerning the **management** of road space and transport modes will be very important to the ETP. **Management** will involve new road / street layouts and signing and lining restrictions which may include making Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) such as for the exclusion of certain vehicle types or for setting parking controls. Further explanation and examples of management issues are provided in section 2.6.2.

Insofar as the success of a number of schemes (such as parking regulations or bus priority) may involve compliance with TROs, the ETP needs to consider issues of **enforcement**. In view of the number of schemes and their local nature, it is an important design principle that the enforcement of traffic regulations represents the "last resort". Therefore, in designing the scheme, the user behaviour required by any scheme should be self-evident, self-enforcing and socially-acceptable. Further explanation and examples of enforcement issues are provided in section 2.6.3.

This aligns with the Safe System approach outlined in the NI Roads Safety Strategy[32] and in general follows a 3-step: Education, Engineering and Enforcement process. This requires the public to be educated about the intended outcomes of the scheme and why the principle of "greater public good" applies, before the scheme is designed and the hard engineering implemented. Enforcement is viewed as the third and final element - the "last resort" to act on those users who perhaps wilfully choose not to adapt their behaviour.

32 https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/infrastructure/road-safe ty-strategy-for-northern-ireland%20to-2030.pdf

The success of the ETP, in implementing local schemes and changing travel behaviour, will require effective communications and marketing and widespread community support. This has been confirmed by the experience of the Welsh Government in implementing 20mph speed limits[33] and by English Local Authorities in delivering Local Traffic Neighbourhood schemes[34]. In Northern Ireland, the difficulties of implementing the A5 are also relevant and demonstrate the need to achieve social licence[35].

2.6.2 Management

Management of the transport network includes the following aspects:

- Design of transport interventions including local **co-design** in conjunction with local residents or businesses or local Council;
- Management of **kerb space** in urban areas for servicing and parking; and
- Management of pedestrian footways, cycle routes and shared spaces between **DfI and the respective Council**.

The application of an effective co-design process involving local stakeholders will be a key first step in the management of the network. It is likely that many stakeholders, at least initially, will not support changes to the network. In the case of schemes in residential areas, there will likely be a split between those residents who will not want their car journeys inconvenienced and those residents who support a transition to sustainable modes and enhanced, safer urban environment. Likewise for town/city centre schemes, local retailers may raise concerns about additional parking controls and road space reallocation to pedestrians which they perceive to reduce accessibility to their premises.

33 https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2023-08/20-mph-campaign-english-leaflet.pdf
34 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/implementing-low-traffic-neighbourhoods/implementing-low-traffic-neighbourhoods
35 https://sibni.org/app/uploads/2024/10/The-Root-Causes-of-Delay-and-Cost-Overruns-in-Major-Capital-Projects.pdf

The design process will need to be thorough and flexible, based upon listening to local concerns and attempting to address each explicitly either with evidence or design details. In general, there needs to be a determination to "win people over" with evidence of the "greater public good" meeting stated policy objectives rather than numerous detailed design changes which add to the cost and ultimately delayed implementation. The statutory guidance for England on Implementing Low Traffic Neighbourhoods for example provides good advice and stresses the importance of engagement including: in-person local events; on-line engagement; and information leaflets delivered to appropriate properties.

Town Centre parking strategies within ETP have been developed by DfI (responsible for on-street parking) in consultation with the local Council (responsible for off-street parking). In general, the strategies seek to rationalise availability and increase turnover of the most convenient on-street spaces to accommodate retail use whilst displacing long-stay parking to edge of town locations. Again, communication and engagement in raising awareness of wider objectives whilst listening and addressing practical concerns including those of specific groups such as the Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC) and Chambers of Trade (or similar) will be key to the implementation of such schemes.

The management of kerb space is likely to become a key issue in urban areas where place-making, movement, parking and servicing all have critical requirements. The preponderance of delivery logistics is expected to continue and hence the digitalisation of TRO with restrictions and one-way traffic systems will be important in enabling these on-line systems to work reliably and efficiently.

The management of pedestrian footways, cycle routes and shared spaces, whilst falling to either DfI or the Councils will be undertaken in a co-ordinated manner. Whilst DfI is the designated road authority there will be increasing need to collaborate as roads and streets take additional place-making functions on which the Councils and Department for Communities lead, and new off-road cycle routes become integral parts of the transport network. Responsibilities for maintenance and enforcement will need to be clear and acted upon with schemes that involve a multi-agency delivery framework.

2.6.3 Enforcement

Enforcement of transport regulations includes the following aspects:

- Enforcement of parking regulations including length of stay and underpayment of charges;
- Enforcement of moving traffic offences including driving/parking in a bus lane;
- Enforcement of speed limits; and
- Enforcement of any new measures such as any revision to the Highway Code in relation to the proposed Hierarchy of Users.

The ETP parking strategy includes additional **parking regulations** which will require enforcement effort including length of stay and underpayment of charges. It will be important that the policy objectives of the parking strategy, e.g. "rationalise availability and increase turnover of the most convenient on-street spaces", are monitored and proven to be supported by the enforcement operations. Whilst the current enforcement operations by contractor are expected to be appropriate in principle, care will be needed to ensure that the rate of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) remains relatively low, and the contractor traffic attendants retain public support. In future years the increasing use of digitalised TROs may reduce the costs of enforcement.

The ETP will increase the length and extent of **bus lanes,** in particular on radial routes in Belfast. Whilst the bus lanes and level of bus service will be designed to encourage compliance it is inevitable that additional enforcement will be required. This is likely to be undertaken by a mix of fixed and mobile Closed Circuit TV cameras which record vehicles illegally driving in bus lanes and traffic attendants who monitor illegal parking. As for parking PCNs, care will be needed that the level of income from fines is not perceived as excessive and that efforts are focused on the achievement of free-flow operation of the bus lanes and to protect areas from residential areas from nuisance parking.

The ETP includes proposals to introduce a network of 20mph limits. The success of 20mph links and zones must be built upon user acceptance and compliance and not upon extensive enforcement. It is recommended that there should be early and extensive engagement on ETP proposals for 20mph and detailed data collection of vehicle speeds, compliance, collisions and casualties for before and after comparisons. In addition, its implementation should be accompanied by a revision to the Road Safety Strategy for NI to 2030 which would make clear the links to road safety improvement. In particular, it is expected that 20mph limits in residential areas will not require enforcement but that local road safety groups should be involved in early engagement and implementation monitoring.

The Highway Code contains the rules of the road for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians – it is a legal requirement to obey these rules. The current Northern Ireland Highway Code does not support the principle of the Hierarchy of Road Users as contained in the recently revised GB Highway Code. The Hierarchy of Road Users could be used to provide additional priority to cyclists and people walking and wheeling in support of the PMF guidelines in the ETP. The Department will consider whether changes to the Hierarchy of Road Users should be addressed in a revision to the Road Safety Strategy for NI to 2030.



Image courtesy of Brian Morrison / Walk Wheel Cycle Trust

2.7 Monitoring and Evaluation

As outlined throughout this document, the ETP has been developed following a Vision and Validate approach. This approach has centred around identifying transport interventions that will contribute towards the Department's long-term aspiration for change to the transport network, in alignment with wider environmental, economic and social aims.

The Validation stage of this process has been achieved through assessment of ETP proposals through a range of means, including use of multi-criteria frameworks to qualitatively assess alignment with ETP objectives and guiding principles as well as use of the Strategic and Local transport modelling techniques to test the impact of some of the major infrastructure proposals quantitatively. The Eastern Transport Plan Strategic Modelling Report can be viewed at Annex C.

As a result, the implementation of the Plan over the coming years is expected to bring significant benefits to users of the region's transport system alongside a wide range of other benefits: to the environment; to the economy; to road safety; and to quality of life.

2.7.1 Role of monitoring and evaluation

There are many projects proposed as part of the ETP Plan and area. However, without adequate monitoring and appraisal there is no way to determine whether these projects are of social, environmental or economic benefit to the area. With a robust programming and monitoring framework in place the ability to determine scheme performance is both clear, comparable and transparent to the Plan's Stakeholders.

There are multiple ways to judge performance for transportation schemes. These vary by what mode is measured and over what timeframes. A range of Key Performance Indicators are set out in Annex A. These may be subject to evolution, including to reflect technological upgrades over the Plan's lifespan. These will all seek to assist the Plan's vision to be delivered in an integrated way to enhance and re-balance transport networks in favour of sustainable, efficient modes, which connects communities creating an attractive, inclusive and safe economic region for all by delivering carbon reduction, improving air quality, enhancing the built and natural environment and facilitating healthy and sustainable travel choices over unnecessary private car travel.

They will seek to address the monitoring requirement in two ways;

- Provide a series of long-term indicators that can be used for multi monitoring of the Plan measures, and the expected benefits; and
- Take due consideration of the impacts that are delivered through combinations or packages of schemes proposed.

The required datasets to assist with monitoring and evaluation will not necessarily be associated, owned or managed by DfI. As a result, DfI where necessary, will engage with partners with constituent organisations, such as the Local Councils, Department for Health, or Department of the Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

2.7.1.1 Sustainability Assessment

The Plan proposals will need to be delivered in stages, with interventions progressed as funding becomes available and as opportunities arise such as during resurfacing work or through developer contributions. However, by ensuring that each individual scheme aligns with the identified strategy, improvements will work well in combination and cumulatively to provide recognised benefits across the area.

Implementation of any individual scheme will be progressed following appropriate guidance and aligning with relevant planning requirements. Engagement with local communities and other relevant interest groups will be undertaken throughout scheme development and design stages.

As schemes are progressed to more detailed design and planning, there will be a requirement to carry out further assessment work of both environmental and social issues. This could include, where appropriate, Environmental Impact Assessment, Habitats Regulation Assessment or assessments such as Health Impact or Equalities Impact. Environmental Management Plans will also be developed ahead of construction.

2.7.2 Technology Upgrades

The ETP area and its constituent local authorities have significant levels of data capture in place, and this is likely to expand as technology evolves. The monitoring and evaluation approach described above makes use of the data, tools and technologies that are currently available to the Department.

Enhancements are likely to include rapid rises in Artificial Intelligence which is streamlining and automating the collection and processing of increasingly large digital datasets which will further strengthen data driven decision making to improve performance monitoring. Using algorithms in a targeted manner for the purposes of data collection, traffic sensors are now able to determine more modes of transport, including pedestrian subclasses (Wheelchairs, Pushchairs, Scooters etc.), more efficiently and over smaller timeframes. This is in comparison to a standard induction loop carriageway sensor which can be less reliable, costly to maintain, or repair and are less accurate. Changes in technology and any subsequent upgrades will therefore be considered as necessary. Whist considered to be seemingly inconsequential, it can be used for the analysis of routes and streets in greater detail. This ensures that the right schemes, in the right areas, are progressed over time. This will save significant amounts of funding, both internal and external to the Department. It also allows almost real-time monitoring of the impacts of transport interventions and more efficient mitigation of unplanned outcomes.

This will provide the cornerstone of monitoring throughout the life of the Plan. Nevertheless, changes in technology are also becoming more obvious in terms of performance monitoring. The Department will continue to invest in upgrades to its systems over the life of the Plan. As a result, this will lead to travel data becoming more accurate, over shorter timeframes and quantifiable over the medium to long term.

2.7.3 Monitoring Review

As with any Plan there will be a need to be reviewed periodically. Changes in the economic, social, legal and political environment may also necessitate modifications to Plan contents and priorities. The success of the implemented initiatives will dictate the extent of their future roll-out. The monitoring of Plan delivery and outcomes may suggest that modifications are required to maximise its effectiveness in delivering a modern integrated transport system. It is envisaged that the Plan is reviewed as a minimum at three-yearly intervals, with intermediate reviews of individual elements undertaken as required.



Image courtesy off Brian Morrison / Walk Wheel Cycle Trust

ETP Glossary

TERM	DEFINITION
Accessible Parking Bay	An accessible parking bay, also known as a disabled parking bay, is a reserved space on the public road for use by Blue Badge holders only.
Accessibility	How easily people can reach destinations at a particular time, using a particular mode.
Active Travel	Travelling by physically active means such as walking, wheeling, or cycling
Appraisal	A structured assessment of options, costs, benefits and impacts.
Automatic Passenger Counting	Technology that records passenger boarding and alighting numbers automatically.
BCN (Belfast Cycling Network)	Belfast's planned cycling route network and contained within the Belfast Cycling Network Delivery Plan 2022-2031.
Behaviour Change Initiative	A programme designed to encourage people to travel differently, often towards more sustainable modes.
Bus Lane	A road lane reserved primarily for buses.
Bus Priority	Measures designed to help buses move faster and more reliably than general traffic.
Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)	A high-quality bus system with dedicated infrastructure and features similar to a tram service.
Carriageway	The part of a road used by vehicles, excluding footpaths.
Civic Spine	A planned high-quality route through a city/town centre prioritising walking, wheeling and sustainable transport.
Community-Led Design	A process where local people help shape and influence project proposals.
Confluence	The point where several transport routes or movements come together.
Congestion	Traffic conditions where demand exceeds road capacity, causing delays.
Constrained Transport Network	A network that has limited capacity and struggles to accommodate demand.
Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ)	An area where on-street parking restrictions and controls apply including locations where parking charges apply.
Cycling	Users of pedal cycles, but not motorbikes. The definition includes road-legal electric bike (known as an **Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycles**) and non-standard cycles, such as adapted cycles (cycles or tricycles, specially adapted for use by disabled people), cargo cycles and recumbents.

TERM	DEFINITION
Demand Management	Measures used to influence travel behaviour and reduce reliance on private cars.
Densification	Increasing the number of homes, jobs or activities within an area.
Destinating Movements	Trips whose destination is within a specific area rather than simply passing through it.
Directionality Changes	Alterations to traffic flow directions, such as making streets one-way or two-way.
E-cargo Bike	An electrically assisted bicycle designed to transport goods.
Exemplar Area	A location selected to demonstrate good practice or test new ideas.
Far Siding	A bus operating strategy where services travel across a city/town centre before terminating, increasing accessibility.
Fixed Infrastructure	Permanent transport assets such as roads, stations, shelters and bus lanes.
Footfall	The number of people walking through a particular area.
Free-Flow Traffic	Traffic moving without delays or congestion.
Glider	Belfast's Bus Rapid Transit system operated by Translink.
Greenway	A traffic-free route designed for walking, wheeling and/or cycling.
Gridlock	Severe traffic congestion where traffic movement becomes extremely difficult or stops altogether.
Hard Shoulder Running	Allowing certain vehicles, usually buses, to use the motorway hard shoulder during specific conditions.
Informal Surveillance	Increased public safety created when more people are present and can naturally observe an area discouraging antisocial behaviour.
Integrated Transport Network	A transport system where different modes work together efficiently and effectively.
Interchange	A place where passengers transfer between different transport services or modes.
Kerbside	The area along the edge of a road. This can also be used for parking, loading, taxis, or bus stops.
Kerbside Review	An assessment of how roadside space is used and whether it can be allocated differently.
Land Use Designation	A planning category that states how land can be used, such as housing, business or open space.

TERM	DEFINITION
Layover	The period when a bus waits between completing one trip and starting the next.
Local Development Plan (LDP)	The long-term planning strategy for land use and development in an area.
Local Authority	A council responsible for providing local services and planning decisions.
Micro-consolidation Centre	A small urban logistics hub where goods are grouped and then delivered using low-emission methods such as cargo bikes.
Mobility Aid	Equipment such as wheelchairs or mobility scooters that assist movement.
Mobility Services	Transport-related services such as bike hire, car clubs or travel information.
Modal Designation	The assigned priority given to different transport modes on a route or place.
Modal Hierarchy	A ranking of transport modes that prioritises one mode over the other on a particular element of the transport network.
Modal Shift	A change from one form of transport to another, usually from private car use to sustainable transport modes.
Mode Share	The percentage of journeys made using a particular transport mode (Walking, Cycling, Bus, Train, Car, etc.).
Multi-modal Journey	A journey involving more than one type of transport.
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
Park and Ride (P&R)	Facilities where people park their car and continue their journey using public transport.
Parking Restraint	Policies intended to limit parking availability to reduce car use.
Passenger Proposition	The overall package of services, facilities and benefits offered to public transport users.
Patronage	The number of passengers using a transport service.
Peak Time	The busiest period of the day for travel demand, such as morning and evening rush hours.
Pedestrianised	An area where vehicle access is restricted or prohibited to prioritise pedestrians.
Peripheral Area	An area located near the edge or boundary of a city or region.

TERM	DEFINITION
Permeability	How easily people can move through an area using different routes.
Placemaking	Designing streets and public spaces to improve how people live, work and spend time in an area.
PMF (Place and Movement Framework)	A framework used to broadly describe the characteristics of each street or road depending on the character of the area, how it prioritises place and movement and the types of transport measures that will support the Vision for the transport plan
Population Catchment	The group of people living within an area who are likely to use a service or facility.
Public Realm	Publicly accessible spaces such as streets, squares, footpaths and parks.
Punctuality	The extent to which transport services operate on schedule.
Radial Corridor	A major route leading into or out of a city/town centre from surrounding areas.
Rat Running	Drivers using minor roads or city/town centre streets as shortcuts to avoid main roads.
Rationalisation of parking	Reducing or reorganising car parking spaces to improve the place and movement function of an area.
Residual Need	Any remaining requirement or justification for a transport scheme after alternatives have been considered.
Resilience	The ability of the transport network to continue functioning during disruptions or emergencies.
Route Variant	A version of a bus route that follows a slightly different path from the main route.
Scheme Protection Line	Land reserved in planning policy for a future transport project.
Segregated Cycle Lane	A cycle lane physically separated from motor traffic for safety.
Serviceability Requirements	The need to maintain access for deliveries, servicing, maintenance and business operations.
Severance	A barrier created by roads or other infrastructure that makes movement between areas difficult.
Slip Road	A road connecting a motorway or major road to another road, allowing vehicles to enter or leave traffic flow.
Social Inclusion	Ensuring everyone can access opportunities, services and activities regardless of circumstances.

TERM	DEFINITION
Statutory Process	A process required by law, often involving approvals, consultation and assessments.
SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems)	Drainage features designed to manage rainwater sustainably and reduce flooding.
Sustainable Transport (Modes)	Travel methods that have lower environmental impacts, such as walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport.
Through Traffic	Vehicles travelling through an area without stopping there.
Ticketing Integration	Allowing different transport services to use a shared ticketing or payment system.
Traffic-Calming Measures	Physical measures such as speed humps or narrower lanes used to slow traffic.
Transport Interchange	A location where passengers transfer between different transport modes.
Travel Hub	A location where different transport modes connect, allowing easy interchange.
Vision and Validate Approach	Widely adopted by the transport planning discipline as a better way of achieving sustainable transport outcomes. It starts with setting a vision of what we are seeking to achieve, and then, through a validation process, identifies the infrastructure and services needed to deliver that vision.
Walking and Wheeling	Walking, running, or wheeling unaided, as well as using any kind of mobility aids such as electric wheelchairs, mobility scooters or walking frames. People pushing prams or buggies are also included in this definition, as well as other modes such as scooting, skateboarding, and rollerblading/roller skating.
Wayfinding	Signs, maps and information that help people navigate an area.
Workforce Catchment	The geographic area from which employers can attract workers.

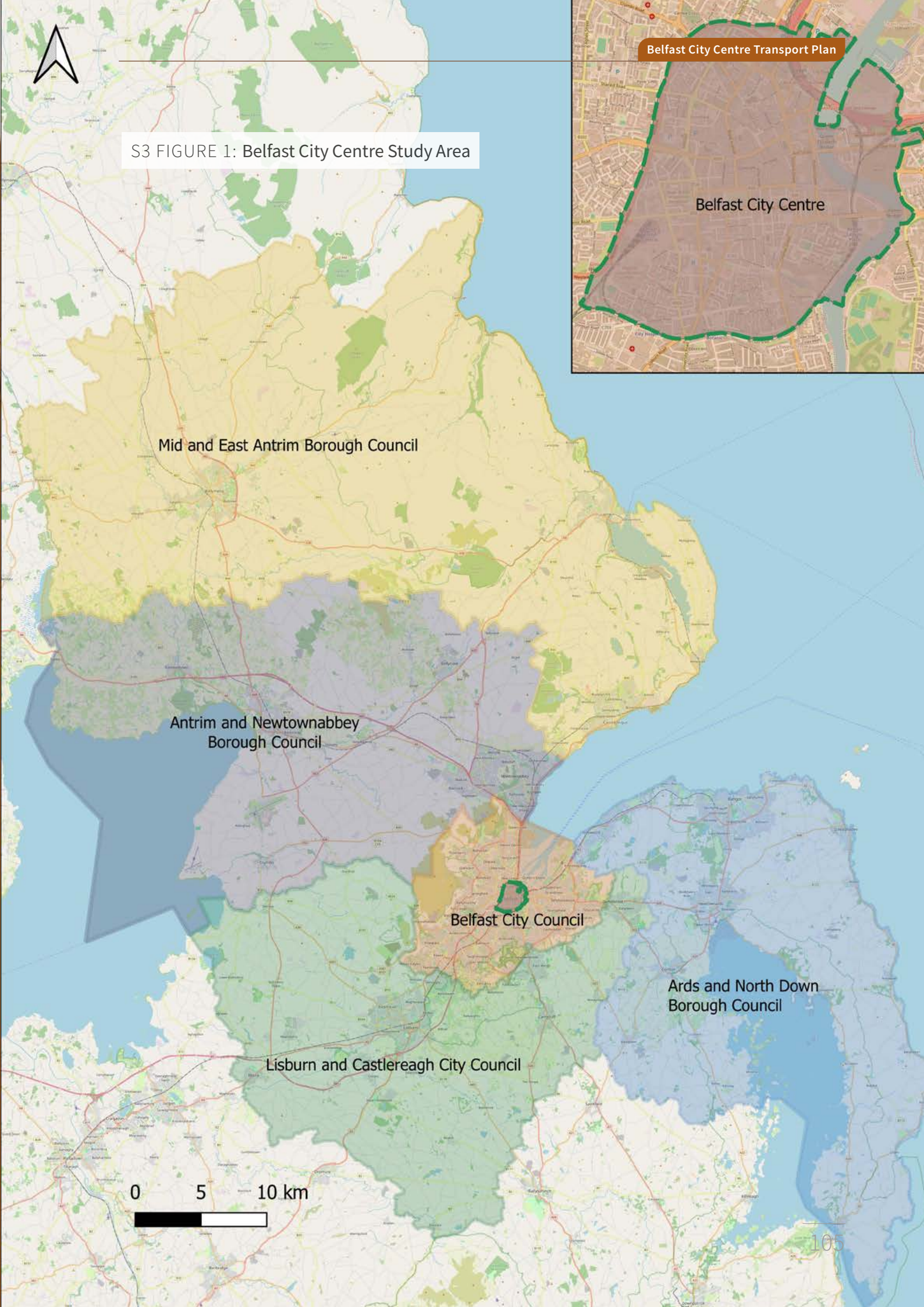


03

Belfast City Centre Transport Plan

3.1 Overview of Belfast City Centre
3.2 Belfast City Council LDP
3.3 Existing Transport Context
3.4 Plan Proposals for Belfast City Centre
3.5 Walking and Wheeling
3.6 Cycling
3.7 Bus and Coach
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3.9 Mobility hubs
3.10 Rail
3.11 Traffic Management
3.12 Car Parking
3.13 Management of our City Centre
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3.15 Summary of Impact
3.16 How does the Belfast City Centre Transport Plan contribute towards the wider ETP Vision and Objectives?

S3 FIGURE 1: Belfast City Centre Study Area



3.1 Overview of Belfast City Centre

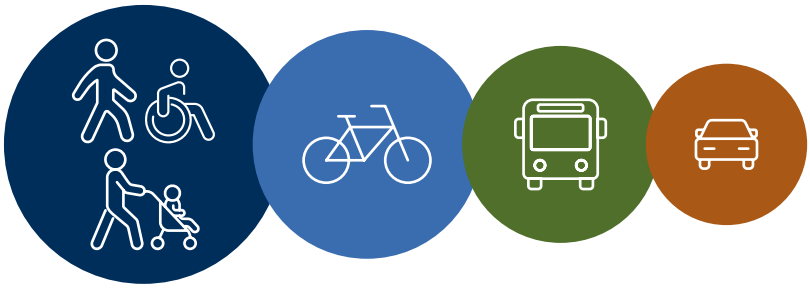
Belfast City Centre plays a significant role in the national economy, acting as a key employment and retail centre as well as a draw for tourists from across the globe. It is the capital city and a centre for administration, services and cultural amenities. It is the hub of regional transport and acts as a gateway to Europe.

When compared to cities of a similar size elsewhere in the UK and Europe the city centre's resident population has historically been low. Belfast City Council (BCC) intend to facilitate ambitious population growth through sustainable residential development, with a key aim to increase the number of people living in the city centre.

The transport network within Belfast City Centre is already at or over capacity at peak times. Over the ten years between 2013 and 2023, approximately 50% of trips into Belfast City Centre have consistently been made by car[36], leading to congestion and delays for bus and car users alike. If this mode share persists, existing challenges faced by the city centre transport network will be compounded by planned growth, and transport risks becoming a barrier to growth. As such this transport plan and BCC's Local Development Plan cannot continue to facilitate this same level of car dominance within the city centre.

The Eastern Transport Plan (ETP), in line with the designated modal hierarchy for town and city centres (Figure 2), aims to make walking and wheeling, cycling and public transport use the most accessible and convenient mode choice for those living, working and travelling to the city centre both now and into the future.

S3 FIGURE 2: **ETP modal hierarchy for city and town centres**



36 2023 Inner Cordon Survey

3.2 Belfast City Council LDP

The Belfast City Council Local Development Plan (LDP) sets out a vision up to 2035, to enable a smart regional city, with environmental resilience and a vibrant economy. The LDP vision encourages healthy active lifestyles, with the city centre identified as a key destination for jobs, investment, residential population growth and opportunities. The LDP sets out four overarching aims, which are supported by a series of specific objectives and strategies.

The LDP's four overarching aims, along with key transport-related considerations for the city centre are outlined below.



Shaping a liveable place

The LDP outlines ambitious plans to support population growth in Belfast City Centre and provide connections with other cities across the region. The LDP growth strategy highlights the need to accommodate 31,600 new homes within the BCC area between 2020 to 2035, with an allocation for 8,000 new homes to be accommodated within the city centre by 2035. The planned housing growth in the city centre represents 25% of the total housing growth planned within the council area. This reflects the Council's ambition to concentrate higher density housing developments in locations that benefit from high accessibility, maximising the use of existing infrastructure. Belfast City Centre has a targeted residential density of 150-350 dwellings per hectare.



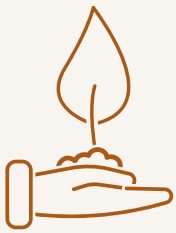
Creating a vibrant economy

With the ambition to create a vibrant and successful economy, Belfast City Centre plays a role as an economic, social and civic hub for the city and wider region. The city centre provides an appealing investment opportunity to attract people and businesses to Belfast. The LDP acknowledges that while the city centre's primary retail area is thriving, some of the city centre fringe areas are characterised by vacant and underused sites and buildings. The LDP identifies a number of key Development Opportunity Areas which will provide significant opportunities for mixed use development and regeneration across the city centre. Enhancing connectivity to and from these areas via sustainable modes will be critical to ensure that the impact of new housing and employment in these areas does not result in an increase in reliance on car use within the city centre.



Promoting a green and active place

Supporting the aim of promoting a green and active place, the LDP outlines a series of policy objectives to encourage healthy lifestyles and protect the natural environment and biodiversity. These include supporting the development of a green and blue infrastructure network, across the city centre. The LDP outlines that connecting different parts of the city centre via high quality and accessible active travel routes open to all sections of the community will help to deliver a compact city centre that is liveable, attractive to businesses, and appealing to visitors.



Building a smart connected and resilient place

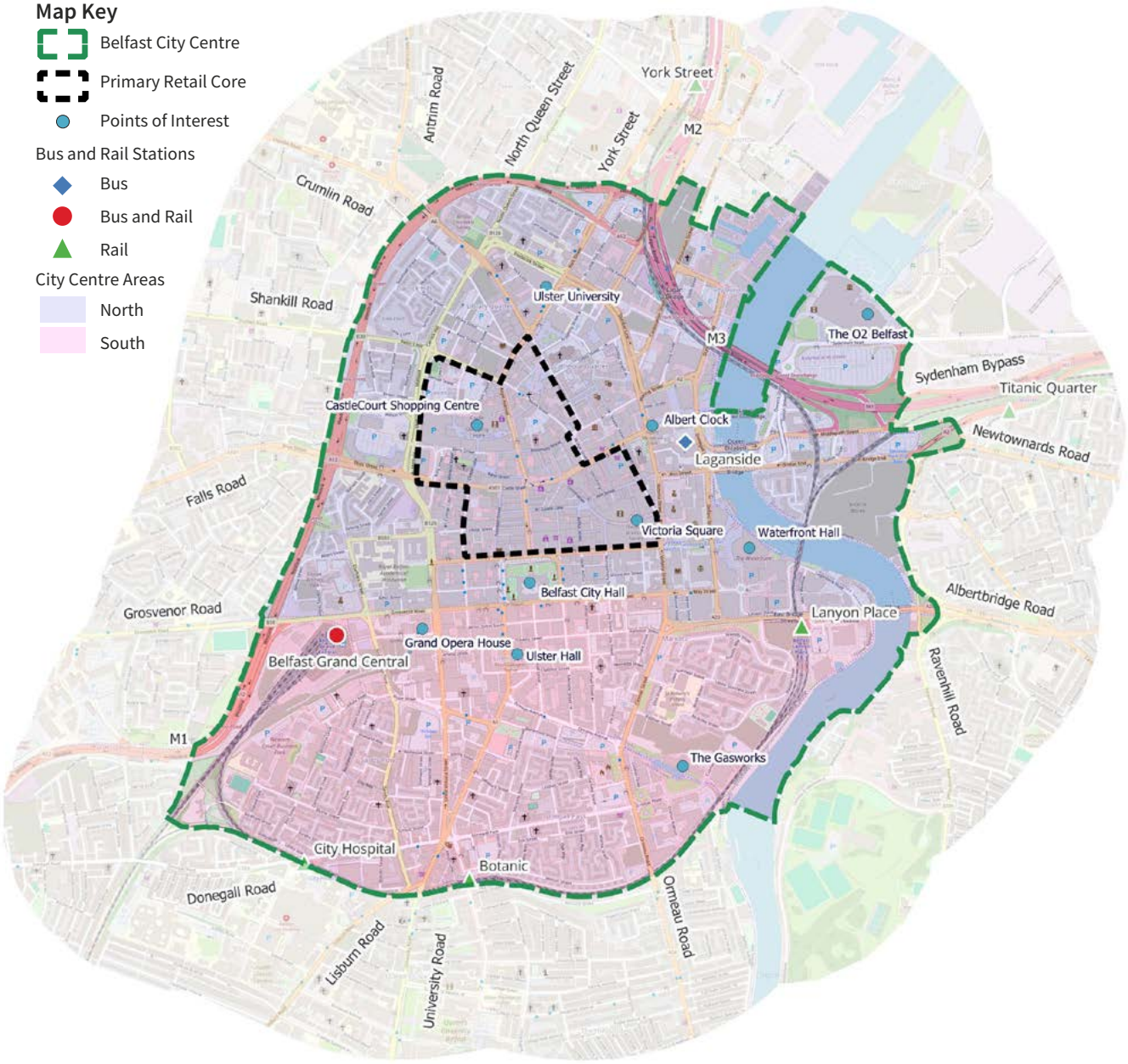
With the aim to build smart connected and resilient places, the BCC LDP sets out the ambition for new developments to enhance environmental quality, where possible, and protect communities from materially harmful development. This includes facilitating sustainable patterns of development that reduce the need to travel and provide an efficient integrated transport network offering safe, sustainable travel choices that reduce private car use, congestion, carbon emissions and air pollution. The 'positive placemaking' policy area encourages vibrant and diverse activity in new developments within Belfast City Centre, whilst acknowledging proposals need to be accessible, have public support and fit the local context.

The ETP proposals for Belfast City Centre presented in the remainder of this chapter have been developed in close collaboration with BCC, including LDP officers. Together, the LDP and ETP aim for better integration between land use and transport planning to benefit the residents, businesses and visitors to the city centre.

The Plan proposals in this report are presented in relation to their locations within the north, south and primary retail core of the city centre. The north of the city centre has been defined as all areas north of Grosvenor Road, City Hall and East Bridge Street, and the south is all areas south of this. The primary retail core is defined by BCC, as shown in Figure 3.

The City Centre and Primary Retail Core boundaries used here (and in the rest of the ETP) are taken from the latest version of the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan and may be subject to change through the Belfast City Council LDP Local Policies Plan.

S3 FIGURE 3: Belfast City Centre Area Definitions



3.3 Existing Transport Context

The city centre plays an important 'movement' and 'place' function for the wider area. The transport network in the city centre acts as the confluence of many radial corridors and public transport links, facilitating both long-distance strategic transport movements as well as local commuter and destinating movements. The city centre also serves as a destination place for many people, residents and visitors alike, to spend time in, rather than just pass through.

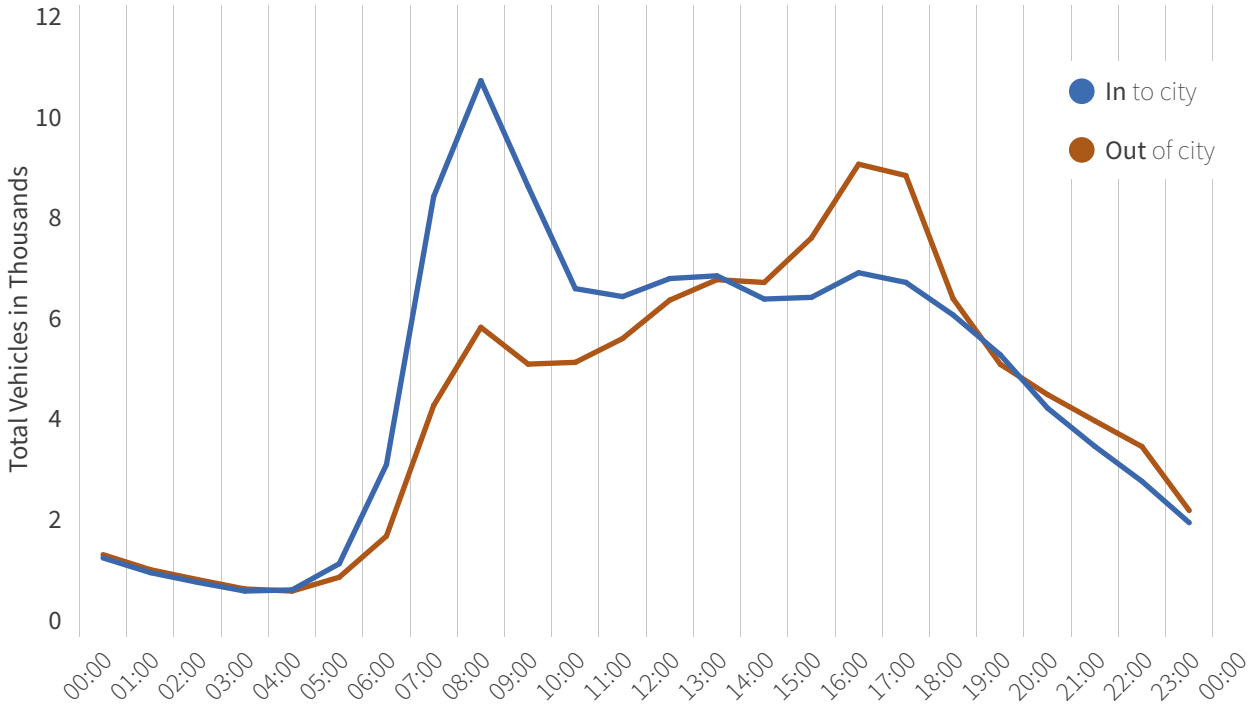
However, the existing operation of the city centre transport network gives rise to conflicts between these uses which need to be carefully managed. While the historic focus on road building was designed to improve access, within the city centre it has reached the limit on available space and has led to the creation of a city centre transport network that prioritises car traffic allowing it to dominate which detracts from the 'place' function and quality of experience of key city centre assets.

As shown in Figure 4, weekday traffic flow into the city centre peaks during the morning from 08:00-09:00. There is then a drop in activity from 10:00 where a steady flow continues at a consistent flow throughout the day.

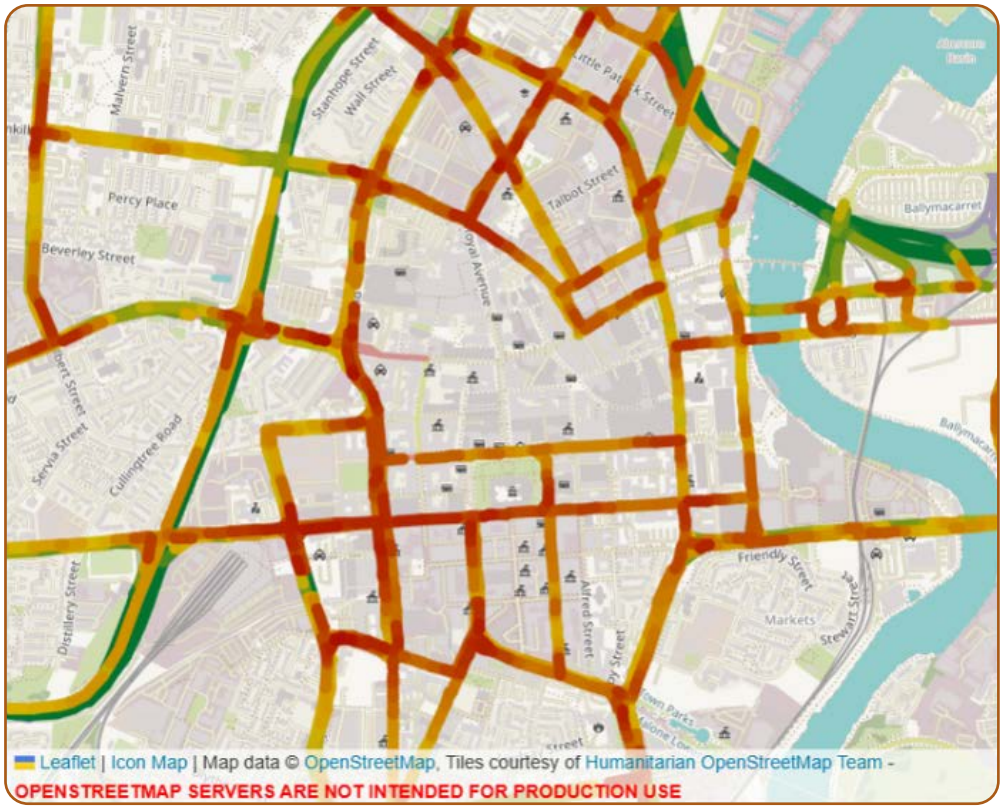
Leaving the city centre, traffic flows peak between 1600-1800.

The weekday AM and PM periods shown in Figures 5 and 6 represent the periods when the traffic network is under greatest pressure when low vehicle speeds are experienced and congestion peaks.

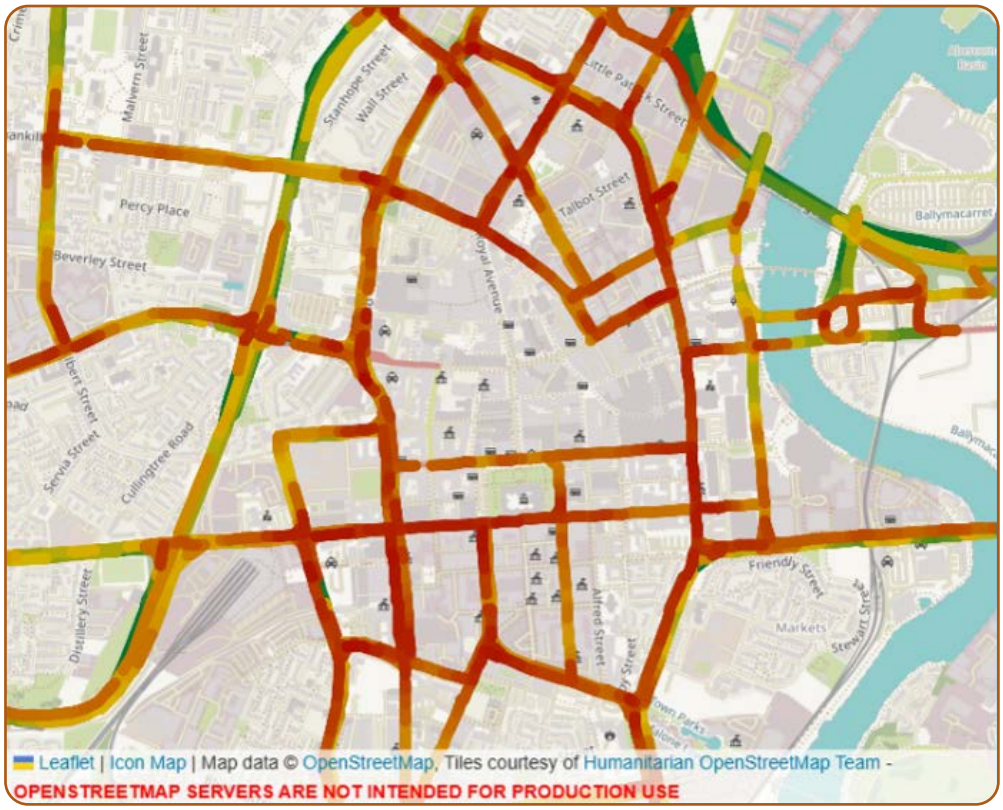
S3 FIGURE 4: **Weekday traffic flow into the City Centre**



S3 FIGURE 5: **TOMTOM: Average Weekday AM Peak (0830-0900)**



S3 FIGURE 6: **TOMTOM: Average Weekday PM Peak (1630-1700)**





S3 FIGURE 7: Belfast City Centre - Existing Transport Network

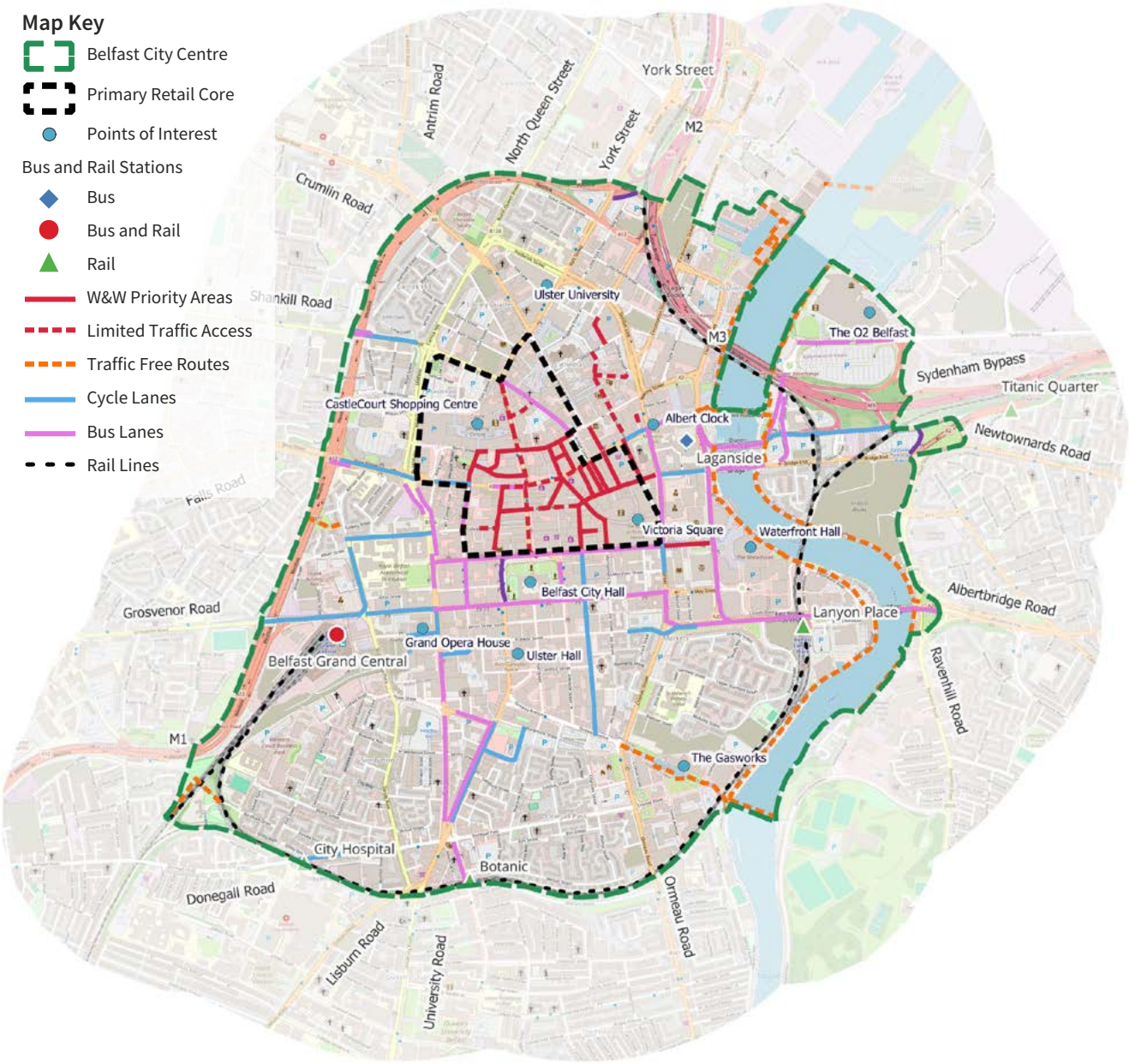


Figure 7 depicts a simplistic view of the existing characteristics of the city centre transport network. It highlights how some substantial effort has already been made to limit the dominance of cars, particularly within and around the primary retail core, where 20mph speed limits are already in place and certain streets have restricted access for general traffic. Over recent years there has also been an increase in the extent of dedicated bus and cycle lanes. The ETP looks to build on these foundations over the plan period.

The last large-scale changes to the city centre transport network were brought in as part of Belfast on the Move in 2012[37] which included the introduction of:

- 23 new controlled pedestrian crossing points
- over 2.6km of new bus lanes which also accommodate cyclists, motorcyclists and taxis
- a new 2-way traffic flow on Hope Street
- 340m of new dedicated service bays for businesses
- 0.5km of new dedicated cycle lanes
- 37 additional dedicated disabled parking bays

The main aim of these proposals was to reorganise traffic management within the city centre to facilitate a reduction in general traffic levels and encourage greater walking, cycling and public transport use.

Based on the 2014 Post Implementation Impact Study, the impacts of implementing Belfast on the Move were:

2,200
additional people
entering Belfast City Centre **(+6%)**

Improved modal share for sustainable modes:

Walking increased by
12%

Cycling increased by
18%

Bus use increased by
17%

Rail use increased by
36%

Year on year public transport patronage increases, including
40% **uptake in use of P&R services**

P+

Around
11,000 **fewer vehicles in the core city centre streets each day,**
which is a reduction of around 16% since 2010

37 Assessing the impact of Belfast on the Move 2013 Surveys - https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/assessing-impact-belfast-move-2013-surveys



Photo credit: Translink

Further changes to the transport landscape within the city centre include the introduction of Glider in 2018. Glider is a bus rapid transit (BRT) system which provides enhanced service frequencies and reliability, modern tram-style vehicles supported by high levels of bus priority along its routes (including some across its route through the city centre), off board ticketing and high-quality waiting facilities.

As of 2026, two Glider routes are in operation, connecting east and west Belfast through the city centre, with a link to Titanic Quarter. The second phase of Glider delivery will add further connections to north and south Belfast via the city centre.

Glider key stats:

- Approximately **10 million passengers travelled on the Glider phase 1** corridors in 2019
- This was an **increase of some 70% relative to patronage on BRT corridors** prior to commencement of the project, which exceeded its opening year targets
- Between 2019 (pre-Covid) and 2025 (post-Covid), **Glider has experienced a 9.9% increase in patronage**
- Existing Glider vehicles use diesel-electric hybrid engine technology, emitting low noise, low vibration and low levels of pollutants. This has resulted in a **90% reduction in NOx** and particulate matter emissions, and **10 to 40% improvement in fuel efficiency** compared with diesel double decker buses in Belfast.

Opening in Autumn 2024, Belfast Grand Central Station now acts as the main terminus rail station for Belfast, offering increased connectivity and integration with the wider public transport network for connections across Northern Ireland, Ireland and beyond, improving reliability and efficiency of services across the network. Belfast Grand Central Station also acts as a key terminus and pick up locations for regional Ulsterbus, Goldliner and other regional bus services.

- The station is already delivering strong performance results and user feedback is very positive with a 96% satisfaction rating.
- In its first year of operation , the station has welcomed over 8 million people. This success has contributed to more than 4 million additional journeys across the wider public transport network since opening.

However, despite several positive steps in the right direction since the publication of BMTP 2015, there is more work to be done on the journey towards a better and more inclusive city centre.



Belfast Grand Central Station
Photo credit: Translink



Highway dominance along Victoria Street, Belfast

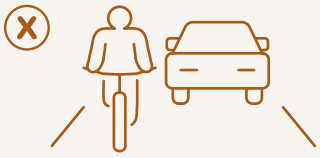
3.3.1 Current and Future Challenges

Informed by a review of the existing transport network and analysis of available data, key transport challenges (in addition to congestion) have been identified for Belfast City Centre, summarised as:



Highway infrastructure dominates and causes barriers to pedestrian movements

The core of the city centre is largely encapsulated within an 'inner ring' of as many as seven lanes of traffic. These wide expanses of highway serve to accommodate high volumes of car traffic at peak times of the day, but at the expense of other road users. This perpetuates severance between the city centre and inner city neighbourhoods.



Lack of coherent cycle network

Although there are some sections of dedicated cycle lanes across the city centre, these are sporadic in nature and cyclists are often required to mix with high-speed traffic to complete their journeys.



Inconsistent bus priority

As for the bus network, existing bus lanes do not provide for continuous priority across the whole of the city centre. This means that bus journey time and reliability benefits gained within bus lanes elsewhere on the network are quickly undermined, leading to unreliable and inconsistent journey times. This also reduces the resilience of our city-wide bus network and disincentivises public transport use.

Oversupply of parking in the City Centre

There are currently a large number of on and off street car parking spaces available within the City Centre. Surveys undertaken show that, depending on the time period, only 44-57% of spaces are utilized. This demonstrates that there is a current over supply of spaces when compared to the current parking demands.

Inefficient use of city centre space, undermining the appeal of city centre assets

There is evidence of conflicts between transport modes and land use across the city centre. In the Donegall Square / Donegall Place area for example, bus and coach activity converges with areas of very high footfall and events. The confluence of these activities leads to conflicts and overcrowding.

Inconsistent parking pricing structures

There are inconsistencies in parking costs largely due to the range of private and public ownership of car parking within the City Centre. In some locations, the payment structure is encouraging long-stay commuter parking, which in turn increases the attractiveness of car travel and potentially discouraging the use of sustainable modes.



“Rat running” through city centre streets

The dominance of highway infrastructure can be seen as both the result and cause of high volumes of vehicular traffic in the city centre. While it is inevitable that some car trips to, from and within Belfast City Centre are and will continue to be necessary, a large proportion of trips travelling in areas such as the front and back of City Hall appear to be “rat running” trips (essentially using the city centre as a short cut) choosing to cross the city centre rather than following an alternative, more suitable route. These trips are contributing to unnecessary congestion and pollution and perpetuate the feeling of car dominance in the city centre.



Planned housing and employment growth in the area will place additional strain on the transport network

Belfast City Council’s planned growth strategy prioritises the city centre and other sustainable locations across the council area, promoting higher-density development that reduces the need for travel among future residents. However, even with these measures, if the planned growth is fully realised during the transport plan period (to 2035), and no transport interventions are implemented, journey delays within Belfast City Centre are projected to increase by more than 50% compared to 2023 levels. This demonstrates that the transport network could soon become a significant constraint on the city’s growth, underscoring the urgent need for change.

3.4 Plan Proposals for Belfast City Centre

The proposals set out in the remainder of this chapter represent the long-term vision for change within Belfast City Centre as well as a series of proposals to be brought forward within the Plan period. These aim to turn the curve away from car dominance towards a more sustainable and accessible future which seeks to stitch together inner-city communities to the city centre.

All of the Plan proposals will need to be delivered in stages, with schemes focused on individual areas being progressed as opportunities become available. Careful consideration of delivery phasing will ensure that multi-modal improvements are delivered efficiently. By ensuring that each individual scheme aligns with the identified vision, improvements will build together over time to form a cohesive sustainable transport network across the whole of the city centre and linking to routes across wider Belfast.

Implementation of individual schemes will be progressed adhering to applicable guidance and aligning with relevant statutory processes. Engagement with local communities and other relevant interest parties will be undertaken throughout scheme development at the appropriate design stages.



3.5 Walking and Wheeling

The Plan proposes improvements to walking and wheeling facilities across Belfast City Centre, including enhancing connections between the primary retail core and other destinations within and close to the centre. In doing so, ETP aims to increase the number of people walking and wheeling by removing perceived and physical barriers that currently impact people's journeys, hence improving links within communities and from residential areas to key attractors in the city centre, whilst improving the public environment in the area.

3.5.1 Vision

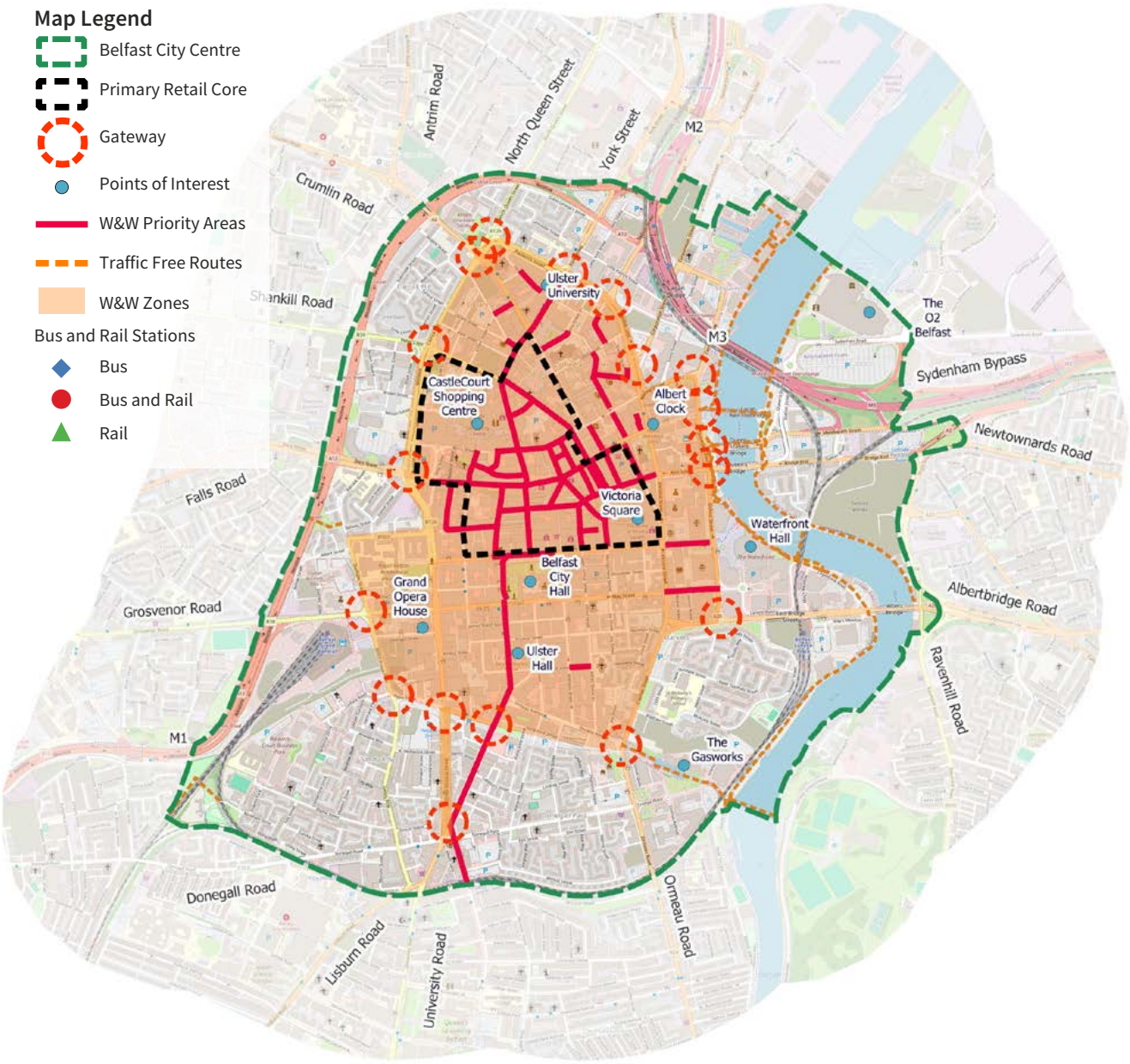
As outlined in section 2.6, walking and wheeling sits at the top of the modal hierarchy for the **City and Town Centres** Place and Movement Framework (PMF) category, meaning that on balance this mode should take precedence when determining changes to the transport network. This is reflected in the ambitious long-term vision for walking and wheeling within Belfast City Centre, as depicted in Figure 8 and described below. Any changes made as a result of ETP or otherwise to the transport network during the Plan period must consider and align with this vision wherever possible.

Central to aligning with this modal priority is the proposal to introduce a city centre-wide **20mph speed limit**. There are demonstrable links between reduced traffic speeds and reductions in collisions and fatalities[38]. There is also evidence to suggest that slower traffic speeds lead to an increased uptake of people choosing to walk, wheel or cycle due to the increased perception of safety. Although the primary retail core, around City Hall and most of the Cathedral Quarter already operate at 20mph, expanding this across the whole city centre will help to ensure that walking and wheeling is an attractive and safe option for travelling within the area. It will also simplify the messaging on speeds for motorists. When reviewing the success of existing 20mph zones across Belfast and elsewhere, it has been noted that the greatest speed limit reductions are achieved when 20mph signage is accompanied by wider traffic calming measures. Such measures, including reductions in the number and width of traffic lanes, will be considered as part of the 20mph expansion proposals for the city centre.

Streets identified as **walking and wheeling priority areas** will comprise high-quality public spaces, where walking and wheeling is naturally the easiest and most attractive method of moving around. The place function of the city centre in these areas may be enhanced by others and provide opportunities for complementary uses. Consideration will be given to the enhanced design of these streets for use at all times of day and night, ensuring that interventions prioritise personal safety for all. While vehicular movements may still be permitted in some locations for access requirements, motorised vehicles will be controlled and treated as "invited guests" in these spaces, maintaining priority for walking and wheeling throughout. The streets identified include existing pedestrianised zones within the retail core, as well as new streets to the south and east of the city centre.

38 Pedestrian fatality risk as a function of car impact speed (Erik Rosén, Ulrich Sander)

S3 FIGURE 8: Belfast City Centre - Walking and Wheeling Vision



The **walking and wheeling zone** includes further city centre streets that connect the primary retail core to the surrounding city centre facilities and communities. All streets within this area and along key entry routes will facilitate easy and safe walking and wheeling journeys through enhancements to existing footways and provision of new crossing facilities at appropriate locations. Treatments to be considered within this area include footway widening, improved wayfinding and lighting, alongside raising and dropping kerbs to create continuous surfaces for wheeling users, which will allow safe, continuous and easy access for all users. Several key corridors that provide important access movements between inner city communities and the core of the city centre have also been included within this area.

The existing **traffic-free routes** will be enhanced and expanded to provide continuous connectivity to the city centre. On these routes, pedestrians and cyclists will be separated from motorised traffic. The design of these routes should align with best practice to either enable safe sharing of space between pedestrians and cyclists or to deliver suitable separation where it is needed.

The **gateways** represent the key junctures between neighbouring communities and the city centre along main corridors. At these key locations, measures will be introduced to improve footways, improve pedestrian priority at crossings, reducing the length of the crossings and number of stages at the crossing where possible. Alongside these improvements, an enhanced streetscape to support a reduction in severance caused by highway infrastructure and vehicular traffic will also be brought forward.

3.5.2 2035 Plan

Under the Climate Change Act (NI) 2022, the Department is committed to spending 10% of its transport budget on active travel. The vision for pedestrian-focused enhancements in the city centre is therefore ambitious in scale. Delivery will, however, need to happen in stages, with schemes focused on individual areas being progressed as opportunities become available. By ensuring that each individual scheme aligns with the identified vision, improvements will work well together and provide recognised benefits across the city centre.

The proposals for walking and wheeling, as well as cycling, within Belfast City Centre and the wider Metropolitan Area, have been developed to complement the proposals contained within the Everyday Active Travel: The Urban Delivery Plan. The Everyday Active Travel: The Urban Delivery Plan identifies proposed enhancements to the walking, wheeling and cycling network across all areas of Northern Ireland except within the Belfast City Council area, where the Belfast Cycling Network Delivery Plan previously defined active travel priorities. The walking, wheeling and cycling proposals contained within ETP have been informed by the BCN but will now supersede the BCN Delivery Plan and bridge the gap in the Everyday Active Travel: The Urban Delivery Plan.

Figure 9 illustrates the proposals planned to be delivered within the Plan period, each of which contributes towards the long-term vision for walking and wheeling. Alongside the delivery of these individual proposals, investment in improvements to existing city centre footways, crossings and public realm will also continue across the Plan period.

Other complementary measures

In addition to the Plan proposals, ETP also acknowledges the following proposals which are relevant to the area and will complement the ETP proposals:

- Delivery of the Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge connecting the Gasworks to Ormeau Embankment, being progressed by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). This is considered to be a committed scheme, separate to the ETP.
- Delivery of new active travel crossing (swing bridge) over the River Lagan connecting Clarendon Road to Loft Lines in the Titanic Quarter, being progressed by BCC.
- DfC's Belfast Streets Ahead phase 3, to be delivered by the Department for Communities (DfC). This includes public realm works in York Street, Frederick Street and Royal Avenue, supporting the opening of the Ulster University campus at York Street. Traffic management and bus lane measures proposed through this Plan, will further enhance DfC placemaking proposals in the area.
- DfC's Belfast Streets Ahead Phase 5, to be delivered by the DfC, focused on enhancing the physical appearance of streets around Blackstaff Square as well as Bedford Street and Dublin Road. Traffic management and walking and wheeling proposals in this area will further enhance DfC's placemaking proposals.



S3 FIGURE 9: **Belfast City Centre - Walking and Wheeling Plan Proposals**



Illustrative example of multi-modal improvements to Castle Place

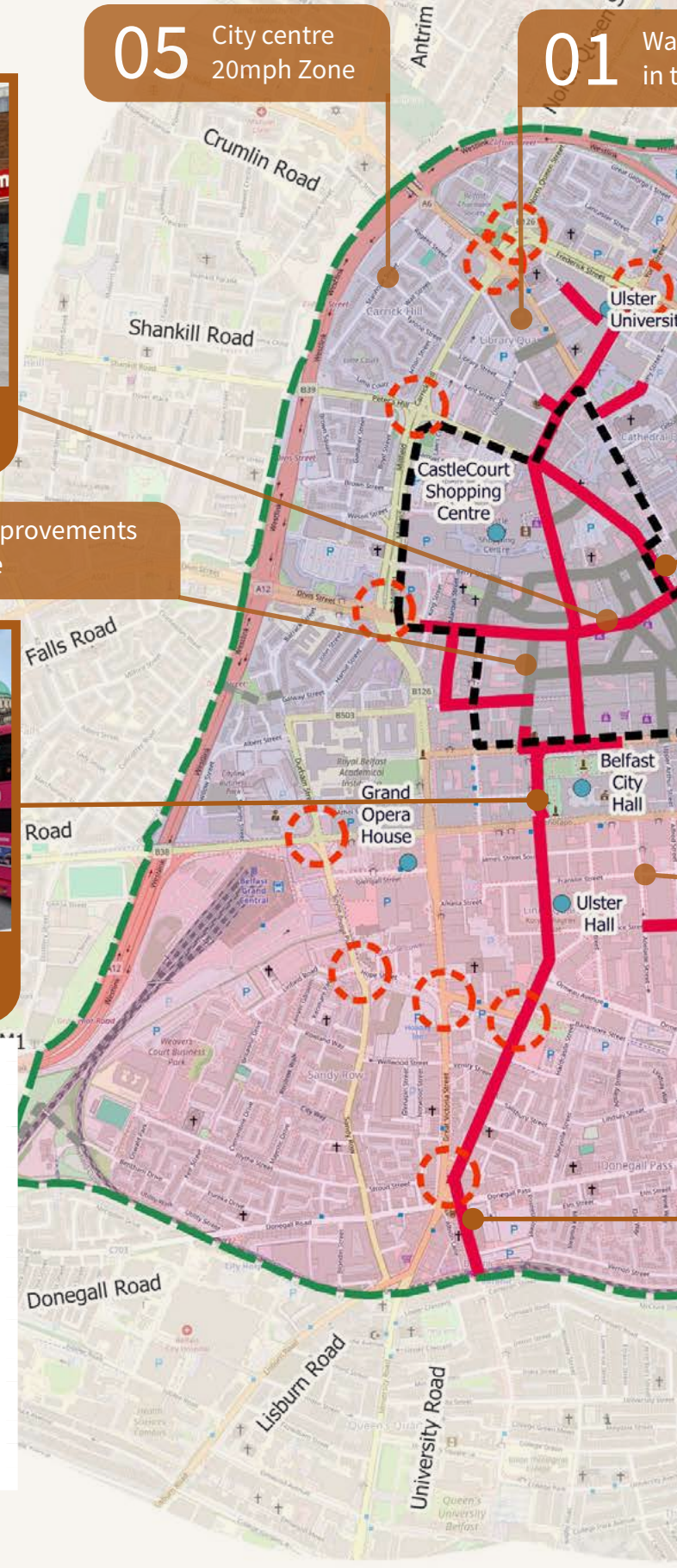


Illustrative example of multi-modal improvements to Donegall Square West

05 City centre 20mph Zone

01 Wa... in t...

04 Walking and Wheeling improvements to the Primary Retail Core



Map Legend

- Belfast City Centre
- Primary Retail Core

City Centre Areas

- North
- South
- Gateway
- Points of Interest

Bus and Rail Stations

- Bus
- Bus and Rail
- Rail

Plan Proposals - Walking and Wheeling

- W & W Priority Areas - Existing
- Traffic Free Routes - Existing
- W & W Priority Areas

lking and Wheeling improvements
he North of the City Centre



Illustrative example of multi-modal improvements to Bridge Street

02 Enhanced city centre gateways

03 Walking and Wheeling improvements in the South of the City Centre



Illustrative example of multi-modal improvements to Botanic Avenue

S3 FIGURE 9 ANNOTATIONS: **Belfast City Centre - Walking and Wheeling Plan Proposals**

01 Walking and Wheeling improvements in the North of the City Centre

Enhanced pedestrian priority will be realised across the city centre through improvements to footways, priority at crossings, enhanced public realm and traffic management measures. The existing walking and wheeling priority area will be expanded through restriction of traffic movements along sections of Academy Street, York Lane, Library Street and Union Street, complementing Department for Communities proposals in the area.

Improvements to footways, priority at crossings, traffic restrictions and enhanced public realm along York Street and Royal Avenue will combine with improvements in other areas of the city centre to form a high-quality, continuous pedestrian priority route via the Civic Spine.

In front of the City Hall, in Donegall Square West and outside Saint George's Market, space will be unlocked for public realm and seating areas through the relocation of bus stands, removal of through traffic and upgrades to footways and crossings.

02 Enhanced city centre gateways

Enhanced footways and pedestrian priority at crossing facilities at the identified gateways across the city centre will combine with a reduction in traffic lanes to reduce the severing impact of wide highways in the city centre.

03 Walking and Wheeling improvements in the South of the City Centre

A high-quality, continuous walking and wheeling priority route, forming the Civic Spine, will connect areas in the south of the city centre with the rest of the city centre via Botanic Avenue, Dublin Road and Bedford Street.

Proposed traffic management measures also unlock the opportunity to provide new public space in Clarence Street, which will connect to a key bus route along Adelaide Street.

Enhanced pedestrian priority, including upgrades to footways and crossings will also be delivered across the area, complementing other multi-modal proposals.

04 Walking and Wheeling improvements to the Primary Retail Core

Enhancements to Royal Avenue, Donegall Place, Donegall Square North and Donegall Square West will combine with improvements in other areas of the city centre to form a high-quality, continuous walking and wheeling priority route via the Civic Spine.

Surrounding these, improvements to key streets including North Street, Bridge Street and Castle Place will extend the existing area that prioritises walking and wheeling within the core of the city centre.

05 City centre 20mph Zone

Expansion of existing 20mph zone to cover all city centre streets within the city centre boundary, excluding Westlink and M2/M3, making the city centre a safer and more attractive place to walk or wheel.



Image courtesy of Brian Morrison / Walk Wheel Cycle Trust

3.6 Cycling

Proposed cycle improvements in Belfast City Centre focus on closing gaps in the existing network by connecting new and existing cycle lanes to streets within the primary retail core as well as outwards to the wider area. Building on proposals outlined within the Belfast Cycling Network (BCN) Delivery Plan, a series of key streets have been identified to form a cohesive cycle network across the city centre which is aimed at encouraging more people to cycle for their everyday journeys.

3.6.1 Vision

The long-term vision for cycling within Belfast City Centre is depicted in Figure 10 and is summarised below. Any changes made to the transport network during the Plan period must consider and be aligned with this vision wherever possible.

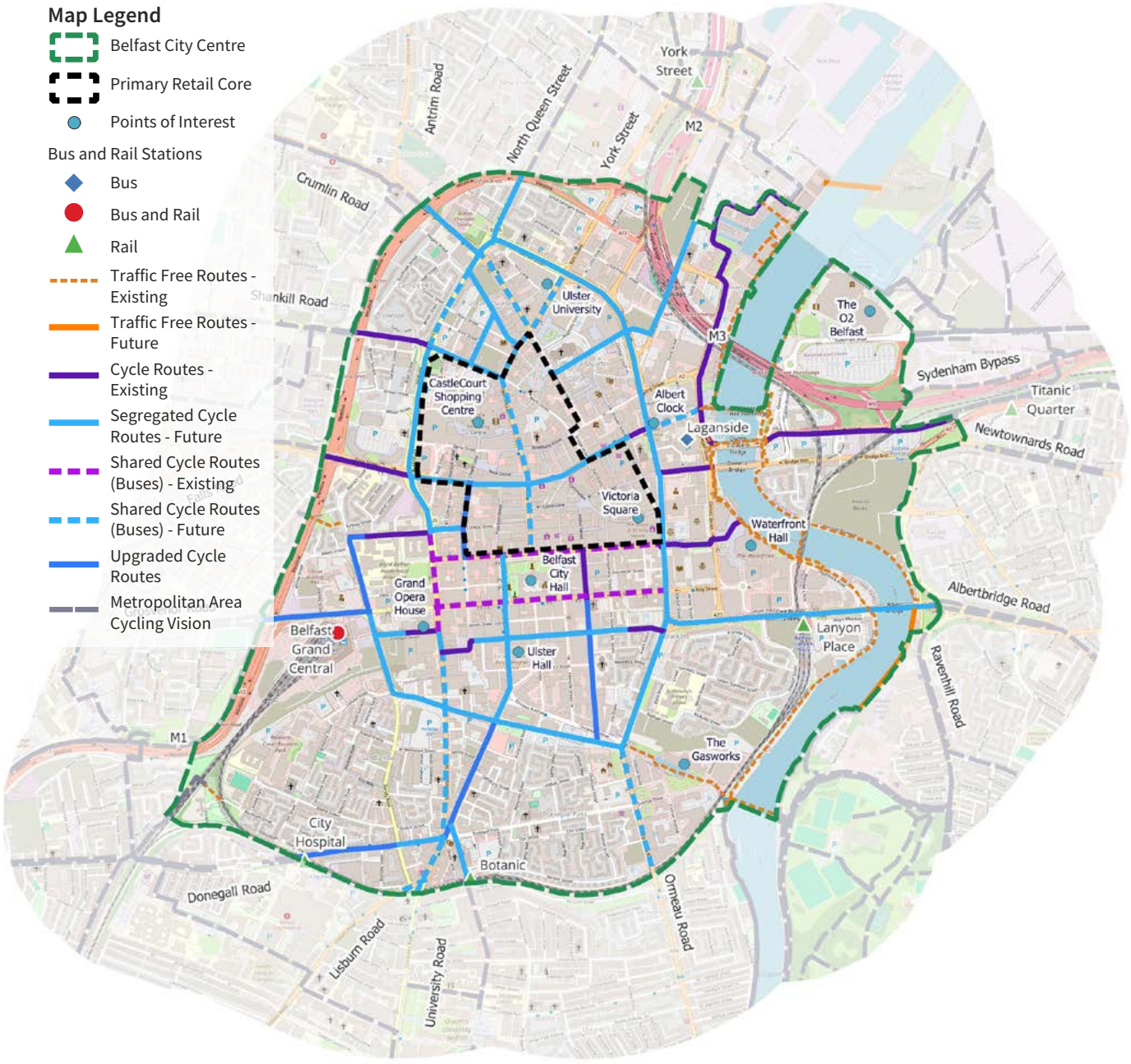
The cycle network shown represents a series of key existing and proposed routes identified as beneficial to accommodate efficient and safe cycle movements within and across the city centre. It is proposed that cycle provision should comprise infrastructure suitable to the specific characteristics of each route. On busier routes with higher traffic volumes, dedicated bi-directional cycle lanes will be introduced (shown as **segregated cycle routes**). However, in mixed use, low speed, and / or quiet streets, physical separation between all modes may not be required. Some key routes have been identified where cyclists will be able to share road space with buses in wide, **shared cycle routes**.

Many of the proposed routes lead to the primary retail core. Within this area cyclists will not be permitted except in a few designated areas to ensure that pedestrians are able to move safely and seamlessly across the defined walking and wheeling priority areas. Where cross-city movements are required, cyclists will be able to make use of the dedicated cycle facilities that border the primary retail core. For journeys that destinate within the primary retail core, cyclists will benefit from secure cycle storage facilities provided on the boundary of the area. Cyclists will be required to push their bikes through the predominantly pedestrianised environment of the primary retail core.

Traffic-free routes within the city centre also form part of the cycle network. These include existing and proposed routes where cyclists will be separated from all motor traffic but may share space with pedestrians. The design of these routes should follow best practice to either enable safe sharing of space between pedestrians and cyclists or to deliver suitable separation where it is needed.

Across the city centre, including at existing and new **travel hubs (see section 3.9)**, improved infrastructure to enable safe street-sharing and improved storage of bicycles will be provided. The multi-modal travel hubs could include facilities such as bike and e-bike hire. These will be linked to both the cycling and wider sustainable transport network, enabling seamless end-to-end journeys.

S3 FIGURE 10: Belfast City Centre - Cycling Vision



3.6.2 ETP Proposals

Under the Climate Change Act (NI) 2022, the Department is committed to spending 10% of its transport budget on active travel. The vision for cycling therefore represents an ambitious and transformational network within the city centre. Delivery will, however, need to happen in stages, with schemes focused on individual areas being progressed as opportunities become available. By ensuring that each individual scheme aligns with the identified vision, improvements will build together over time to form a cohesive cycle network across the whole of the city centre and link to routes across wider Belfast.

The proposals for cycling, as well as walking and wheeling, within Belfast City Centre and the wider Metropolitan Area, have been developed to complement the proposals contained within the Everyday Active Travel: The Urban Delivery Plan. The Everyday Active Travel: The Urban Delivery Plan identifies proposed enhancements to the walking, wheeling and cycling network across all areas of Northern Ireland except within the Belfast City Council area, where the Belfast Cycling Network Delivery Plan previously defined active travel priorities. The walking, wheeling and cycling proposals contained within the ETP have been informed by the BCN but will supersede the BCN Delivery Plan and bridge the gap in the Everyday Active Travel: The Urban Delivery Plan.

Figure 11 shows the network of new and upgraded cycle routes identified for delivery within the Plan period. These will be delivered either as standalone schemes or in combination with other multi-modal improvements to the city centre. Together with existing infrastructure, the Plan proposals will contribute towards the vision for a cohesive and safe network of cycle routes within and connecting beyond the city centre.

Other complementary measures

In addition to the proposals outlined in Figure 11 which will be progressed by DfI during the Plan period, the Plan also acknowledges the following proposals which are relevant to the area and will complement the ETP proposals:

- Delivery of two-way segregated cycle lanes and bus only link along the proposed new Bankmore Street sustainable transport corridor. This is considered to be a committed scheme, separate to the transport plan
- Delivery of the new Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge Lagan connecting the Gasworks to Ormeau Embankment, being progressed by DfI. This is considered to be a committed scheme, separate to the transport plan.
- Delivery of new active travel crossing (swing bridge) over the River Lagan connecting Clarendon Road to Loft Lines in the Titanic Quarter, being progressed by BCC.
- Short term schemes identified through the Belfast Cycle Network Delivery Plan 2021 including along Durham Street, Dublin Road, Botanic Avenue and Corporation Street.

- DfC's Belfast Streets Ahead phase 3, to be delivered by DfC. This includes public realm works in York Street, Frederick Street and Royal Avenue, supporting the opening of the Ulster University campus at York Street. Traffic management and bus lane measures proposed through this Plan, will further enhance DfC placemaking proposals in the area.
- DfC's Belfast Streets Ahead Phase 5, to be delivered by DfC, focused on enhancing the physical appearance of streets around Blackstaff Square as well as Bedford Street and Dublin Road. Traffic management and walking and wheeling proposals in this area will further enhance DfC's placemaking proposals.
- New two-way segregated cycle lanes along Clifton Street and Frederick Street delivered as part of DfC's Clifton Gateway proposals.



Illustrative example of multi-modal improvements to Donegall Square North



Illustrative example of multi-modal improvements to Botanic Avenue

S3 FIGURE 11: Belfast City Centre - Cycling Plan Proposals

Cycling improvements in the North of the City Centre



Illustrative example of multi-modal improvements to Victoria Street

02 Cycling improvements to the Primary Retail Core

03 Cycling improvements in the South of the City Centre

York Street
M3
The O2 Belfast
Sydenham Bypass
Titanic Quarter
Albert Clock
Laganside
Newtownards Road
Victoria Square
Waterfront Hall
Albertbridge Road
Lanyon Place
Ravenhill Road
The Gasworks
Ormeau Road

Map Legend

- Belfast City Centre
- Primary Retail Core
- Points of Interest
- City Centre Areas
  - North
  - South
- Bus
- Bus and Rail
- Rail
- Traffic Free Routes - Existing
- Traffic Free Routes
- Cycle Routes - Existing
- Shared Cycle Routes (Buses) - Existing
- Shared Cycle Routes (Buses)
- Upgraded Cycle Routes
- Segregated cycle routes
- Metropolitan Area Cycling

S3 FIGURE 11 ANNOTATIONS: **Belfast City Centre - Cycling Plan Proposals**

01 Cycling improvements in the North of the City Centre

New segregated and shared cycle routes will be delivered across the North of the city centre, delivered alongside wider multi-modal improvements.

These include delivery of two-way segregated cycle routes via the inner ring, connecting all areas of the city centre together to provide faster, convenient and safe cross-city connections for cyclists.

New and upgraded segregated and shared options for cyclists to connect between the wider Metropolitan Area and the core of the city centre will be delivered.

02 Cycling improvements to the Primary Retail Core

While many of the new and enhanced cycle routes will converge on the core of the city centre, transport interventions in the Primary Retail Core will focus on enhancing the walking and wheeling environment and connectivity rather than creation of new segregated routes.

Provision of safe and conveniently located cycle storage will be provided in strategic locations on entry to the Primary Retail Core.

Shared facilities for cyclists will be delivered as part of multi-modal improvements in this area, including along the **Civic Spine** and east-west across Castle Street, Castle Place and High Street.

03 Cycling improvements in the South of the City Centre

New segregated and shared cycle routes will be delivered across the southern part of the city centre alongside upgrades to existing routes. These will connect to priority radial corridors, Belfast Grand Central Station and the rest of the city centre.

Enhancements to existing cycle lanes along Dublin Road and new segregated connections via Bedford Street will connect into multi-modal improvements to the Civic Spine.

04 City centre 20mph Zone

The expansion of existing 20mph zones to cover all city centre streets within the city centre boundary, excluding Westlink and M2/M3, will improve the safety of cyclists across the area, supporting safe door-to-door journeys.



Image courtesy of Brian Morrison / Walk Wheel Cycle Trust

3.7 Bus and Coach

Glider, Metro, Ulsterbus and Goldliner services to, from and within Belfast City Centre provide connections to the wider region. ETP proposes the simplification of bus routing through the city centre, enhanced travel hub facilities and provision of additional bus priority measures to complement existing and proposed measures for wider Belfast. This will include "far siding measures". This consists of bringing bus services to the far edge of the city centre to increase accessibility by public transport. Glider proposals are presented in 3.8 and build on the Phase 2 proposals which expand services to the north and south of the city via new routes and associated infrastructure. This will include connections to Queens University and the City Hospital.

The network-wide proposals are designed to provide services that are less complex and more attractive to both current and prospective bus users, and which are thereby better placed to grow patronage. By reducing the number of overlapping route variants, the bus network will become more easily understandable for local and visiting bus users as the bus network becomes more easily scalable in response to changes in demand. The introduction of further bus lanes across the proposed city centre bus network will help to improve journey times and reliability of services with the aim of increasing overall patronage. The proposed routings will connect into two new travel hubs (north and south of the city centre). These Hubs (described further in section 3.9) will facilitate interchange and support improved access to the public transport network and cycle infrastructure, supplementing the existing hubs in the east (Laganside) and west (Grand Central) of the city.

3.7.1 Vision

The long-term vision for the provision of enhanced bus priority measures across Belfast City Centre is depicted in Figure 12 and is summarised below. Any changes made to the transport network during the Plan period must consider and be aligned with this vision wherever possible.

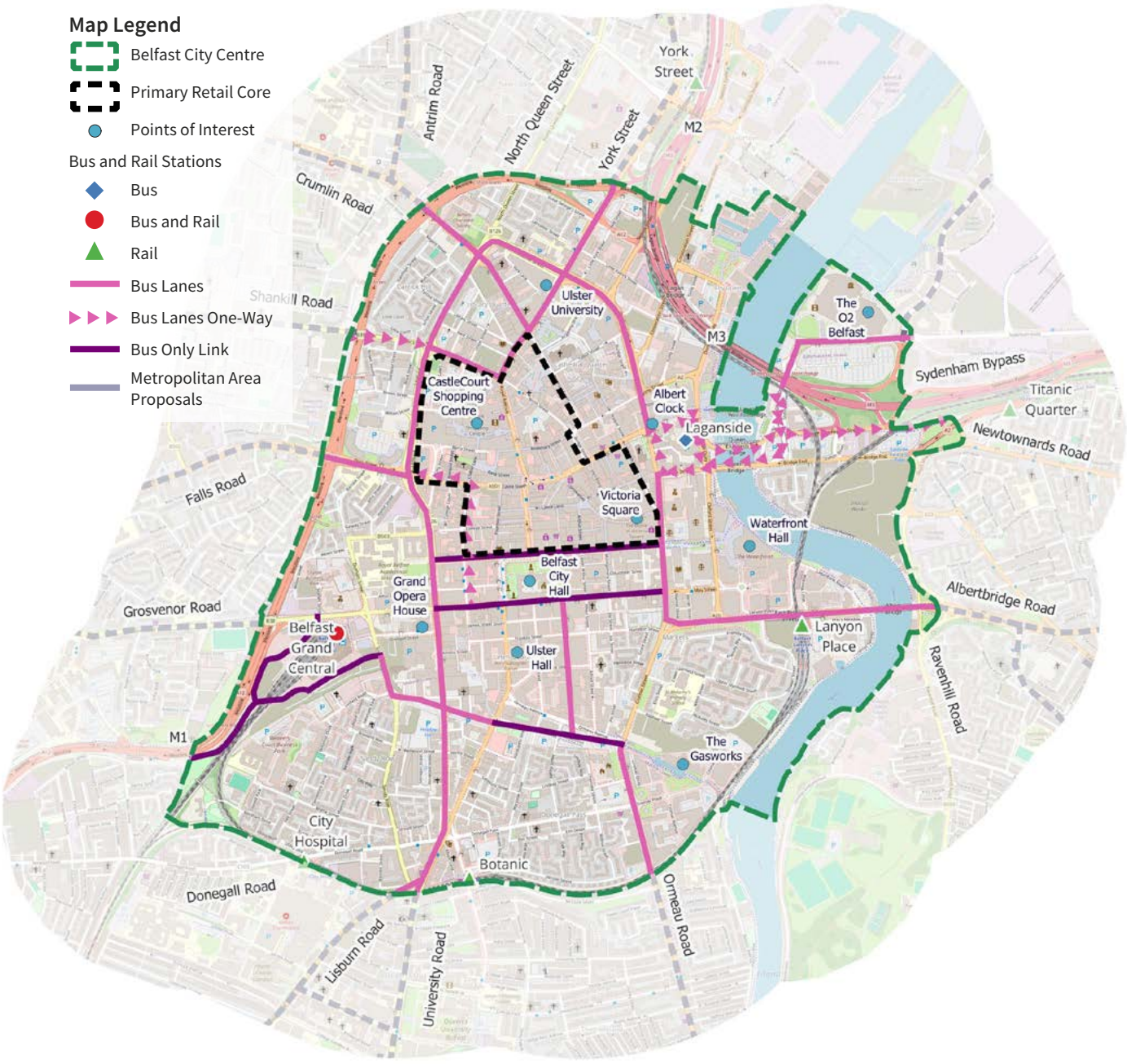
To facilitate fast, reliable and efficient journeys by bus, the required infrastructure along these bus routes includes a mixture of bi-directional and one-way bus lanes that separate buses (and other permitted users such as cyclists and motorcyclists) from general traffic. Conveniently located bus stops will include safe and accessible waiting facilities equipped with real-time information.

Bus lanes within the city centre are expected to operate from 7am to 7pm Monday-Saturday to reduce the likelihood of bus lanes becoming blocked by parked vehicles during operational hours. To support the city centre nighttime economy, bus lanes will be open to other modes (e.g. private vehicles) outside of these hours. Appropriate operational hours will also be considered and introduced for Sundays.

These proposed bus routes represent a simplification of the existing bus movements in the city centre, enabling targeted improvement to bus infrastructure, enhanced access to key destinations and the release of kerb space through a reduction in numbers of stopped buses which will create opportunities to provide high quality public realm.

To accommodate the proposals, road space will be reallocated away from general traffic to allow the introduction of the required bus lanes orbiting and crossing the city centre.

S3 FIGURE 12: Belfast City Centre - Bus Vision





Bus only links will be created to the front and back of City Hall, increasing permeability of the city core, unlocking space for walking, wheeling, and cycling as well as new and improved spaces for socialising and community events. A further bus only link (which will include segregated cycle lanes) along Bankmore Street will facilitate sustainable transport movements and enable access to the proposed southern travel hub.

The enhanced city centre bus network will be supported by the improvement of Quality Mass Movement Routes which serve the wider Metropolitan Area (as defined in chapter 4).

Coaches and sightseeing buses, which play an important role supporting the tourist economy for the region, currently drop-off/ pick-up and layover on key central streets. Some existing coach and tourist bus bays and routes will need to be adapted. Suitable changes to bus routes and bay locations have been considered and will be refined in collaboration with stakeholders.

3.7.2 ETP Proposals

Figure 13 identifies the bus-related Plan proposals that will be delivered during the Plan period.

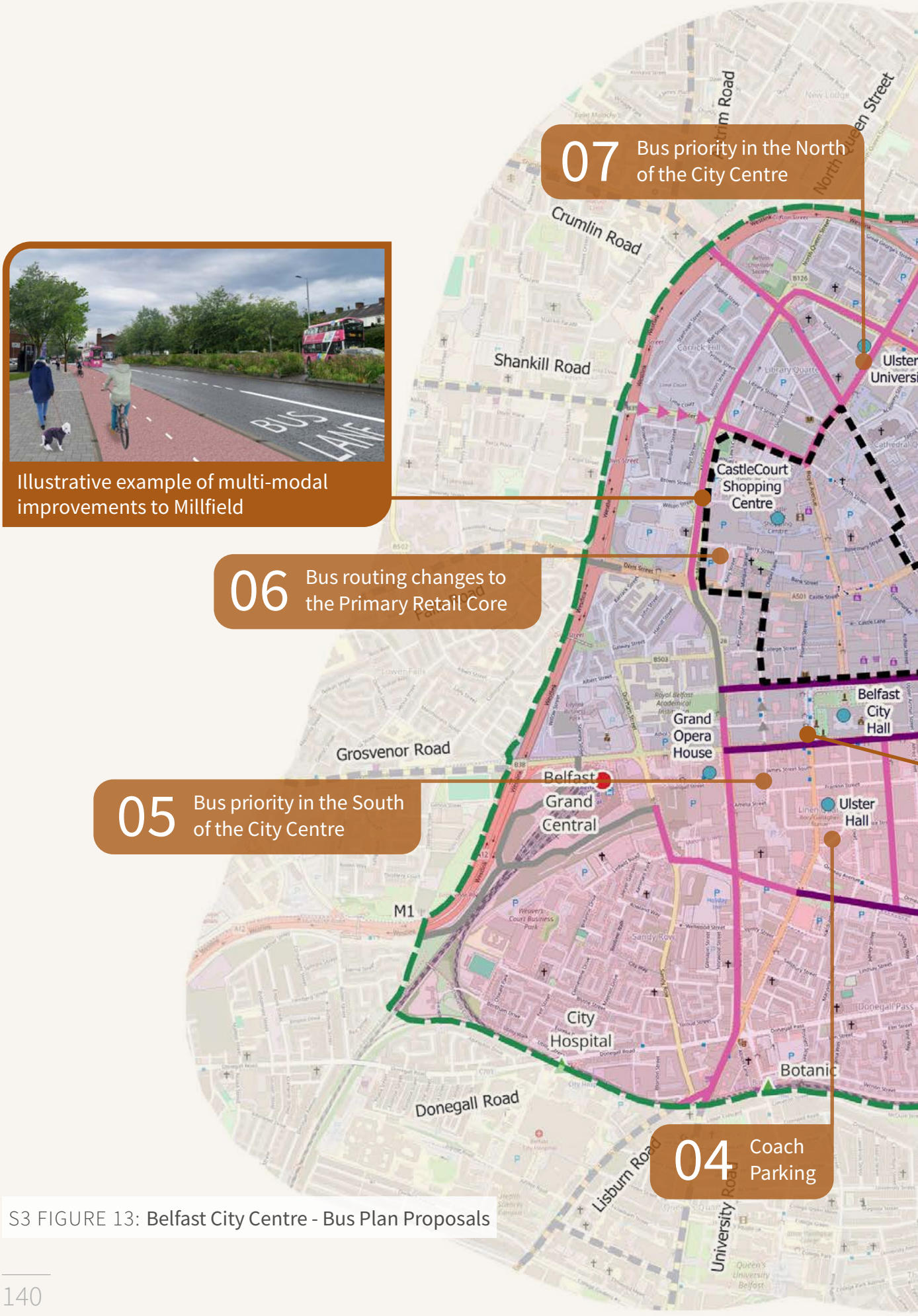
Other complementary measures

In addition to the proposals outlined in Figure 13 which will be progressed by DfI during the Plan period, the Plan also acknowledges the following proposals which are relevant to the area and will complement the ETP proposals:

- DfC's Shankill Gateway proposals include the amendment of the kerb line to facilitate a future bus lane.
- Delivery of a bus only link along the new Bankmore Street sustainable transport corridor.

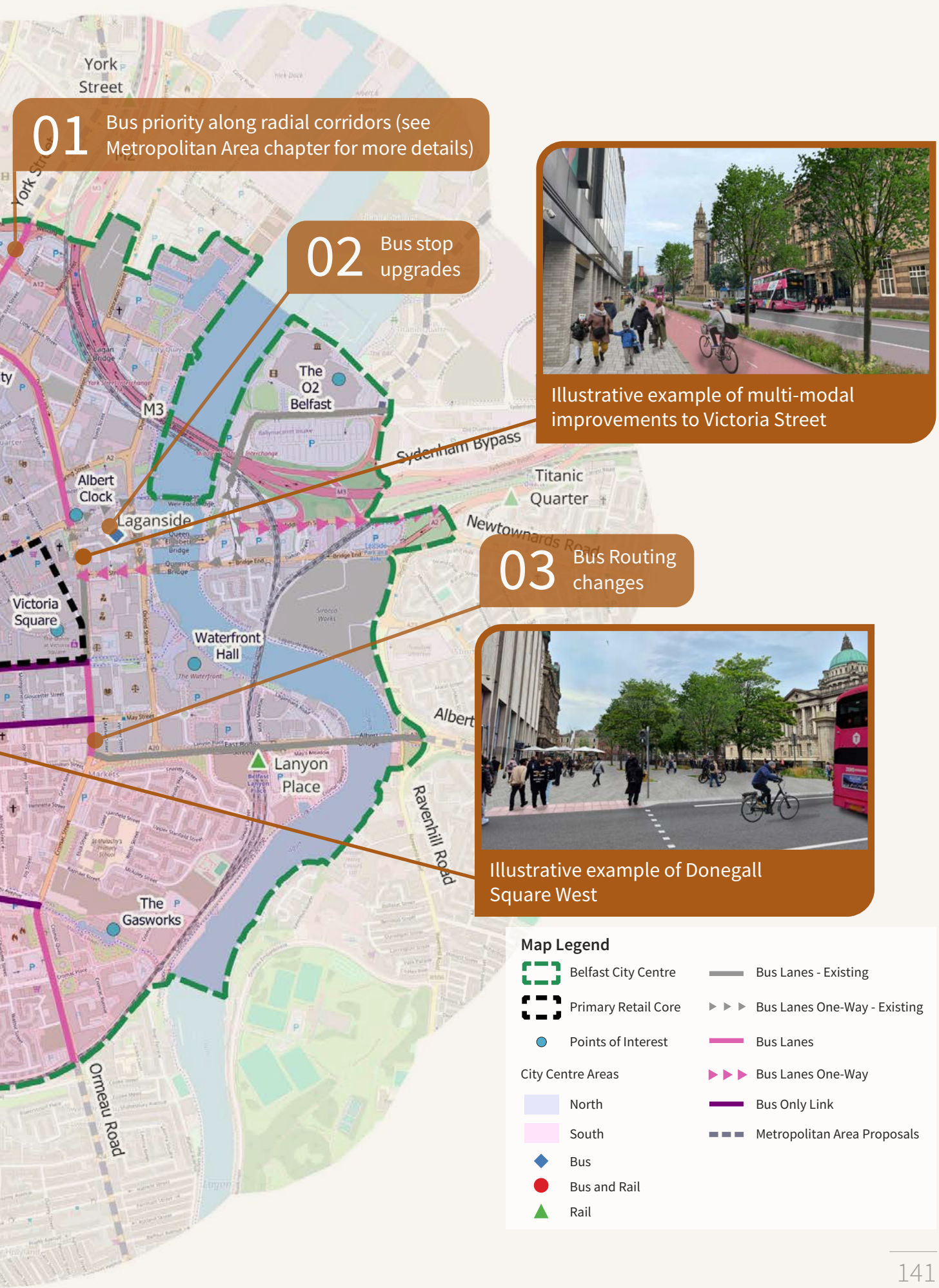


Image courtesy of Tourism Ireland by Richard Watson



Illustrative example of multi-modal improvements to Millfield

S3 FIGURE 13: **Belfast City Centre - Bus Plan Proposals**


01 Bus priority along radial corridors (see Metropolitan Area chapter for more details)
02 Bus stop upgrades
03 Bus Routing changes
York Street
The O2 Belfast
M3
Sydenham Bypass
Albert Clock
Laganside
Titanic Quarter
Newtownards Road
Victoria Square
Waterfront Hall
Albert
Lanyon Place
Ravenhill Road
The Gasworks
Ormeau Road
Illustrative example of multi-modal improvements to Victoria Street
Illustrative example of Donegall Square West
Map Legend
Belfast City Centre
Primary Retail Core
Points of Interest
City Centre Areas
North
South
Bus
Bus and Rail
Rail
Bus Lanes - Existing
Bus Lanes One-Way - Existing
Bus Lanes
Bus Lanes One-Way
Bus Only Link
Metropolitan Area Proposals

S3 FIGURE 13 ANNOTATIONS: **Belfast City Centre - Bus Plan Proposals**

01 Bus priority along radial corridors (see Metropolitan Area chapter for more details)

Provision of bus lanes will be expanded across key radial corridors, supporting journey times and service reliability into Belfast City Centre from the wider Metropolitan Area and beyond.

02 Bus stop upgrades

The quality of bus stops will be reviewed and enhanced across the city centre, including expanding provision of real time passenger information, seating and shelters.

03 Bus Routing changes

In order to realise the benefits of far siding, create routing efficiencies and maximise the use of new bus lanes, bus service routings through the city centre will be reviewed and refined. Changes will aim to maximise accessibility for passengers, helping people to make quicker and more reliable end to end journeys via sustainable modes.

04 Coach parking

Coach parking drop off/pick space capacity will be increased along with the identification of a dedicated long stay coach parking facility.

05 Bus priority in the South of the City Centre

Delivery of bus lanes along Adelaide Street, supported by improved bus waiting facilities, will improve bus journey times and reliability across the city centre and reduce overcrowding at bus stops. This priority will connect into extended bus lanes around the inner ring as well as to the planned sustainable transport corridor via Bankmore Street and a new southern travel hub (see section 3.9).

06 Bus routing changes to the Primary Retail Core

While many of the new and enhanced bus routes will converge on the core of the city centre, transport interventions in the Primary Retail Core will focus on enhancing the pedestrian environment and enhancing connectivity rather than facilitating bus routes.

Accessibility to the primary retail core will be maintained through the enhanced bus journey times and reliability to its edges, as well as through the introduction of Glider services along the Civic Spine.

07 Bus priority in the North of the City Centre

Delivery of bus lanes along northern sections of both Donegall Street, North Street, around the inner ring and connecting to key radial corridors will improve bus journey times and reliability across and into the city centre. These may also be crucial links to provide access to the proposed new northern travel hub (see section 3.9).

Bus only links will also be delivered alongside walking and wheeling improvements and restriction of general traffic in front of and behind City Hall which will enhance waiting facilities.



Image courtesy of Tourism Ireland by Richard Watson

3.8 Bus Rapid Transit

The provision of a customer focused, high-quality, integrated public transport system, which is sustainable, provides good value for money, enhances competitiveness, helps sustain economic growth, promotes regional development and contributes to social inclusion was identified in BMTP 2015 as a major element of the delivery of a step change in the quality of public transport in the Metropolitan Area.

The Belfast Rapid Transit Phase 1 pilot route network and service opened on 3rd September 2018 under the Glider brand and provides a bus based rapid transit service between East and West Belfast through the City Centre, with a link to Titanic Quarter. The Glider largely replaced the Metro bus service on the Falls Road and Upper Newtownards Road corridors.

Phase 1 has proven successful, resulting in an increase of 70% in public transport patronage on the respective corridors post implementation of the project. Sustaining and building on this level of increased patronage will be critical if we are to successfully reduce carbon emissions from transport.

As previously outlined, a network of dedicated bus lanes is proposed across Belfast City Centre. These will also benefit Glider services which aim to increase the number of people travelling by public transport.

3.8.1 Vision

The long-term vision in terms of BRT routes through Belfast City Centre is depicted in Figure 14 and is summarised below. The vision for BRT aligns with the proposed introduction of new bus lanes across the city centre, as well as proposals for the wider Metropolitan Area.

The **Glider routes** indicate the existing and proposed future routings of Glider services through Belfast City Centre. These include Belfast Rapid Transit 2 (BRT2) proposals under development for a G2 extension via University Road and Lisburn Road, a new southern route via Ormeau Road and a new northern route via Antrim Road.

During the development of BRT2 proposals, consideration of new Glider routes serving Shore Road and Lisburn Road were also explored. It is anticipated that these proposals will be developed in more detail during the Plan period and come to form Phase 3 (BRT3) of Glider, connecting to the city centre via new dedicated bus / Glider links.

The BRT2 and BRT3 proposals will significantly expand the existing bus rapid transit offer across Belfast and, in combination with additional Park & Ride proposals (see Metropolitan Area Transport Plan chapter), enhance connections between settlements across the wider region.

The proposed routes offer a high level of permeability of the city centre, enhancing accessibility to city centre destinations from many areas across wider Belfast and beyond. To support this, a north-south Glider only link through the core walking and wheeling zone

39 https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/belfast-rapid-transit-glider-introduction

S3 FIGURE 14: **Belfast City Centre - BRT vision**

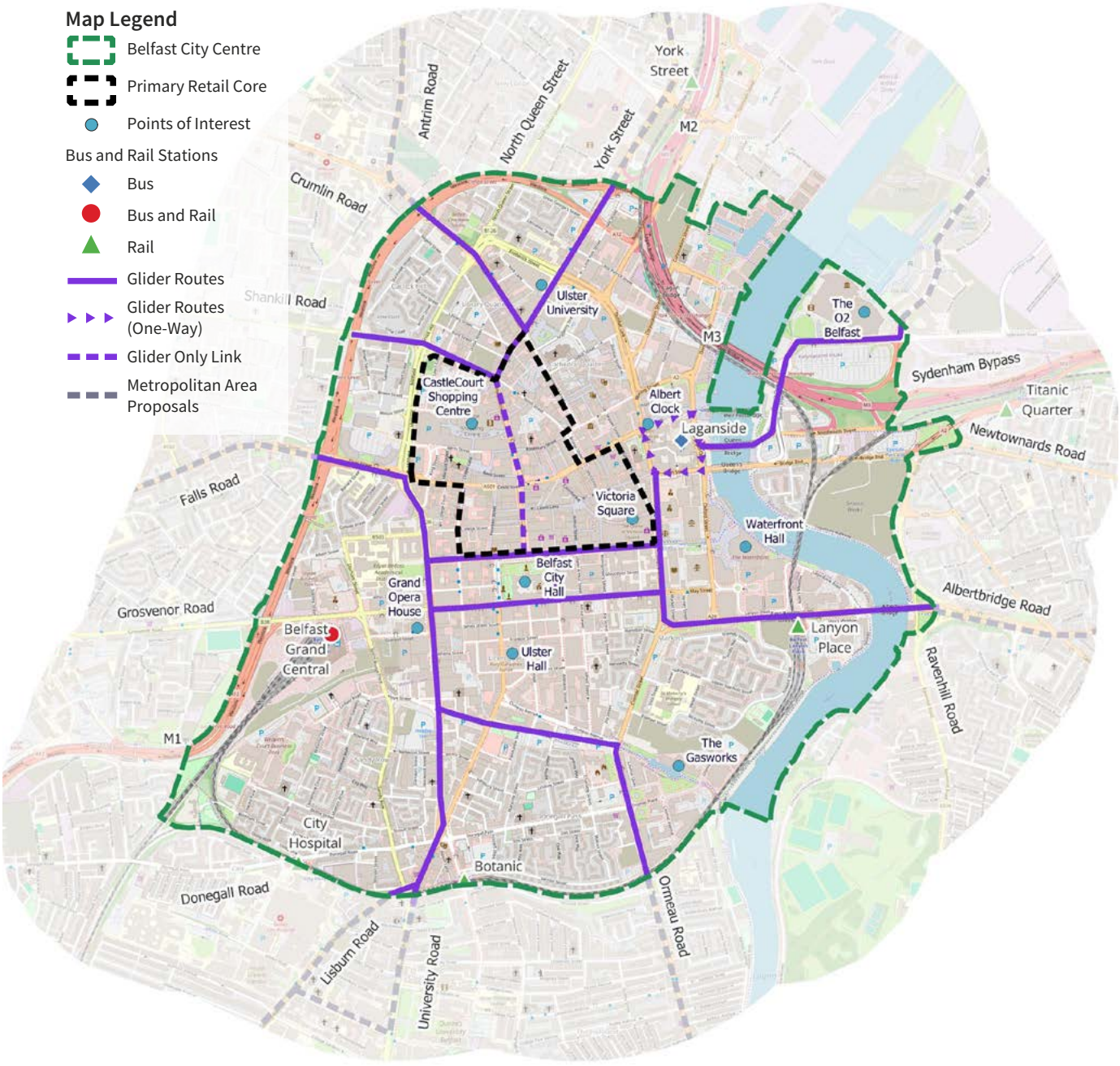




Photo credit: Translink

will be implemented. To ensure the safety of pedestrians and cyclists here, Gliders will be treated as the 'guest' within this otherwise traffic-free space, with vehicles operating at very low speeds to ensure they follow closely to the defined and clearly marked route along the street.

In order to facilitate fast, reliable and efficient journeys, the required infrastructure along these routes include bus lanes that separate Glider (and other buses) from general traffic and conveniently located halts. The waiting facilities provided at halts will match the existing high quality Glider halts and include shelters and seating, suitable lighting, ticket vending machines and real time journey information screens. The vehicle and halt designs of Glider make BRT the most accessible mode of transport for all users.

3.8.2 ETP Proposals

The vision for expanding the BRT network will be interdependent on improvements to bus priority infrastructure, as outlined in section 3.7. Figure 15 outlines the BRT-specific proposals expected to be achieved within the Plan period (to 2035).

Other complementary measures

In addition to the proposals outlined in Figure 15 which will be progressed by DfI during the Plan period, the Plan also acknowledges the following proposals which are relevant to the area and will complement the ETP proposals:

- BRT2 proposals will introduce new Glider routes into the city centre. These will include provision of two-way bus lanes from Antrim Road, utilising bus lanes on Clifton Street and new bus lanes along the inner ring as well as new and upgraded bus lanes along Ormeau Road as well as the new Bankmore sustainable transport link from Ormeau Rd to Dublin Road. This is considered to be a committed scheme, separate to the transport plan. Under ETP proposals the Gilder G2 extension would operate two-way on Great Victoria Street to facilitate the Dublin Road as a Walking and Wheeling priority area.



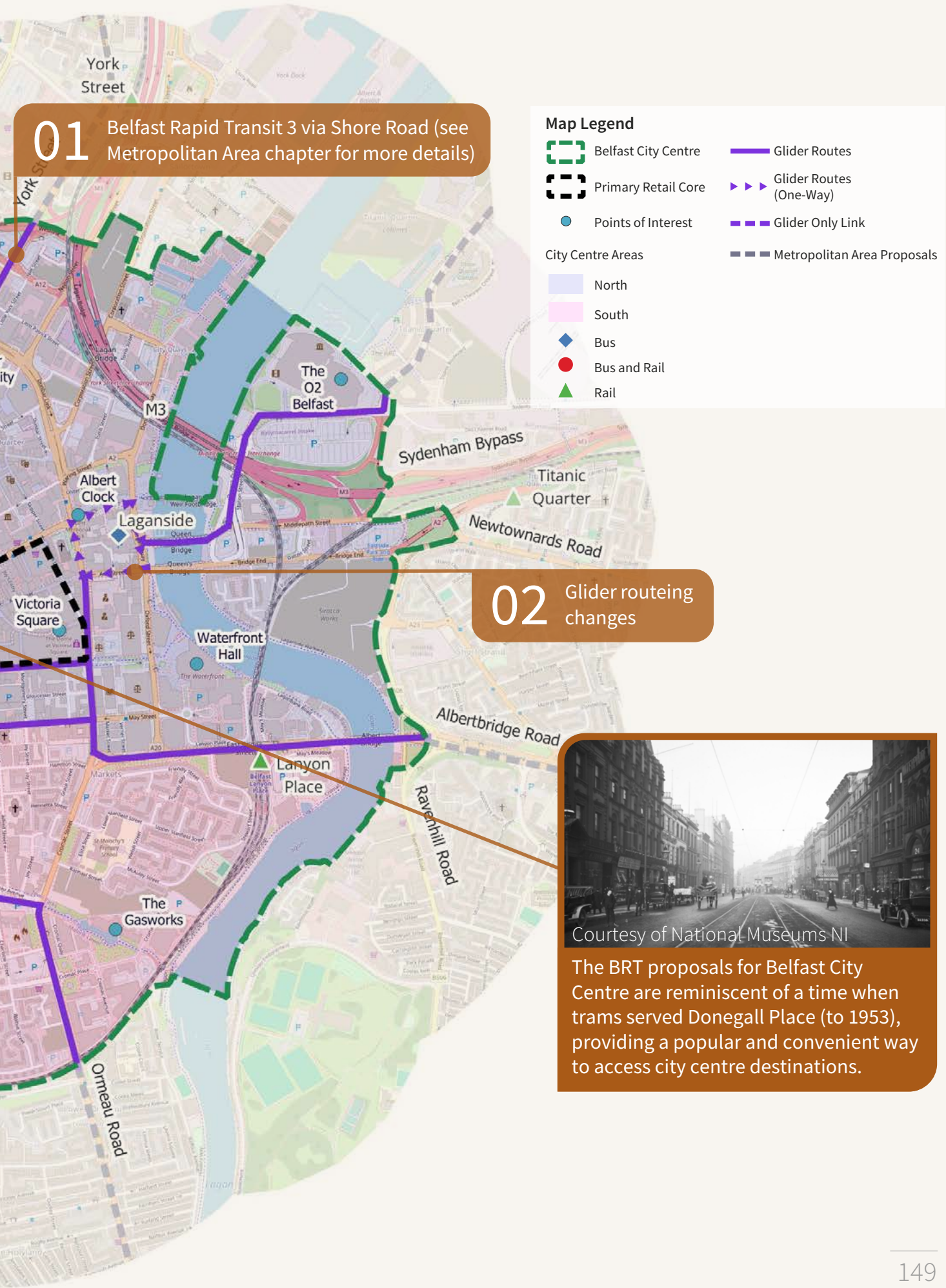
Illustrative example of proposed Glider route along Royal Avenue



Illustrative example of proposed Glider route along Donegall Place

03 Belfast Rapid Transit 3 via Lisburn Road (see Metropolitan Area chapter for more details)

S3 FIGURE 15: **Belfast City Centre - BRT Plan Proposals**



Courtesy of National Museums NI

The BRT proposals for Belfast City Centre are reminiscent of a time when trams served Donegall Place (to 1953), providing a popular and convenient way to access city centre destinations.

S3 FIGURE 15 ANNOTATIONS: **Belfast City Centre - BRT Plan Proposals**

01 Belfast Rapid Transit 3 via Shore Road (see Metropolitan Area chapter for more details)

Shore Road has been identified as a priority corridor for delivery of future Glider services. During the Plan period, further appraisal and design work will be undertaken, leading to refinement and delivery of the BRT3 proposals. It is expected that the BRT3 route will travel into the city centre via bus lanes on York Street, running past Ulster University, traversing the city centre and connecting to the existing rapid transit network.

02 Glider routeing changes

Alongside the review of city centre bus routeings, changes to existing and new Glider routings will be implemented. These will realise the benefits of far siding, create routing efficiencies and maximise the use of new bus lanes. Changes will include allowing Glider services to penetrate the core of the city centre via a Glider-only link along Royal Avenue and Donegall Place. This will help passengers to reach city centre attractions via the region's most accessible mode of public transport. Safety in this walking and wheeling priority area will be managed through very low vehicle speeds and careful street design.

03 Belfast Rapid Transit 3 via Lisburn Road (see Metropolitan Area chapter for more details)

Lisburn Road has been identified as a priority corridor for delivery of future Glider services. During the Plan period, further appraisal and design work will be undertaken, leading to refinement and delivery of the BRT3 proposals. It is expected that the BRT3 route will travel into the city centre via bus lanes on Lisburn Road, via Shaftesbury Square and Great Victoria Street, traversing the city centre and connecting to the existing rapid transit network.



Image courtesy of Tourism Ireland by Richard Watson

3.9 Travel Hubs

A need for two new 'travel hubs' has been identified for Belfast City Centre. These hubs will bring together various modes of transport into convenient and accessible locations, enabling people to make seamless transitions and encouraging multi-modal journeys.

While the exact locations for these two new hubs have not been confirmed, it is expected that they will be located to the north and south of the city centre. Currently, key city centre streets including those around City Hall are dominated by bus and other transport-related activity, which is undermining the place value of these locations. Providing space to focus bus stopping and layover activity in other parts of the city centre will help to unlock 'far siding' opportunities for bus journeys, as well as accommodating space for other mobility and interchange benefits.

In essence, buses from the north of the city and beyond will be able to penetrate the city centre, dropping people at their destinations on the way through, before terminating, laying over and starting their next journey from a travel hub to the south of the city – and vice versa. Laganside Buscentre will also be used to facilitate this from western directions and Belfast Grand Central Station will be used in addition to Queen Street for eastern services.

3.9.1 Vision

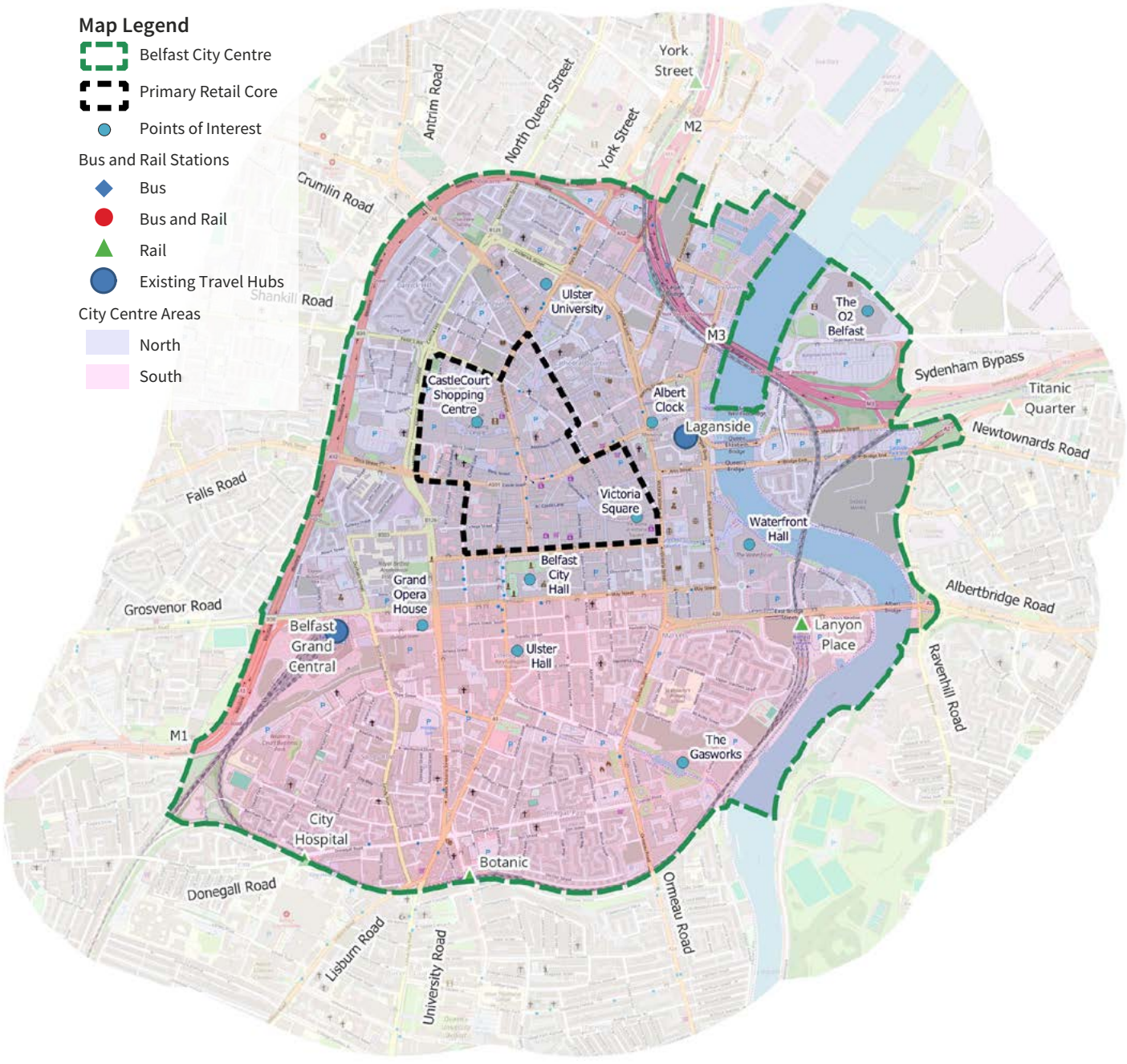
The provision of a travel hub facility on each of the four points of the compass, supporting the far siding approach, will enhance accessibility for all transport users. As well as acting as key access and egress points for public transport users, all four hubs will also incorporate a range of other mobility services to support end-to-end journeys, as well as providing benefits to other transport modes.

The hubs will provide a high quality waiting environment, new and improved mobility facilities such as Belfast Bike hire and secure bike storage facilities to support onward journeys via active modes. Wider walking, wheeling and cycling proposals for the city centre will deliver improved quality of footways, crossings, cycle paths and wayfinding to ensure that onwards journeys can be accommodated safely and conveniently.

The Department will also work with organisations such as Shopmobility to explore the potential of offering rental of mobility aids for example mobility scooters and wheelchairs, and other services, from the existing and proposed travel hubs. Shopmobility support those who have difficulty accessing and travelling around Belfast City Centre and the greater Belfast area via a free rental service.

Micro-consolidation centres are becoming a more popular and effective means of facilitating environmentally friendly delivery of goods. Businesses can drop their stock in a micro-consolidation centre near the city centre from where it is delivered to multiple addresses by e-cargo bike or similar. Parcel lockers that enable people to pick up or drop off deliveries are also commonplace across the UK. The opportunity to embed these types of facilities at travel hubs across the city centre will be explored, in collaboration with freight organisations, during design of the hubs.

S3 FIGURE 16: Belfast City Centre - Existing Travel Hubs



3.9.2 ETP Proposals

During the Plan period, two new travel hubs will be developed and delivered. Appraisal, design and delivery of the sites will be progressed following appropriate guidance and aligning with relevant planning requirements. Engagement with local communities and other relevant stakeholders will be undertaken throughout scheme development and design stages.

The potential to introduce further mobility services to existing travel hubs and across the city centre will also be considered during the Plan period.

Other complementary measures

The Plan also acknowledges the following proposals which are relevant to the area and will complement the ETP proposals:

- Works to improve connections from Belfast Grand Central Station. Ongoing projects will improve walking, wheeling, cycling, bus and taxi facilities. All of this will help enhance the end-to-end journey offer at the station.

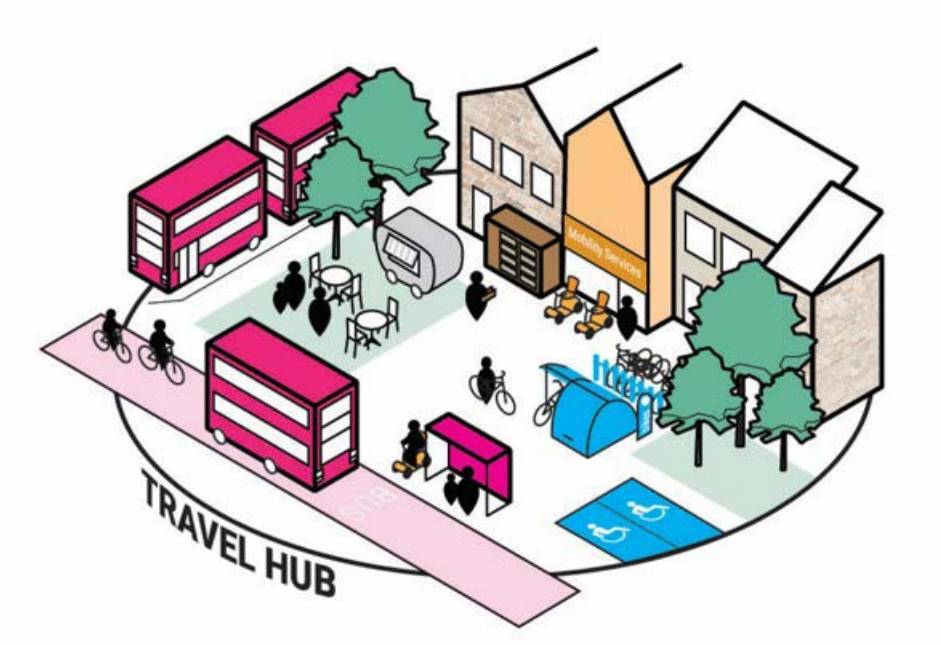




Photo credit: Translink

3.10 Rail

There are currently four rail stations located within Belfast City Centre: Belfast Grand Central, City Hospital, Botanic and Belfast Lanyon; with further stations located close by at York Street and Titanic Quarter. These stations connect the centre of Belfast to Bangor, Derry~Londonderry, Dublin, Larne, Portadown and many other settlements along each rail line.

Rail demand is predominantly Belfast centric, with evidence of high demand at city centre rail stations, particularly in the morning peak, indicating that rail is seen as a popular and competitive transport option.

3.10.1 Vision

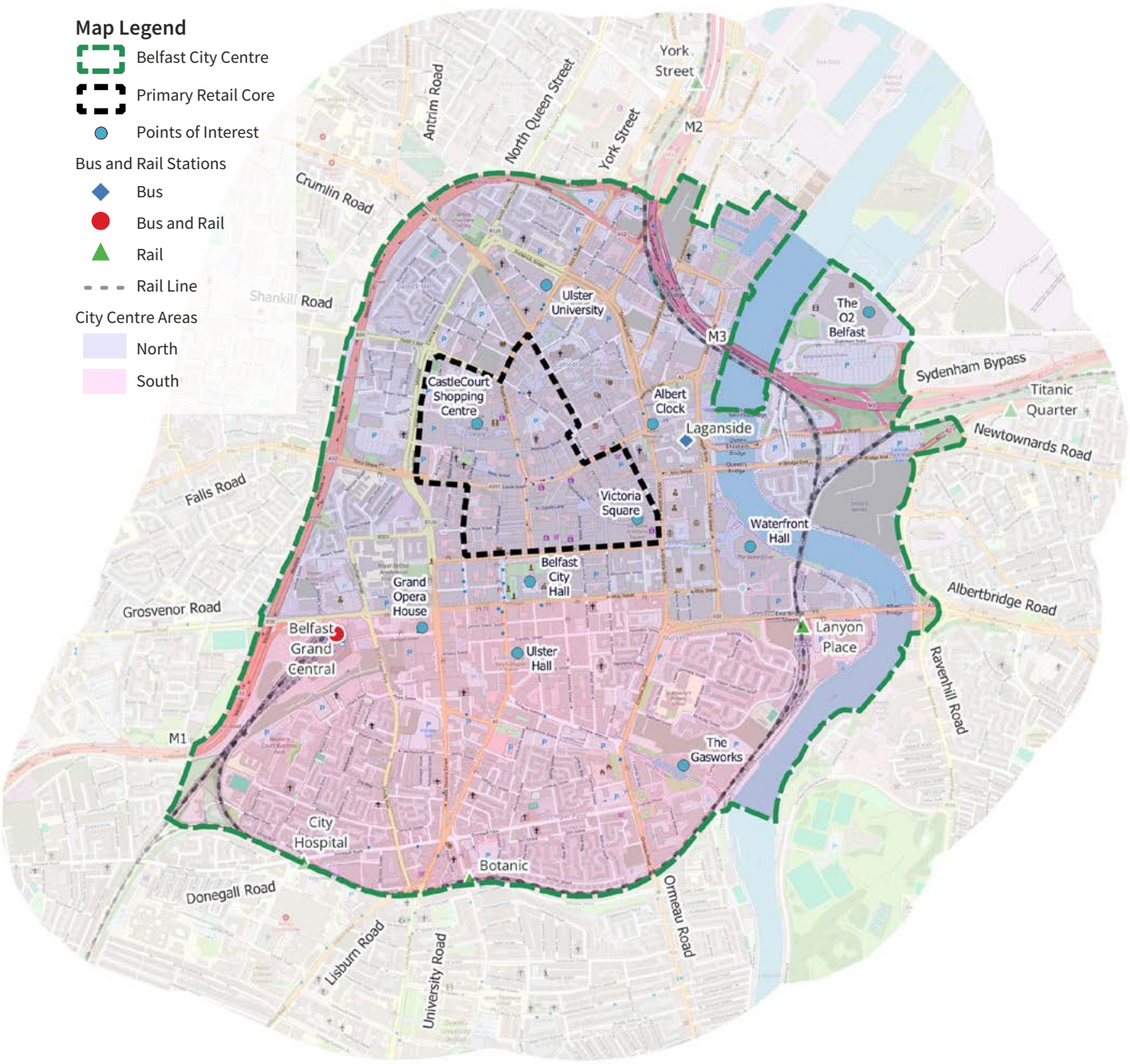
The Rail network is considered part of the Regional Strategic Transport Network and therefore planning for its future falls outside the scope of this plan. Instead, the ETP Rail related proposals for Belfast City Centre and the wider Metropolitan Area focus on ensuring that the existing rail stations are well connected to the rest of the city centre.

Within the city centre, the improvements to the walking, wheeling and cycling networks outlined earlier in this chapter will play an important role in enhancing connections between rail stations and city centre destinations via active modes.

3.10.2 ETP Proposals

Changes to the regional rail network are principally considered within the scope of the Regional Strategic Transport Plan. Within the scope of the ETP, which is focused on local transport needs, the improvements to walking, wheeling, and cycling facilities (as set out in the earlier sections) within Belfast City Centre will support improved access to existing rail stations.

S3 FIGURE 17: **Belfast City Centre - Rail Network**



3.11 Traffic Management

Belfast City Centre's transport network is affected by congestion, particularly during the morning and evening peak hours. Without intervention, congestion levels are only going to worsen into the future, with delays to journeys within the city centre being forecast to increase by over 50% by 2035.

Evidence gathered through the development of the ETP shows that a large proportion of cars currently using city centre streets are rat running, rather than using them to access destinations within the area. These are trips that could be made via more suitable routes in the city and ETP proposals therefore aim to discourage use of city centre streets for these unnecessary routing journeys.

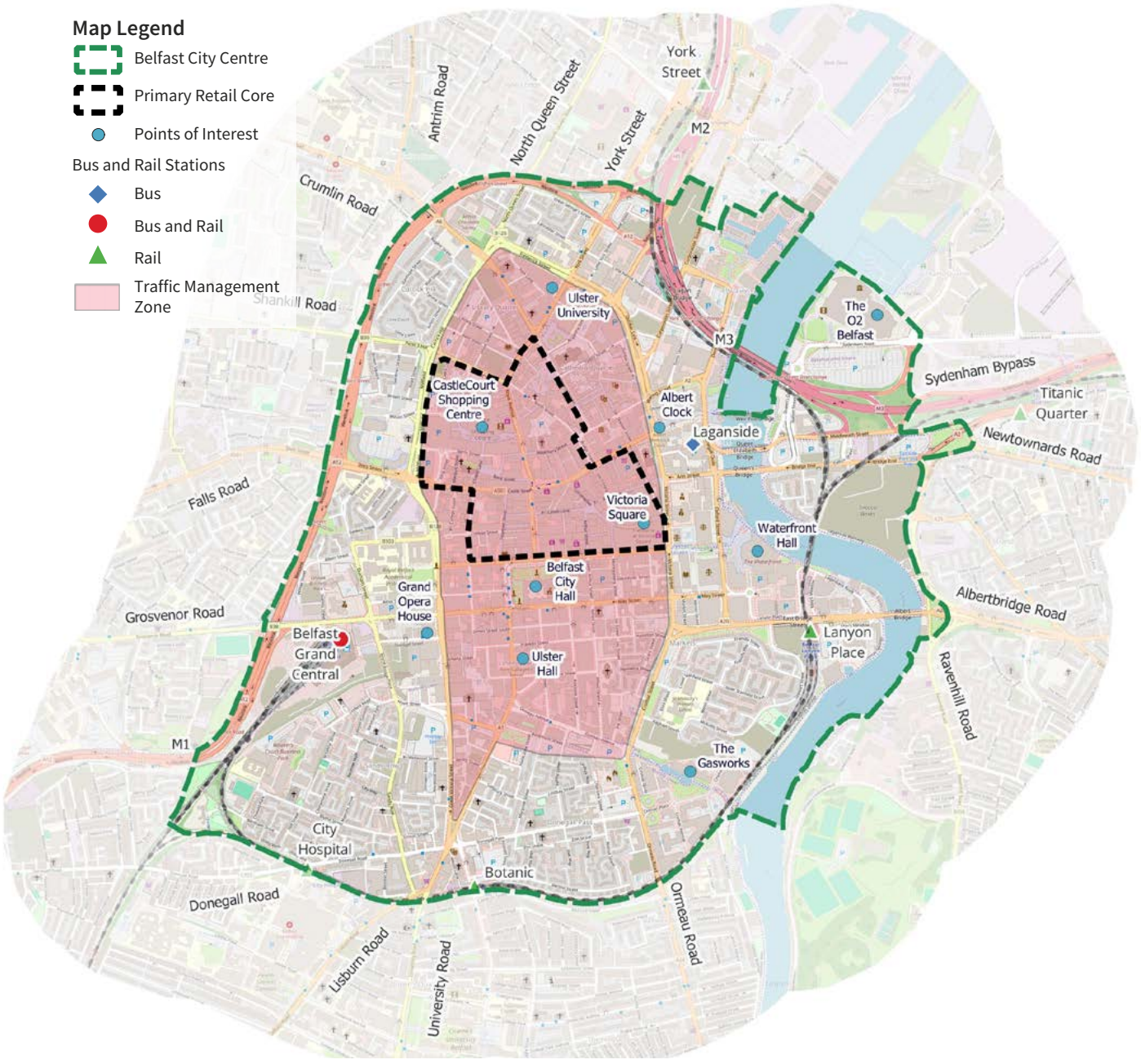
With the expected future residential and economic growth and without intervention, city centre traffic conditions are forecast to worsen which will pose further environmental, safety and congestion challenges; traffic management measures to tackle the effects of increasing vehicular traffic are therefore required. Reducing the amount of traffic in the city centre will help to make the streets healthier and more pleasant places to walk, wheel, cycle and spend time.

Monitoring data captured following the introduction of Belfast on the Move interventions between 2011-2013 found that improving provision for sustainable transport within the city centre resulted in around 11,000 fewer vehicles being on city centre streets each day. Crucially, despite the reduction in vehicles, the overall number of people in the city centre increased, as a result of increased use of walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport.

The active travel and public transport interventions proposed in the preceding sections of this document represent an ambitious plan to significantly improve the capacity, efficiency and coverage of the sustainable transport network in the city centre. These improvements will be complemented by interventions across the rest of Belfast and the wider ETP area. Together, the proposals are expected to encourage large-scale modal shift away from car use and mitigate against the impacts of increased travel demand from new developments.

However, in order to accommodate these ambitions within the heavily built-up area across Belfast, and particularly within the city centre, significant reallocation of road space will be required. This will result in a reduction in the number of traffic lanes and likewise a reduction in the provision of on-street parking. Re-allocation of roadspace will allow for dedicated public transport infrastructure along with pedestrian and cycle space, offering placemaking opportunities which will encourage residents and visitors to spend time in the city and enjoy all that it has to offer.

S3 FIGURE 18: **Belfast City Centre - Traffic Management Vision**



3.11.1 Vision

The long-term vision for the city centre will help to create safer, cleaner, greener and more active streets, unlocking opportunities for placemaking and on-street activity. This will support increased footfall which is important for the vitality of local businesses.

A city centre-wide 20mph speed restriction will be put into place to support the creation of safer streets for pedestrians and cyclists. Many parts of the city centre network already operate at or below this speed limit due to existing 20mph zones and the stop-start nature of city centre vehicle trips, however the expansion of the area in combination with calming measures such as the reduction in the number of general traffic lanes will help to further deter unnecessary rat running and enhance safety for all road users.

Streets within the core of the city centre, aligning closely with the walking and wheeling priority area, have been identified to be closed to general traffic. This will ensure that vehicles will no longer be able to use these streets as a means to cross the city centre. Time restricted, low speed access will be retained for properties and businesses, considered on a case-by-case basis ahead of scheme delivery. Directionality changes supported by a City Centre Wayfinding Strategy are also proposed across the city centre to further eliminate rat-running and help to free up street space for use by sustainable modes and other uses. Cars that currently rat-run through the city centre will be displaced onto parallel routes.

Road space will also be reallocated away from on-street parking to realise the expansion of cycle and bus lanes, provide development potential and unlock new public amenity space. The long-term vision for car parking within Belfast City Centre focuses on the rationalisation of parking spaces and a review of parking charges, in line with a policy of encouraging increased use of sustainable transport modes.

Changes to traffic movements within the city centre have the potential to impact a range of transport users but are designed to reduce the impact of the expected future residential and economic growth on the network while maintaining suitable access for those necessary car and freight movements.

The traffic management proposals will have an impact upon some existing taxi ranks. New taxi ranks will be required and the aim is to increase the total available space for taxis across the Plan period.

Vehicular access for loading, unloading and servicing will continue to be a crucial consideration across the ETP area. Any changes to streets within the city centre will be carefully designed to ensure that necessary loading, unloading and servicing activities can be carried out safely and conveniently. This will be realised through carefully planned timing of access restrictions.

As part of the longer-term vision for change, it may also be necessary to consider further measures to manage the use of private cars. During the Plan period, exploratory works to understand the necessity for and logistics of implementing such schemes will be undertaken. This will include policy development and the introduction of primary legislation as required.

3.11.2 ETP Proposals

The proposed changes to car movements and parking will be delivered alongside improvements to the city centre sustainable transport networks. Schemes focused on individual areas will be progressed as funding becomes available.

Figure 19 outlines the proposals related to changes to car movements and parking that are expected to be achieved within Belfast City Centre within the Plan period. Implementation of individual schemes will be progressed following appropriate guidance and aligning with relevant planning requirements. Engagement with local communities and other stakeholders will be undertaken throughout scheme development and design stages. More detailed feasibility, assessment and option development related to the need for and logistics of implementing further demand management measures will be progressed before 2035 to understand the potential benefits and impacts of a proposed scheme. This development work will also consider the legislative requirements and begin to put in place the necessary changes to legislation so to enable a future scheme, should it be required.

Other complementary measures

In addition to the proposals outlined in Figure 19 which will be progressed by DfI during the Plan period, the Plan also acknowledges the following proposals which are relevant to the area and will complement the ETP proposals:

- York Street Interchange aims to overcome challenges associated with the bottleneck of the Westlink, M2 and M3 motorways in the north of the city centre. Should YSI be brought forward within the Plan period it would provide complementary benefits to the local highway network in the vicinity of the city centre.

3.11.3 Legacy Scheme Protection Lines

During the development of the ETP and RSTP, an extensive review of historic planned road schemes has been undertaken to confirm priorities to be taken forward within the coming Plan periods. This has included a detailed review of known scheme protection lines, which are reviewed and confirmed within the relevant Local Development Plan, and summarised as follows:

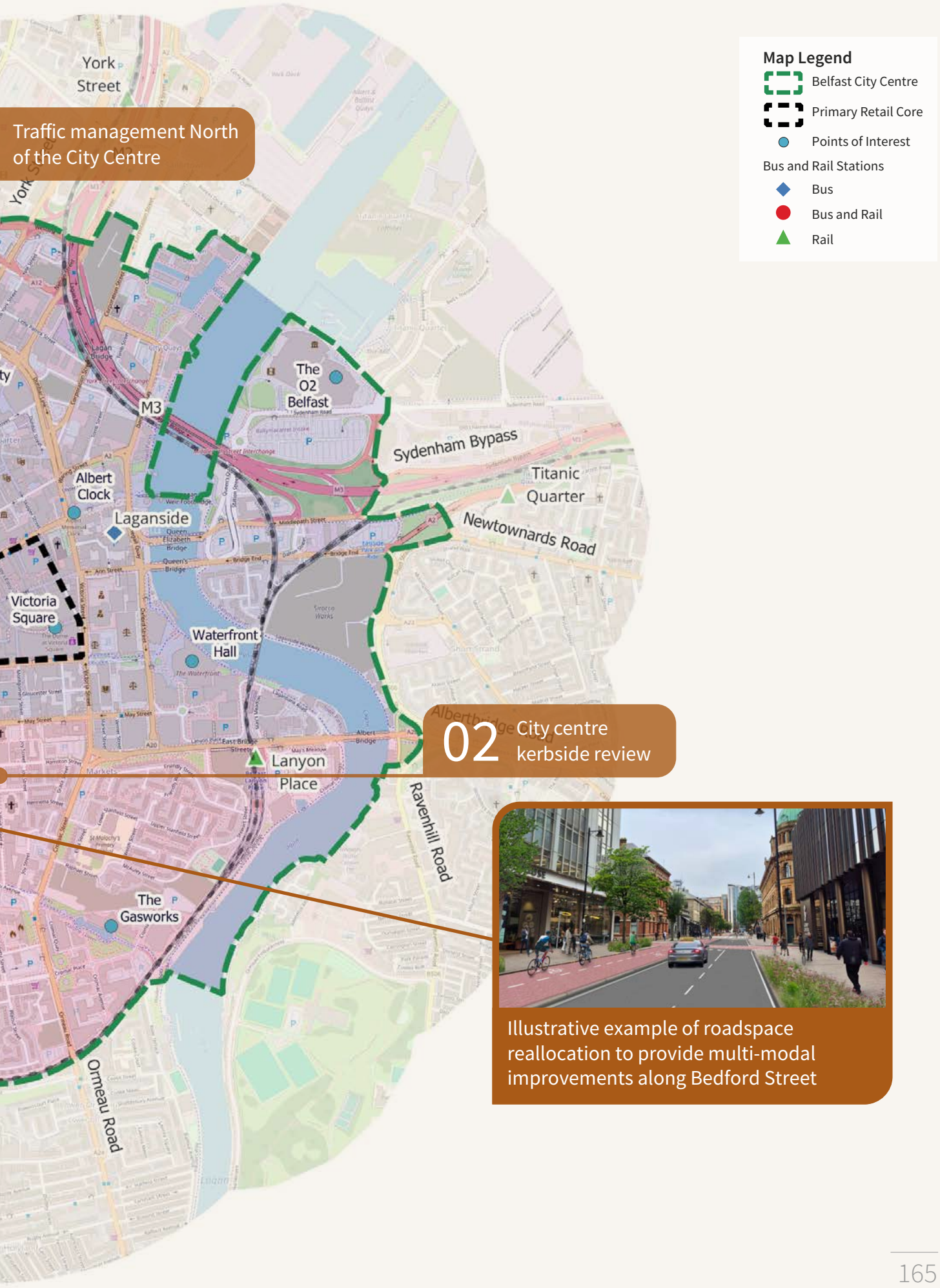
Name	Source	ETP recommendation
City Centre Ring Road-Bankmore Link	BMAP (Map 26)	Protection refined to reflect current infrastructure improvements associated Belfast Grand Central Station and the detailed design associated with BRT2.
WWAY (Durham Street to Mulhouse Road, Belfast)	BMAP (Map 33)	Protection to be removed.
Ormeau Embankment extension to Albertbridge/ Short Strand	BUAP (E20)	No longer considered required as a highway link, however, will be repurposed as a valuable active travel link and therefore protection retained.
Ormeau Park Link, Ormeau Road to Ravenhill	BUAP (S14)	No longer required due to the advancement of the Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle bridge[40]. Protection to be removed.
Ormeau Road, Cromac Street to Ormeau Bridge	BUAP (S12)	No longer required due to the progression of alternative proposals by way of the Belfast Rapid Transit Phase 2.

40 https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/lagan-pedestrian-and-cycle-bridge





S3 FIGURE 19: Belfast City Centre - Traffic Management Plan Proposals



Illustrative example of roadspace reallocation to provide multi-modal improvements along Bedford Street

S3 FIGURE 19 ANNOTATIONS: **Belfast City Centre - Traffic Management Plan Proposals**

01 Traffic management North of the City Centre

To realise the significant improvements to the sustainable transport network across the North of the City Centre, traffic management measures will be put in place including road space reallocation away from private vehicles. Key streets where this is proposed are Fisherwick Place, College Square East, College Avenue, Millfield, Carrick Hill, North Queen Street, Frederick Street, Great Patrick Street, Dunbar Link, Victoria Street, Albert Square, Waring Street, Donegall Quay, Ann Street, Oxford Street, May Street and Cromac Street. In these locations on-street parking, traffic directionality changes and in some cases, roads will be closed to through traffic (including along York Street). This also includes making Oxford Street two-way for general traffic, enabling priority for sustainable modes along Victoria Street. Access will be retained for those that need it, including for loading / unloading.

02 City centre kerbside review

As part of a wider city centre kerbside review, on-street parking provision will be rationalised to accommodate proposed improvements to walking, wheeling, cycling and bus priority. The locations of accessible parking bays, along with new provision for taxis, coach drop off/pick up and tourist buses will be reviewed. Changes are expected to enhance provision and facilitate easier access to key destinations.

03 Traffic management South of the City Centre

To realise the proposed enhancements to sustainable transport network across the South of the City Centre and to reduce known challenges relating to rat running, changes to traffic movements will be required. This will include directionality changes and limiting access for general traffic on certain streets. In particular, restrictions will be added to the streets around City Hall, and within the area to the south of May Street.

Road space reallocation and a reduction in on-street parking provision will also be delivered.

04 Traffic management within the Primary Retail Core

To realise the significant improvements to the sustainable transport network within the Primary Retail Core, including the expansion of the walking and wheeling priority area, traffic management measures will be put in place. These will include further access restrictions for through traffic, with access limited to those who need to be there (e.g. for loading activity or to access or service properties and businesses). On-street parking provision will also be reduced, with accessible parking bays located away from pedestrianised streets to other nearby, suitable locations.

05 City centre 20mph speed limit

The expansion of existing 20mph zones to cover all city centre streets within the city centre boundary, excluding Westlink and M2/M3, will improve safety and slow or dissuade unnecessary car traffic movements across the city centre.


NEW 20 MPH
SPEED LIMIT
IN FORCE

3.12 Car Parking

In previous sections, proposed interventions are set out to improve sustainable travel modes and will represent a major investment in transport infrastructure. In order to realise the benefit of these proposals, it is important to reconsider the level of infrastructure currently allocated to car travel of which car parking is a key component.

Currently, Belfast faces challenges such as an oversupply of parking in the city centre, inconsistent tariffs, and enforcement gaps. When combined these undermine efforts to promote modal shift and reduce congestion. Parking policy has also been fragmented and struggles to balance the need to maintain a vibrant city centre with reducing the attractiveness of car based commuting.

A review of Belfast City Centre's existing parking stock within the Core and Fringe Controlled Parking Zones was carried out in 2024. Further information can be found on this in Annex B. This identified that Belfast's parking stock is comprised of approximately 29,500 parking spaces across publicly available on-street and off-street locations within the core and fringe areas. Of these, 52% are provided in off-street car parks and 48% as on-street parking.

Of the on-street spaces, 10% are within the Controlled Ticket Zone (operated by the Department for Infrastructure). The remainder are uncontrolled and located in the core and fringe areas.

The off-street car parks consist of a mix of ownership between publicly owned car parks, which are managed by Belfast City Council (21%), and privately owned car parks, operated by a number of private companies (79%).

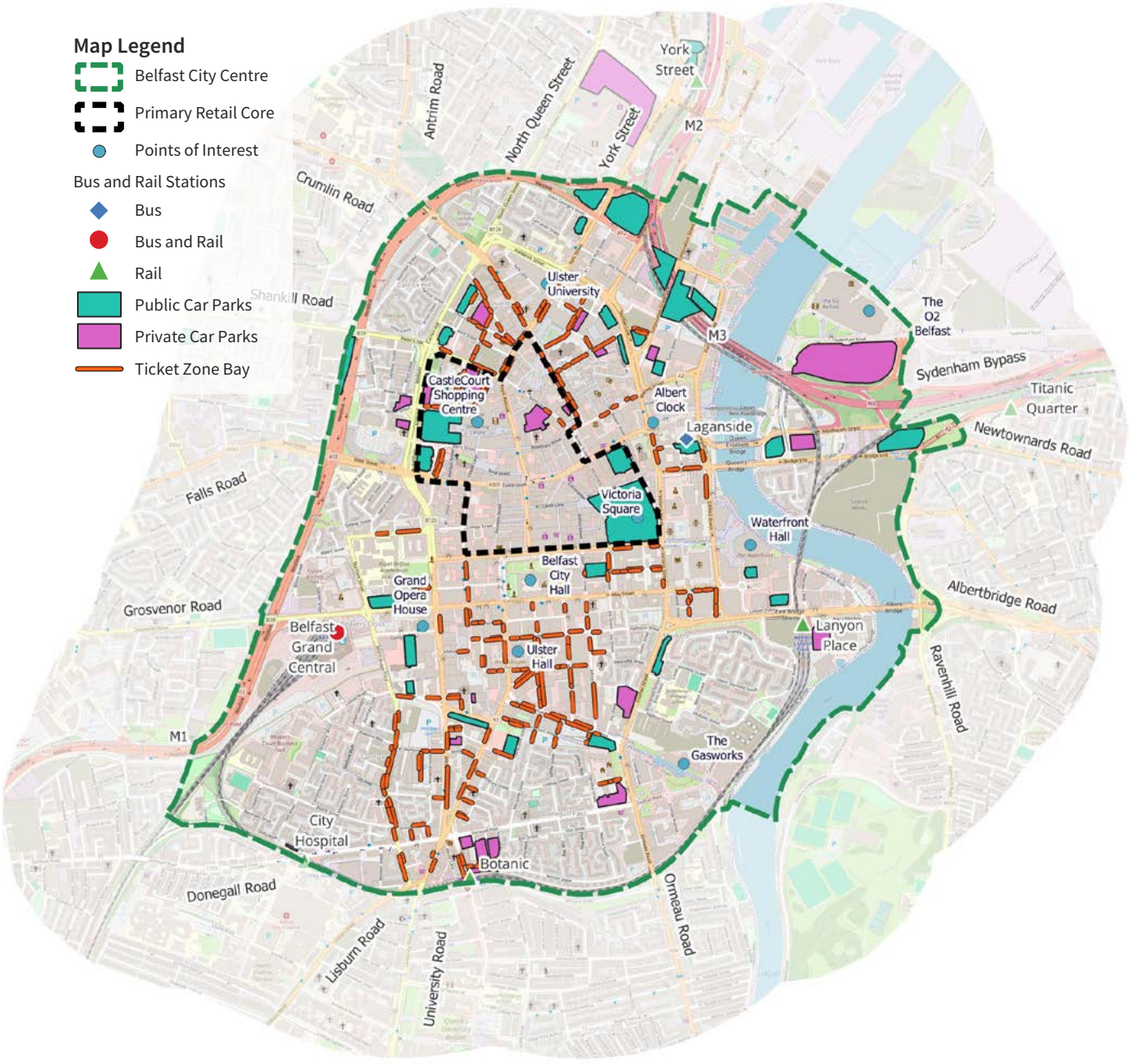
There are also parking spaces that are associated with city centre businesses and offices. These are referred to as 'Private Non Residential' (PNR). In Belfast City Council's "Belfast Integrated Parking Strategy and Action Plan[41]" it was noted that there were over 10,400 PNR spaces in Belfast with around 6,700 within the core and 3,700 in the fringe.

Parking surveys undertaken to support the Belfast Parking Strategy (see Annex B) found that on a typical weekday in 2024, only 60% of on-street parking spaces and 55% of off-street car parking in the existing city core and fringe areas are occupied[42]. On a typical Saturday, up to 50% of on-street parking spaces and 40% of off-street parking spaces are used[43].

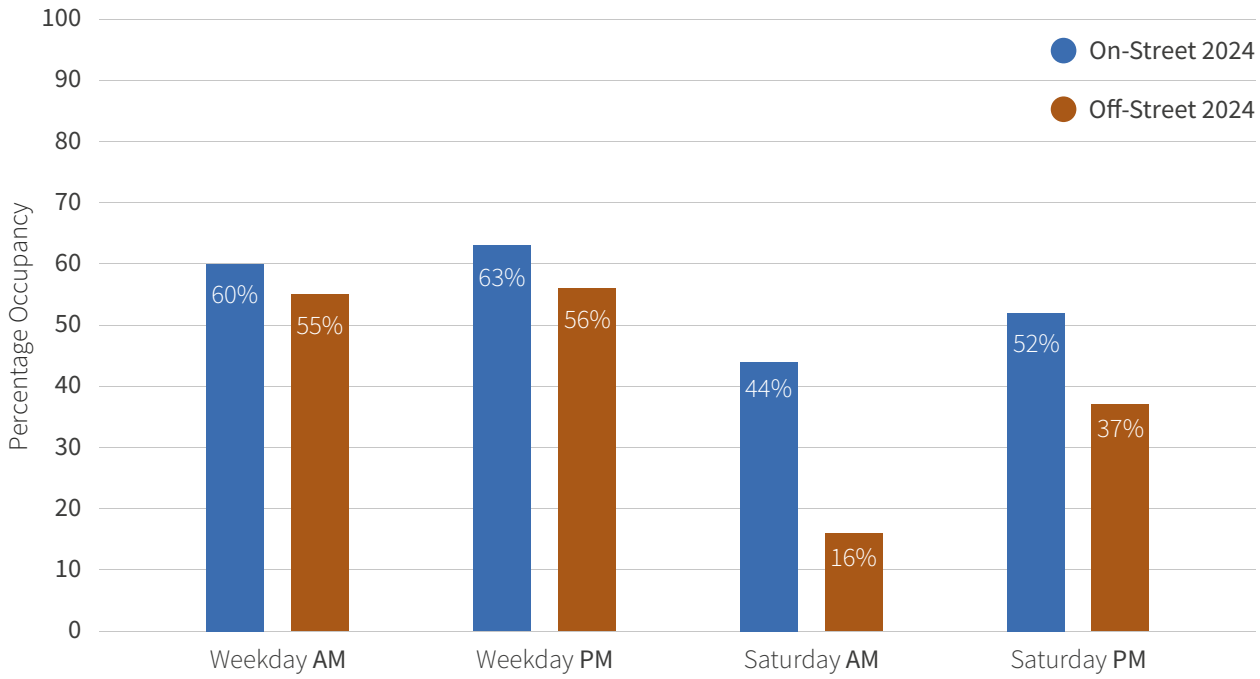
While ETP acknowledges the important role that suitable parking provision plays in facilitating trips that cannot be made by means other than car (i.e. necessary car trips), the over-supply of parking spaces (combined with attractive pricing strategies) is contributing to unacceptable levels of car dominance within the city centre and undermines efforts to encourage use of more sustainable modes of transport.

41 https://www.pacni.gov.uk/files/pacni/media-files/201805BelfastCarParkingStrategyAndActionPlan.pdf
42 In the morning peak hour, observed during parking surveys undertaken in October 2024.
43 In the afternoon peak hour, observed during parking surveys undertaken in October 2024.

S3 FIGURE 20: **Belfast City Centre Existing Car Parking (On and Off Street)**



S3 FIGURE 21: **Belfast City Centre Parking Occupancy in Core and Fringe**



3.12.1 Vision

To support the realisation of the broader sustainable transport interventions, the long-term vision for car parking within Belfast City Centre focuses on the rationalisation of parking spaces and a review of parking charges, in line with a policy of encouraging increased use of sustainable transport modes. Parking supply within the city centre will seek to accommodate only those journeys that cannot otherwise be made by sustainable travel options and providing for those that live in or close to the area. A review of residents parking zones will be required to limit any unintended impacts on surrounding residential areas.

To support the careful management of new development proposals, an overall parking restraint policy will be maintained through controlled parking zones in the city centre. This supports BCC's LDP Plan Strategy Policy TRAN 9[44] 'Parking Standards within areas of parking restraint' which outlines that within these areas, there will be a presumption against additional car parking.

Changes to traffic movements and parking arrangements within the city centre have the potential to impact a range of transport users but are designed to reduce the impact of the expected future residential and economic growth on the network while maintaining suitable access for those necessary car and freight movements.

44 Belfast LDP Plan Strategy 2035 (Adopted May 2023)

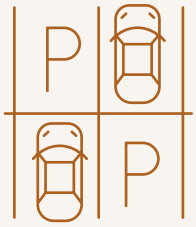
Whilst further considerations and engagement will need to be undertaken to identify specific locations where changes will be implemented, the following measures will be considered in applicable locations across Belfast City Centre:



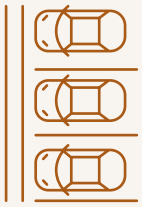
Introduce or expand Controlled Parking Zones to manage parking demand and reduce congestion in residential and commercial areas



Ensure **sufficient** provision of **Blue Badge parking** in appropriate locations



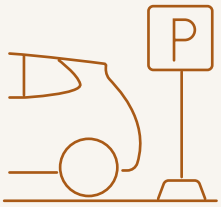
Reduce negative impacts of parking on residents, local businesses, communities and the environment



Identify zones where residential parking would be appropriate to prioritise local access and **reduce commuter parking**



Manage parking provision in a way that encourages and enables **sustainable travel**



Promote and enforce **positive parking behaviours**

3.12.2 ETP Proposals

The proposed changes to parking will be delivered alongside improvements to the city centre sustainable transport network, Figure 22 sets out the measures to be implemented within the Plan period.

Google Maps Data, @ Google Street View **19 Alfred St May 2015**



Google Maps Data, @ Google Street View **19 Alfred St June 2016**



Alfred Street example of Road Space Reallocation for Active Travel

05 Belfast City Centre Core Parking Zone

04 Belfast City Centre Fringe Parking Zone

03 Blue Badge and Accessible Bays

S3 FIGURE 22: **Belfast City Centre - Car Parking Plan Proposals**


01 Road space reallocation and closure to general traffic
02 New residents parking zones
York Street
M3
The O2 Belfast
Sydenham Bypass
Titanic Quarter
Albert Clock
Laganside
Newtownards Road
Victoria Square
Waterfront Hall
Albertbridge Road
Lanyon Place
Ravenhill Road
The Gasworks
Ormeau Road
Map Legend
Core Parking Zone
Fringe Parking Zone
Points of Interest
Bus and Rail Stations
Bus
Bus and Rail
Rail

S3 FIGURE 22 ANNOTATIONS: **Belfast City Centre - Car Parking Plan Proposals**

01 Road space reallocation and closure to general traffic

Streets within the core of the city centre, aligning closely with the walking and wheeling priority area, have been identified to be closed to general traffic. This will ensure that vehicles will no longer be able to use these streets as a means to cross the city centre between 0700-1900.

Road space will be reallocated away from on-street parking to realise the expansion of cycle and bus lanes, provide development potential and unlock new public amenity space. The long-term vision for car parking within Belfast City Centre focuses on the rationalisation of parking spaces and a review of parking charges, in line with a policy of encouraging increased use of sustainable transport modes.

02 New residents parking zones

To help to manage the potential impacts of city centre parking restrictions on surrounding residential communities, it is anticipated that residents parking zones will be expanded across areas within a ten-minute walk time. This will help to eliminate the possibility of commuters and other parking occurring within residential streets for access to city centre amenities. New residents parking zone will be developed in collaboration with the local community and in accordance with DfI Policy.

03 Blue Badge and Accessible Bays

Retaining convenient access for **Blue Badge holders** is a key priority. There are currently approximately 60 dedicated Blue Badge parking bays available on city centre streets (2025). While some of these bays may need to be relocated, the overall provision is expected to increase across the Plan period.

Any relocated provision will be carefully considered, with support from IMTAC and other key stakeholders to ensure that accessibility to key destinations is retained or enhanced.

04 Belfast City Centre Fringe Parking Zone

The city centre fringe zone has been extended to represent a 10 minute walk time from the core zone. The change allows for areas around Queens Island and Queen's Quarter to be included within the Fringe zone of Belfast.

05 Belfast City Centre Core Parking Zone

The core zone has been brought into line with Belfast City Councils LDP City Centre boundary. The zone now includes the Grand Central Station, as it is a regional transport interchange and highly accessible by sustainable modes. In addition, there are a number of redevelopment proposals within the City Centre boundary and their inclusion within this area will limit the dominance of car use.

45 Residents' Parking Zones | Department for Infrastructure


BUS DROP OFF
BUS DROP OFF

3.13 Management of our City Centre

3.13.1 Introduction

Implementation of the transport infrastructure proposals outlined throughout this chapter alone will not be sufficient to achieve the desired benefits of the transport plan. Unlocking the true value of the proposals also relies on achieving widespread travel behaviour change. Management, enforcement and promotion of the infrastructure proposals will therefore be critical.

The Department recognises the value of collaborating within a dedicated Multi-Agency City Centre Management Team. This team could comprise of key public and private sector organisations that commit resources to managing and improving the way the city centre operates. Its purpose will be to ensure that changes within the city centre and the wider Metropolitan Area are implemented and utilised as intended.

The Department will engage with key city stakeholders to explore the feasibility of creating such a team and will lead the development of a City Centre Management Plan. This plan is expected to address the following key areas:

3.13.1.1 Enforcement

Key areas that will need to be suitably managed and enforced within the city centre include traffic regulations relating to:

- On- and off-street parking;
- Use of bus lanes;
- Parking in cycle lanes;
- Access to streets that are otherwise closed to general traffic;
- Loading and unloading arrangements;
- Adherence to yellow boxes; and
- Traffic speed limits.

It is an important design principle that the enforcement of traffic regulations represents the “last resort” – i.e. transport users should feel willing and able to abide by the new restrictions without conflict. In designing the proposed schemes, the user behaviour required by any scheme should be self-evident, self-enforcing and socially accepted. This means that schemes are designed with the end user in mind, ensuring that any changes are developed in collaboration with and clearly communicated to affected road users and that any resulting signage and road markings are clear and easy to use. The success of this Plan, in implementing local schemes and changing travel behaviour, will therefore require effective communications and marketing and widespread community support.

It is acknowledged, however, that the ETP proposals represent a significant increase in extents of enforceable restrictions, additional resources will therefore be required to ensure suitable management. Some elements of enforcement and management will require increased coordination between the DfI and BCC. DfI, along with support from other

agencies, will confirm this approach as well as clearly articulating roles and responsibilities for enforcement (and maintenance).

3.13.1.2 Use of information and technology

Effective monitoring and evaluation of the transport plan will be crucial to ensure that proposals are being implemented in accordance with the ETP vision and objectives and with respect to the PMF modal designations, as well as to review whether the desired outcomes and benefits are being achieved.

DfI already have in place a series of data capture mechanisms which will allow for monitoring of certain impacts, however there are gaps in information availability which should be closed within the Plan period.

Technology enhancements to be delivered throughout the Plan period are to include installation of smart sensors across the city centre which, with assistance from artificial intelligence, can support with footfall and traffic monitoring. Furthermore, DfI will remain open to exploring other emerging or enhanced information, technology and services that may support the collection, analysis and monitoring of information relating to transport over the Plan period and beyond.

3.13.2 ETP Proposals

The key management related activities anticipated to be achieved for Belfast City Centre within the Plan period are summarised as follows. Implementation of individual measures will be progressed following appropriate guidance.

Consideration of Multi-Agency Management Approach

DfI will work with other relevant agencies to develop an approach to ensure responsible management, enforcement and maintenance of the Belfast city transport network. Roles and responsibilities for delivery will be confirmed, in collaboration with BCC, DfC and Translink.

City Centre Wayfinding Strategy

A City Centre Wayfinding Strategy will be developed to support clarity of messaging and enable people to make informed decisions about the journeys they make. This Strategy will aim to highlight opportunities across all modes.

City Centre Data Collection Sensors

DfI are exploring the potential to use new technologies to automatically capture and record information related to travel behaviours entering and exiting the city centre. This information will enable improved understanding of mode split and levels of network performance.

3.14 ETP Proposals for Belfast City Centre

The tables throughout this chapter highlight the key interventions proposed to be brought forward within the Plan period of most relevance to each individual mode discussed. Table 1 combines these together to summarise a comprehensive list of ETP proposals for Belfast City Centre.

In preparing the ETP, a wide range of potential transport interventions have been considered and assessed to ensure that the resulting package of proposals represents best fit in terms of alignment with the ambitions of the Plan. Both qualitative and quantitative appraisal of impacts have been undertaken to understand the benefits and potential drawbacks of proposals, alone and in combination.

Implementation of all individual schemes will be progressed following appropriate guidance and aligning with relevant planning requirements. Engagement with local communities and other relevant stakeholders will be undertaken throughout scheme development and design stages.



Image courtesy of Brian Morrison / Walk Wheel Cycle Trust

S3 TABLE 1: **2035 Plan for Belfast City Centre**

Scheme	Reference	Summary of Interventions
City centre 20mph speed limit	CC- 01	Expansion of existing 20mph zone to cover all city centre streets within the city centre boundary, excluding Westlink and M2/M3, making the city centre a safer and more attractive place to walk or wheel.
Walking and Wheeling improvements in the North of the City Centre	CC- 02	Enhanced pedestrian priority will be realised across the city centre through improvements to footways, priority at crossings, enhanced public realm and traffic management measures. The existing walking and wheeling priority area will be expanded through restriction of traffic movements along sections of Academy Street, York Lane, Library Street and Union Street, complementing Department for Communities proposals in the area. Improvements to footways, priority at crossings, traffic restrictions and enhanced public realm along York Street and Royal Avenue will combine with improvements in other areas of the city centre to form a high-quality, continuous pedestrian priority route via the Civic Spine. In front of the City Hall, in Donegall Square West and outside Saint George's Market, space will be unlocked for public realm and seating areas through the relocation of bus stands, removal of through traffic and upgrades to footways and crossings.
Walking and Wheeling improvements to the Primary Retail Core	CC- 03	Enhancements to Royal Avenue, Donegall Place, Donegall Square North and Donegall Square West will combine with improvements in other areas of the city centre to form a high-quality, continuous walking and wheeling priority route via the Civic Spine. Surrounding these, improvements to key streets including North Street, Bridge Street and Castle Place will extend the existing area that prioritises walking and wheeling within the core of the city centre.

Scheme	Reference	Summary of Interventions
Enhanced city centre gateways	CC- 04	Enhanced footways and pedestrian priority at crossing facilities at the identified gateways across the city centre will combine with a reduction in traffic lanes to reduce the severing impact of wide highways in the city centre.
Walking and Wheeling improvements in the South of the City Centre	CC- 05	A high-quality, continuous walking and wheeling priority route, forming the Civic Spine, will connect areas in the south of the city centre with the rest of the city centre via Botanic Avenue, Dublin Road and Bedford Street. Proposed traffic management measures also unlock the opportunity to provide new public space in Clarence Street, which will connect to a key bus route along Adelaide Street. Enhanced pedestrian priority, including upgrades to footways and crossings will also be delivered across the area, complementing other multi-modal proposals.
Cycling improvements in the North of the City Centre	CC- 06	New segregated and shared cycle routes will be delivered across the North of the city centre, delivered alongside wider multi-modal improvements. These include delivery of two-way segregated cycle routes via the inner ring, connecting all areas of the city centre together to provide faster, convenient and safe cross-city connections for cyclists. New and upgraded segregated and shared options for cyclists to connect between the wider Metropolitan Area and the core of the city centre will be delivered.

Scheme	Reference	Summary of Interventions
Cycling improvements to the Primary Retail Core	CC- 07	While many of the new and enhanced cycle routes will converge on the core of the city centre, transport interventions in the Primary Retail Core will focus on enhancing the walking and wheeling environment and connectivity rather than creation of new segregated routes. Provision of safe and conveniently located cycle storage will be provided in strategic locations on entry to the Primary Retail Core. Shared facilities for cyclists will be delivered as part of multi-modal improvements in this area, including along the Civic Spine and east-west across Castle Street, Castle Place and High Street.
Cycling improvements in the South of the City Centre	CC- 08	New segregated and shared cycle routes will be delivered across the southern part of the city centre alongside upgrades to existing routes. These will connect to priority radial corridors, Belfast Grand Central Station and the rest of the city centre. Enhancements to existing cycle lanes along Dublin Road and new segregated connections via Bedford Street will connect into multi-modal improvements to the Civic Spine.
Bus priority in the North of the City Centre	CC- 09	Delivery of bus lanes along northern sections of both Donegall Street, North Street, around the inner ring and connecting to key radial corridors will improve bus journey times and reliability across and into the city centre. These may also be crucial links to provide access to the proposed new northern travel hub. Bus only links will also be delivered alongside walking and wheeling improvements and restriction of general traffic in front of and behind City Hall which will enhance waiting facilities.

Scheme	Reference	Summary of Interventions
Bus routing changes to the Primary Retail Core	CC - 10	While many of the new and enhanced bus routes will converge on the core of the city centre, transport interventions in the Primary Retail Core will focus on enhancing the pedestrian environment and enhancing connectivity rather than facilitating bus routes. Accessibility to the primary retail core will be maintained through the enhanced bus journey times and reliability to its edges, as well as through the introduction of Glider services along the Civic Spine.
Bus priority in the South of the City Centre	CC - 11	Delivery of bus lanes along Adelaide Street, supported by improved bus waiting facilities, will improve bus journey times and reliability across the city centre and reduce overcrowding at bus stops. This priority will connect into extended bus lanes around the inner ring as well as to the planned sustainable transport corridor via Bankmore Street and a new southern travel hub.
Bus stop upgrades	CC - 12	The quality of bus stops will be reviewed and enhanced across the city centre, including expanding provision of real time passenger information, seating and shelters.
Bus routing changes	CC - 13	In order to realise the benefits of far siding, create routing efficiencies and maximise the use of new bus lanes, bus service routings through the city centre will be reviewed and refined. Changes will aim to maximise accessibility for passengers, helping people to make quicker and more reliable end to end journeys via sustainable modes.

Scheme	Reference	Summary of Interventions
Glider routing changes	CC - 14	Alongside the review of city centre bus routeings, changes to existing and new Glider routings will be implemented. These will realise the benefits of far siding, create routing efficiencies and maximise the use of new bus lanes. Changes will include allowing Glider services to penetrate the core of the city centre via a Glider-only link along Royal Avenue and Donegall Place. This will help passengers to reach city centre attractions via the region's most accessible mode of public transport. Safety in this walking and wheeling priority area will be managed through very low vehicle speeds and careful street design.
Belfast Rapid Transit 3 via Shore Road	CC - 15	Shore Road has been identified as a priority corridor for delivery of future Glider services. During the Plan period, further appraisal and design work will be undertaken, leading to refinement and delivery of the BRT3 proposals. It is expected that the BRT3 route will travel into the city centre via bus lanes on York Street, running past Ulster University, traversing the city centre and connecting to the existing rapid transit network.
Belfast Rapid Transit 3 via Lisburn Road	CC - 16	Lisburn Road has been identified as a priority corridor for delivery of future Glider services. During the Plan period, further appraisal and design work will be undertaken, leading to refinement and delivery of the BRT3 proposals. It is expected that the BRT3 route will travel into the city centre via bus lanes on Lisburn Road, via Shaftesbury Square and Great Victoria Street, traversing the city centre and connecting to the existing rapid transit network.
Travel Hubs	CC - 17	During the Plan period, two new travel hubs will be developed and delivered. Appraisal, design and delivery of the sites will be progressed following appropriate guidance and aligning with relevant planning requirements. Engagement with local communities and other relevant stakeholders will be undertaken throughout scheme development and design stages.

Scheme	Reference	Summary of Interventions
Traffic management North of the City Centre	CC - 18	To realise the significant improvements to the sustainable transport network across the North of the City Centre, traffic management measures will be put in place including road space reallocation away from private vehicles. Key streets where this is proposed are Fisherwick Place, College Square East, College Avenue, Millfield, Carrick Hill, North Queen Street, Frederick Street, Great Patrick Street, Dunbar Link, Victoria Street, Albert Square, Waring Street, Donegall Quay, Ann Street, Oxford Street, May Street and Cromac Street. In these locations on-street parking, traffic directionality changes and in some cases, roads will be closed to through traffic (including along York Street). This also includes making Oxford Street two-way for general traffic, enabling priority for sustainable modes along Victoria Street. Access will be retained for those that need it, including for loading / unloading.
Traffic management within the Primary Retail Core	CC - 19	To realise the significant improvements to the sustainable transport network within the Primary Retail Core, including the expansion of the walking and wheeling priority area, traffic management measures will be put in place. These will include further access restrictions for through traffic, with access limited to those who need to be there (e.g. for loading activity or to access or service properties and businesses). On-street parking provision will also be reduced, with accessible parking bays located away from pedestrianised streets to other nearby, suitable locations.
Traffic management South of the City Centre	CC - 20	To realise the proposed enhancements to sustainable transport network across the South of the City Centre and to reduce known challenges relating to rat running, changes to traffic movements will be required. This will include directionality changes and limiting access for general traffic on certain streets. In particular, restrictions will be added to the streets around City Hall, and within the area to the south of May Street. Road space reallocation and a reduction in on-street parking provision will also be delivered.

Scheme	Reference	Summary of Interventions
City centre kerbside review	CC - 21	As part of a wider city centre kerbside review, on-street parking provision will be rationalised to accommodate proposed improvements to walking, wheeling, cycling and bus priority. The locations of accessible parking bays, along with new provision for taxis, coach drop off/pick up and tourist buses will be reviewed. Changes are expected to enhance provision and facilitate easier access to key destinations.
Update to Belfast City Centre Core Parking Zone Boundary	CC - 22	The core zone has been brought into line with Belfast City Councils LDP City Centre boundary. The zone now includes the Grand Central Station, as it is a regional transport interchange and highly accessible by sustainable modes. In addition, there are a number of redevelopment proposals within the City Centre boundary and their inclusion within this area will limit the dominance of car use.
Update to Belfast City Centre Fringe Parking Zone Boundary	CC - 23	The city centre fringe zone has been extended to represent a 10 minute walk time from the core zone. The change allows for areas around Queens Island and Queen's Quarter to be included within the Fringe zone of Belfast.
Blue Badge and Accessible Bays	CC - 24	Retaining convenient access for Blue Badge holders is a key priority. There are currently approximately 60 dedicated Blue Badge parking bays available on city centre streets (2025). While some of these bays may need to be relocated, the overall provision is expected to increase across the Plan period. Any relocated provision will be carefully considered, with support from IMTAC and other key stakeholders to ensure that accessibility to key destinations is retained or enhanced.

Scheme	Reference	Summary of Interventions
Introduction of new residents parking zones	CC - 25	To help to manage the potential impacts of city centre parking restrictions on surrounding residential communities, it is anticipated that residents parking zones will be expanded across areas within a ten-minute walk time. This will help to eliminate the possibility of commuters and other parking occurring within residential streets for access to city centre amenities. New residents parking zone will be developed in collaboration with the local community and in accordance with DfI Policy.
Road space reallocation and closure to general traffic	CC - 26	Streets within the core of the city centre, aligning closely with the walking and wheeling priority area, have been identified to be closed to general traffic. This will ensure that vehicles will no longer be able to use these streets as a means to cross the city centre between 0700-1900. Road space will be reallocated away from on-street parking to realise the expansion of cycle and bus lanes, provide development potential and unlock new public amenity space. The long-term vision for car parking within Belfast City Centre focuses on the rationalisation of parking spaces and a review of parking charges, in line with a policy of encouraging increased use of sustainable transport modes.

3.15 Summary of Impacts

As noted earlier, an effective transport network can support the delivery of transformative changes across many areas of society. This section outlines how the combined package of proposals for Belfast City Centre is expected to contribute to each of the wider societal benefits:



Social Inclusion



Health



Road Safety



Personal Safety



Climate Change



Environment



Economy



Resilience

The tables on the following pages identify the principal relevant transport Initiatives, the expected Output and where applicable a description of their longer-term Outcomes.

3.15.1 Transport and Social Inclusion

Increasing the choice of transport options available via the ETP and eliminating barriers to use will help improve access and deliver benefits for all.



PLAN OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
Increase in the total number of Blue Badge parking spaces across the city centre.	Increase in accessibility to the city centre for mobility impaired people with private cars and Blue Badges.
Delivery of new and improved active travel routes including the creation of new segregated cycle lanes.	It becomes easier and safer for people to get to and move around the city centre by means of active travel.
Rerouting of existing Metro services, in accordance with far siding approach.	Far siding strategy will mean that existing and new bus users are able to get closer to their end destination in the city centre via bus.
New BRT routes, replicating existing Glider features which assist people with disabilities and families with prams.	Improved accessibility for public transport users, including those that cannot use conventional bus vehicles.
Increase in active travel and public transport provision improves city centre access for those without a car	Creation of less trafficked streets will especially benefit vulnerable users including children and older people.

3.15.2 Transport and Health

The ETP aims to support improved air quality and an increased uptake in active modes of transport including walking, wheeling and cycling.



PLAN OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
Improved footways and crossing facilities throughout the city centre.	Increase in cycle trips starting in the city centre. Increase in walking trips starting in the city centre.
Improved cycle network throughout the city centre including the creation of new segregated cycle lanes.	Residents become more active and healthier.
Provision of two new public travel hubs connected to city centre destinations via high quality footways and crossing facilities.	Improvement in local air quality contributing to a potential reduction in respiratory issues and other health.
	Reduction in noise pollution from traffic contributing to improved levels of physical and mental health.

3.15.3 Transport and Road Safety

The ETP aims to reduce the number of collisions involving vulnerable road users.



PLAN OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
Expansion of 20mph zones across the city centre.	Travelling via active and sustainable modes becomes easier and safer due to separation from motorised vehicles.
Expansion of walking and wheeling priority areas, reducing the levels of vehicular traffic in high-footfall locations.	Reduction in conflict between transport modes leads to a lower rate and lower severity of collisions involving vulnerable road users.
New and enhanced pedestrian crossings.	
Introduction of segregated cycle lanes, separating cyclists from motorised traffic in the city centre.	

3.15.4 Transport and Personal Safety

The ETP aims to support personal safety while travelling.



PLAN OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
The plan proposals will create new safe spaces for people in the city centre at interchange hubs, enhanced taxi stands and bus stops.	Increased use of active travel, public transport of transport across the city centre in the evenings.
Improvements to existing streets and traffic free routes will follow best practice in terms of provision of adequate lighting and other safety features.	Increased levels of real and perceived public safety at locations where improvements are proposed.
Simplification of bus routeings across the city centre and beyond will make it easier for people to find the right bus for their journey home.	Increased passive surveillance linked to higher number of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.
Enhancements to city centre streets and creation of new public spaces will help to encourage increased footfall across the area, supporting a sense of informal surveillance and personal safety.	

3.15.5 Transport and Climate Change

The ETP aims to support a reduction in carbon emissions from transport, working towards net zero.



PLAN OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
Improved footways and crossing facilities throughout the city centre.	Increased numbers of people accessing the city centre via sustainable transport modes (walking and wheeling, cycling and public transport).
Improved cycle network throughout the city centre including the creation of new segregated cycle lanes.	Reduced numbers of private cars accessing the city centre.
Improved bus journey times and reliability as a result of new bus lanes.	Modal shift supports a reduction in carbon emissions from transport in the city centre.
Demand management measures including reduction in on street car parking.	

3.15.6 Transport and the Environment

The ETP aims to protect the region's air quality and habitats.



PLAN OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
Reduced ability for general traffic to rat run through the city centre.	Improved air quality through increased use of active travel, public transport and reduced vehicular traffic within the city centre.
Relocation of bus layover activity away from City Hall.	Unlocking road space to be repurposed for alternative, sustainable and green uses.
Increased provision for active travel and public transport modes.	Improvement in air quality in city centre.
Expansion of city centre area available for public realm and green spaces, to be delivered in line with best environmental practices.	Enhanced quality of natural environment and increase in improved habitats and biodiversity.

3.15.7 Transport and the Economy

The ETP aims to support housing and employment growth across the region.



PLAN OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
More frequent and reliable public transport.	Reduced journey times by public transport along with enhanced service reliability increasing the journey to work catchment to the city centre.
City Management team to work across agencies to support the efficient operation of the city centre network.	Faster and more reliable bus journey times will help to boost business productivity and efficiency.
Enhanced public realm and accessibility across city centre.	Increased footfall and spend across city centre businesses.
Increased modal choice for existing and new city centre residents, commuters and visitors.	A transport network that can sustainably accommodate forecast growth in city centre housing and employment.
	Contributing to a safer city centre, attracting increased footfall, dwell time and supporting the evening economy and tourism.

3.15.8 Transport and Resilience

The ETP aims to improve the resilience of the region's transport network.



PLAN OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
Expanded network of bus lanes.	Increase in the number of viable alternative journey options for those accessing the city centre.
Enhanced bus frequencies and new Glider services connecting the city centre to the rest of Belfast and the wider region.	Bus lanes that can be used by emergency services and other vehicles to support response to crises.
	The anticipated reduction in carbon helps to work towards a decarbonised transport network and protect against climate change, protected against extreme weather events.

3.16 How does the Belfast City Centre Transport Plan contribute towards the wider ETP Vision and Objectives?

The ETP Vision and Objectives are repeated as follows:

Deliver an integrated and re-balanced transport network in favour of sustainable, efficient modes, which connects communities creating an accessible, inclusive, safe and prosperous economic region by delivering carbon reduction, improving air quality, enhancing the built and natural environment and facilitating healthy and sustainable travel choices over unnecessary private car travel.

01 Reduce travel distances by promoting safe, inclusive and connected neighbourhoods, supported by integrated planning.

The Plan proposals for the city centre include extensive enhancements to existing and new active travel routes and facilities. These will help to better connect city centre communities together and to city centre services, as well as connecting to areas of planned housing and employment development.

02 Deliver a reduction in carbon emissions by increasing accessibility for all to jobs, services and recreation by sustainable travel modes.

The city centre Plan proposals include the addition of nearly 10km of new segregated cycle lanes and approximately 13km of new bus lanes, changes to bus routings and the introduction of new interchange locations which will support a reduction in bus journey times and an increase in bus journey time reliability, helping to connect people to jobs, services and recreation opportunities within the city centre.

03 Promote healthy and inclusive communities by developing safe sustainable travel modes that respect the local built and natural environment.

The introduction of new bus priority measures, expanded 20mph zones, nearly 10km of new segregated cycle lanes, the expansion of existing walking and wheeling priority areas, and enhancements to other pedestrian facilities will provide safety and inclusion benefits. They are also considered demand management as they will make accessing the city centre by sustainable modes more attractive at the expense of road space and car journey times during peak periods.

04 Reduce unnecessary use of the private car by implementing effective demand management measures.

In order to accommodate the identified sustainable transport improvements across the city centre, the Plan proposals will result in a reduction in road space available for use by general traffic. On-street

parking provision will also be reduced, with the exception of provision of Blue Badge parking spaces which will be expanded to accommodate journeys that cannot otherwise be made by public transport.

05 Improve air quality and the environment by encouraging the use of sustainable travel modes and vehicles which utilise sustainable fuels.

As part of the ETP development process, there has been an assessment of air quality and wider environmental impacts through the supplementary Integrated Sustainability Assessment report. It concludes that, should the ETP proposals be delivered, the Plan will have overall beneficial impacts to air quality through the expected reduction of private motor vehicles and a rebalancing towards communal public transport, or active travel modes of transport. The ISA report also makes recommendations relating to the incorporation of measures to enhance the local environment and biodiversity during scheme design stages, for example through the incorporation of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

06 Enhance the resilience and safety of the transport network to support the economy and meet the challenges of climate change.

The Plan proposals for the city centre will, together with Metropolitan Area proposals, increase the range of transport options available to travellers. This is in addition to providing more livable and walkable streets. Additionally, the expanded provision of bus lanes will provide resilience benefits to emergency services. In terms of climate resilience, an anticipated reduction in reliance on private car use will lead to a reduction in carbon emissions from transport.

07 Support the efficient, sustainable movement of goods and people and enhance connectivity to regional networks including access to airports and ports.

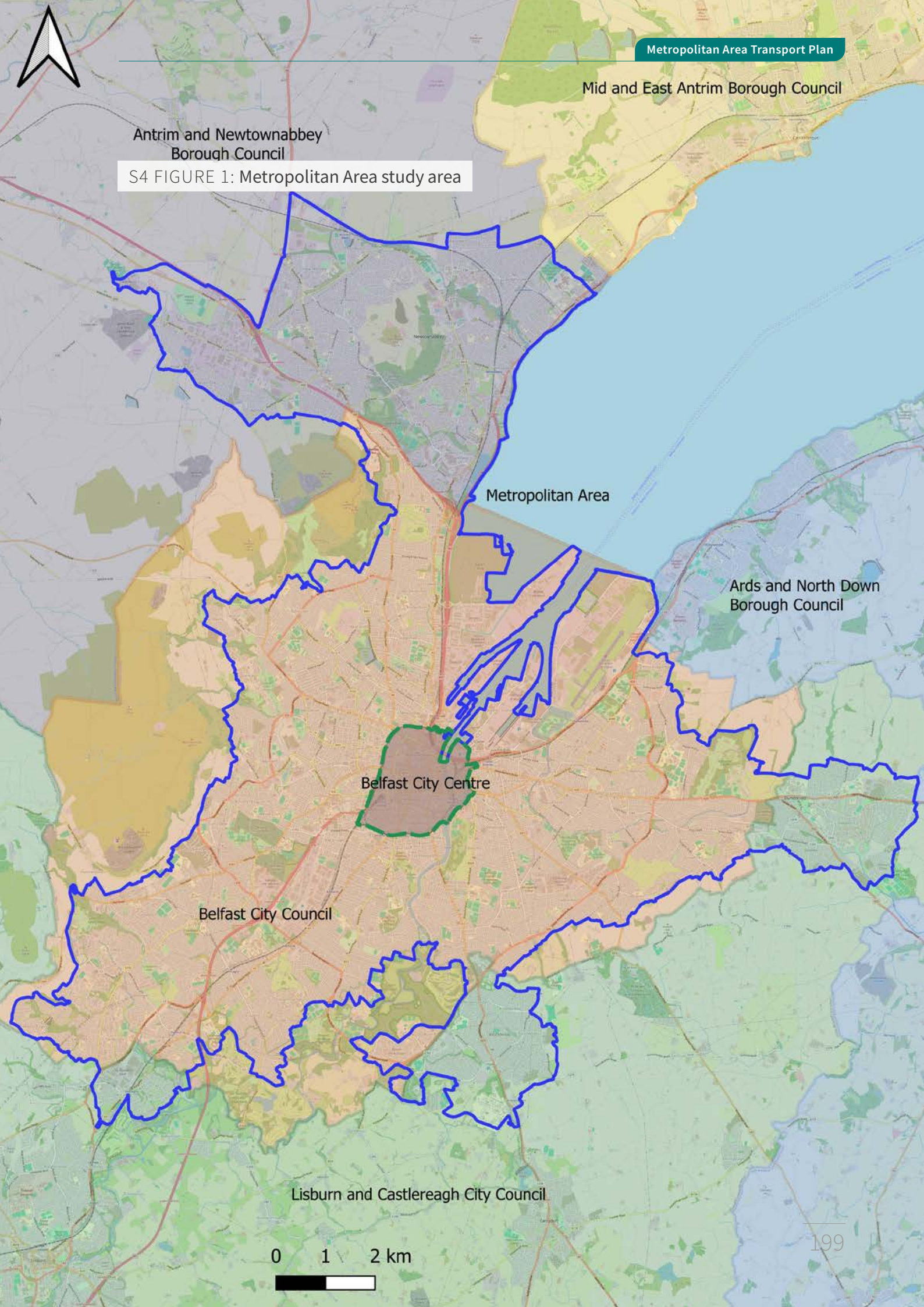
The city centre acts as the confluence of many transport movements for the region. The ETP's Place and Movement Framework approach highlights the importance of retaining the strategic purpose of certain roads across the area, including within the city centre. The Westlink and other strategic routes will continue to act as an important regional link between the city centre and the rest of the region.



04

Metropolitan Area Transport Plan

4.1 Overview of the Metropolitan Area
4.2 Existing Transport Context
4.3 Area-wide Vision
4.4 Walking and Wheeling
4.5 Cycling
4.6 Bus and BRT
4.7 Park and Ride
4.8 Rail
4.9 Traffic Management and Parking
4.10 Management of the Metropolitan Area Transport Network
4.11 ETP Proposals for the Metropolitan Area
4.12 Summary of Impacts
4.13 How does the Metropolitan Area Transport Plan contribute towards the wider ETP Vision and Objectives?



S4 FIGURE 1: Metropolitan Area study area

4.1 Overview of the Metropolitan Area

The Metropolitan Area refers to the continuous built-up area spanning outwards from Belfast City Centre, including wider Belfast city, Metropolitan Newtownabbey, Metropolitan Castlereagh and Metropolitan Lisburn (Figure 1). As of the 2021 Census, the combined population of this area was over 450,000, comprising approximately 24% of the population of the Northern Ireland region.

4.1.1 Local Development Plans

The Metropolitan Area straddles the boundaries of three local authorities:

- The metropolitan element of Belfast City Council (BCC);
- Metropolitan Newtownabbey, which falls within Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council (ANBC); and
- Metropolitan Castlereagh (including Dundonald) and Metropolitan Lisburn (including Newtownbreda and Derriaghy) which fall within Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC).



Each of these councils are in the process of preparing new Local Development Plans (LDP) which will outline local policies, specific proposals for new development and land use designations. Key elements of each emerging LDP are summarised as follows:



Housing Development

All three councils have plans to support population growth. BCC's growth strategy highlights the need to accommodate 31,600 new homes within the council area between 2020 to 2035.

In the broader Metropolitan Area, a further 3,900 new homes are proposed by ANBC in Metropolitan Newtownabbey (representing 40% of the total ANBC planned growth), along with 1,706 new homes in Metropolitan Castlereagh and 242 new homes within the Lisburn Greater Urban Area. Should these growth proposals be realised, and if historical trends were followed, a substantial increase in trips will be generated across the Metropolitan Area's transport network, placing further strain on the highway and public transport network that are already at capacity during peak periods.



Sustainable Development and Economic Development

A key policy theme throughout each LDP is a commitment to sustainable development. Each LDP encourages positive placemaking and recommends that consideration is given to ensuring that housing, employment and mixed-use developments are delivered in the most sustainable possible ways, including encouraging reduced reliance on private car use. The allocations for mixed-use developments across each LDP match the desire to better integrate housing and employment opportunities more closely to the existing population catchments, reducing travel distances and helping to make sustainable transport a more viable and attractive option for new developments.



Promoting Sustainable Travel

To support the economic and development proposals within the Metropolitan Area, each LDP acknowledges the crucial role that enhanced transport infrastructure will play in accommodating growth. The LDPs support the need to expand the offering of sustainable travel choices and encouraging increased levels of walking, wheeling and cycling, alongside improved public transport links. The LDPs also cite specific transport proposals as being key to supporting planned growth including the expansion of the Glider and greenway (or traffic free routes) networks that will help to connect existing and new population centres to opportunities.

The LDPs also identify the importance of protecting strategic routes such as the M1 and M2 regional corridors, along with the key railway lines, as an important element of connecting communities and settlements together.

The realisation of ETP proposals, focused on enhancing the capacity and coverage of the active travel and public transport provision across the region, alongside complementary strategic road proposals contained within the Regional Strategic Transport Plan, will be vital to achieving each councils' ambitions for sustainable development and relieving pressure on an already constrained transport network.


Departures
Time Destination Plat Expd.
09:41 Grand Central 3 On Time
09:45 Bangor 4 On Time
09:46 Grand Central 2 On Time
09:52 Grand Central 1 On Time
09:55 Larne Harbour 4 On Time
10:01 Grand Central 3 On Time
10:15 Bangor 4 On Time
10:16 Grand Central 2 On Time
10:20 Londonderry 3 On Time
10:22 Grand Central 1 On Time
10:25 Whitehead 4 On Time
10:41 Grand Central 3 On Time
10:45 Bangor 4 On Time
Time Now: 09:36
No smoking
OFF

4.2 Existing Transport Context

The Metropolitan Area acts as the confluence of many major transport links, connecting to other key locations across the region and beyond. Belfast Grand Central Station, Belfast Harbour and Belfast City Airport, also within the area, provide gateways to Ireland, Britain, Europe and the rest of the world. The following sections summarise the key elements of the transport network already in place across the region.

4.2.1 Walking, Wheeling and Cycling

The quality of infrastructure provision for active modes varies across the area. While footways are provided alongside road carriageways, the quality of the surfaces, kerb lines and the provision of pedestrian crossing facilities varies significantly. Figure 2 provides an overview of the existing cycling network. High quality provision includes traffic-free greenways and cycle paths that are fully segregated from other modes. However, there are also lower quality “on road” cycle lanes, some of which are sporadic and inconsistent in nature.

The Belfast Cycling Network (BCN) and Everyday Active Travel: The Urban Delivery Plan both identify ambitious proposals to expand the network of walking, wheeling and cycling routes across the Metropolitan Area (and beyond). The ETP proposals look to build on the success of routes that have already been unlocked, and champion the delivery of future proposals.



S4 FIGURE 2: Existing cycle provision within the Metropolitan Area



4.2.2 Public Transport

4.2.2.1 Bus and Bus Rapid Transit

In addition to the road and rail links that serve the Metropolitan Area, an extensive bus and bus rapid transit (BRT) network helps to connect residents, businesses and visitors to key destinations within and beyond the area. Regional Ulsterbus and Goldliner services provide longer distance connections to settlements across the region and key destinations across the border.

The Belfast Metro bus network, centred on Belfast City Centre, provides services across council boundaries into Metropolitan Newtownabbey, Metropolitan Castlereagh and Metropolitan Lisburn.

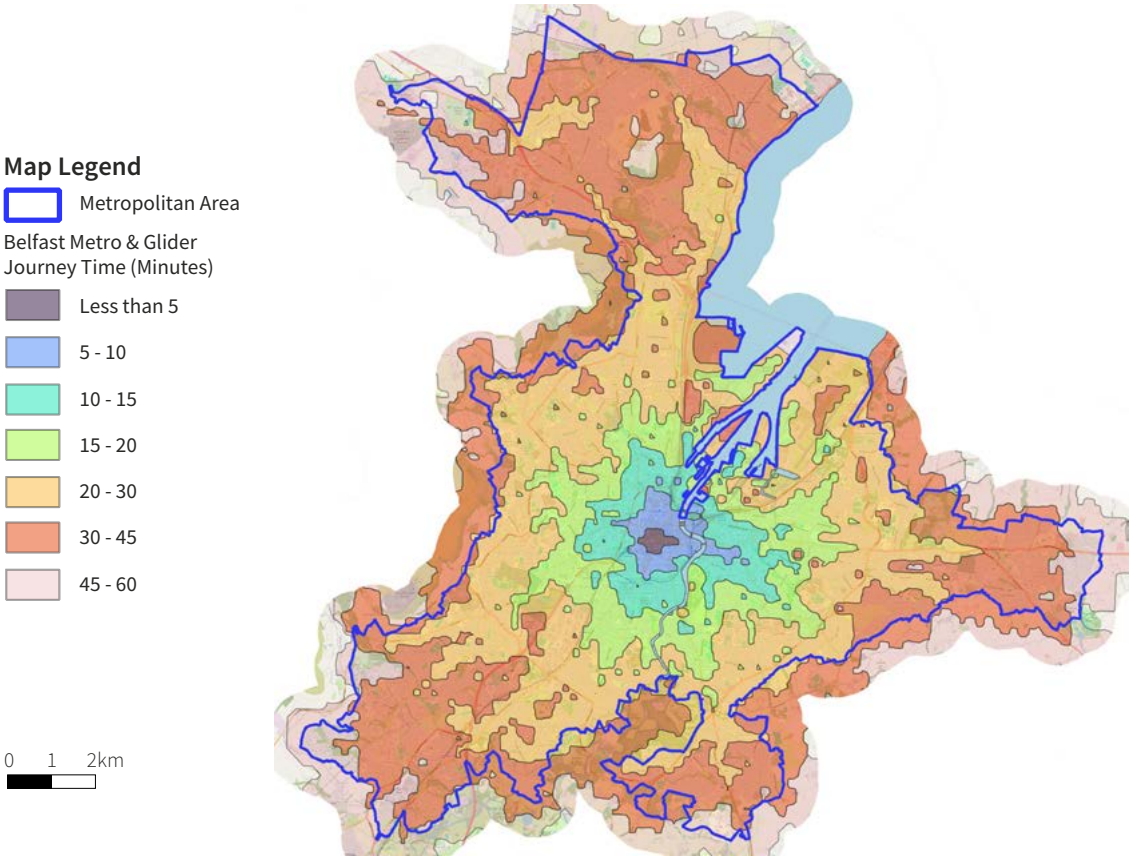
The Belfast Rapid Transit Phase 1 pilot route network and service opened on 3rd September 2018 under the Glider brand and provides a bus rapid transit (BRT) service between East and West Belfast through the City Centre, with a link to Titanic Quarter. The Glider largely replaced the Metro bus service on the Falls Road and Upper Newtownards Road corridors.

- Approximately **10 million passengers** travelled **on the Glider** phase 1 corridors in **2019**.
- This was an **increase of some 70% on those corridors** relative to patronage prior to commencement of the project, which exceeded its opening year targets.

The preferred route for Phase 2 has been announced to service North and South Belfast via Antrim Road and Ormeau Road/ Saintfield Road along with extending the G2 service to Queens University and Belfast City Hospital. Sustaining and building on the success of BRT will support in achieving a reduction in carbon emissions from transport. The combined bus and BRT network is complex with many overlapping route variants, offering a mix in terms of bus journey times and service frequencies. Figure 3[46] shows that, while there is generally a consistent pattern of journey times, with journey times increasing with distance away from Belfast City Centre, there are some outliers where journey times are longer from some inner-city locations. Although bus journey times appear generally consistent, they are uncompetitive when compared to the equivalent journey by car, with many parts on the outskirts of the Metropolitan Area experiencing bus journey times in excess of 45 minutes compared to an equivalent journey of 30 minutes by car. A lack of consistent provision of bus priority is a contributor to this challenge. Figure 4 shows existing bus priority infrastructure in place across the area, including inbound (to Belfast City Centre) and outbound bus lanes, demonstrating gaps in provision across all radial corridors, most notably in the outbound direction.

46 2023 All Ireland Road Network & 2022 Metrobus & Glider PT Network utilised to produce journey time contour within Basemap TRACC v2.3.1

S4 FIGURE 3: Bus Journey Time into Belfast - AM Peak (07:00 – 10:00 arriving into City Hall)



S4 FIGURE 4: Existing bus priority infrastructure within the Metropolitan Area





Glider vehicle and onboard facilities

Image courtesy of Tourism Ireland by Richard Watson

4.2.2.2 Rail Network

Alongside the highway network, regional rail lines also provide links to towns and cities across the region and across the border (Figure 5). A focus of the railway network is Belfast Grand Central Station, which provides key commuting corridors radiating from Belfast City Centre and beyond into the Metropolitan Area and on to Dublin. There are 15 railway stations located within the Metropolitan Area, enabling access to the Portadown Line linking to the south west, the Bangor Line to the east, and a combination of Derry/Londonderry Line and Larne Line linking northwards.

Demand for rail is heavily Belfast centric, with higher utilisation into the late morning. This will be influenced by the benefit of peak time express services meaning that rail is more competitive than bus and car in terms of journey times within the ETP area. However, due to the number and density of stations along the line between Lisburn and Belfast, average journey speeds are significantly longer on off-peak services.

S4 FIGURE 5: **Existing rail network within Metropolitan Area**





4.2.3 Highway network

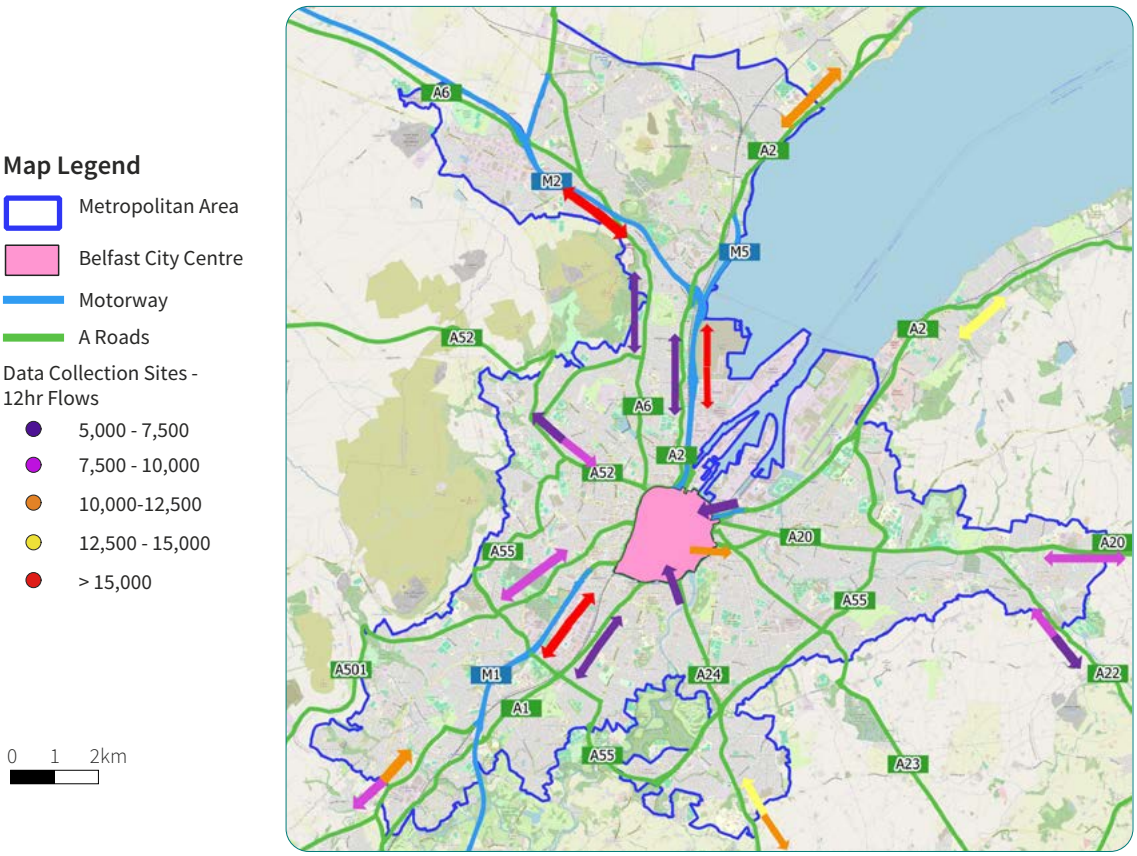
The existing highway network provides for local and strategic connections within and beyond the Metropolitan Area. Figure 6 shows key strategic highway links including the M1, M2 and M5 as well as the A-road network that provides for faster long-distance journeys to and from neighbouring settlements and across the border. Figure 7 also shows how Belfast City Centre is served by a network of radial corridors.

Figure 6 highlights key locations on this highway network where typical weekday, one-way traffic flows in 2023 exceed 5,000 vehicles per day (7:00-19:00)[47]. The highest traffic volumes occur on the M1 and M2 corridors in both directions to and from Belfast. The highest volumes on the A Road network are exhibited on the A2 corridor in both directions to and from Belfast and Bangor, and inbound on the A24 towards Belfast from the area to the south of the Metropolitan Area. Many other radial corridors spanning outwards from Belfast City Centre also exhibit high volumes of traffic. Figure 7 shows parts of the highway network that exhibit a reduction in average traffic speeds during the morning peak hour, compared to free-flowing overnight traffic speeds[48], demonstrating the most congested parts of the area's transport network. This also highlights the importance of the radial corridors, which all currently suffer from peak hour congestion, and, without intervention, will only deteriorate further with the planned growth for the area.

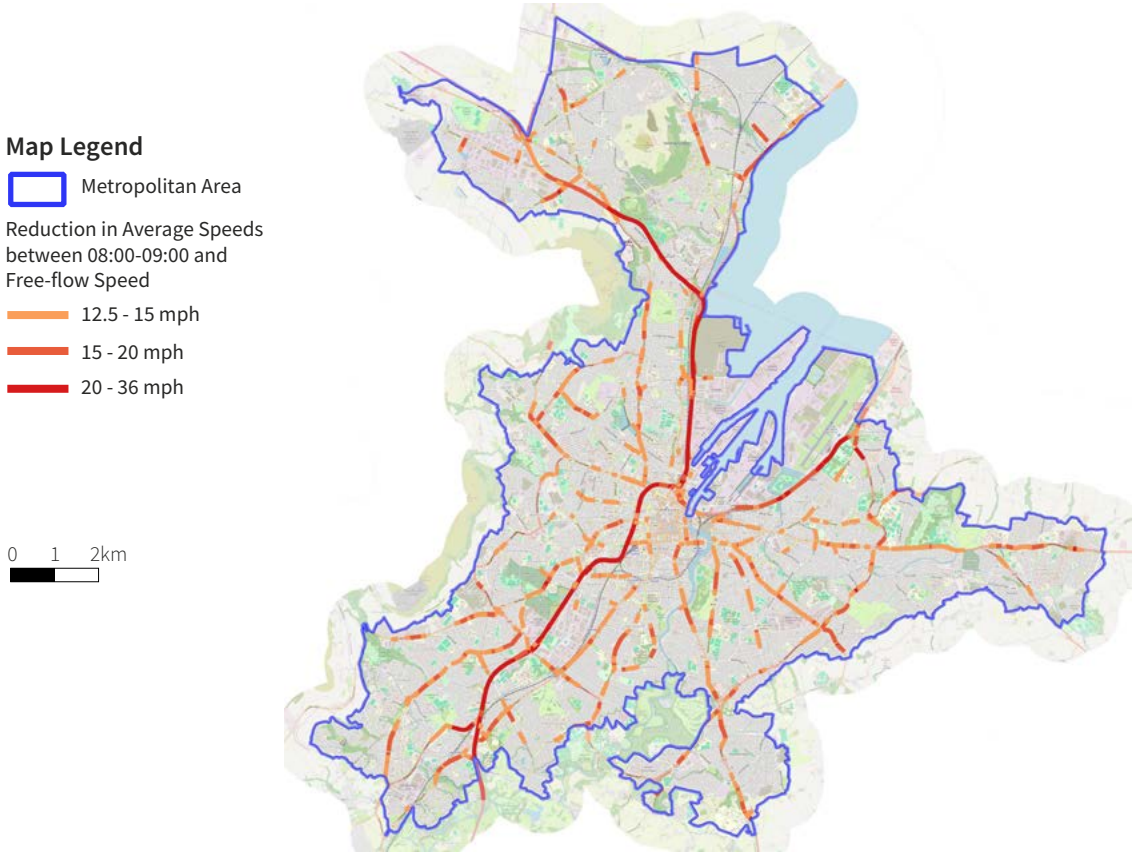
47 Typical traffic flows established as an average of Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday traffic flows observed at Automatic Traffic Count sites at each marked location during 2023

48 TomTom data extracted across a year's data from weekdays across April 2023 to April 2024, comparing the AM Peak time period between 08:00-09:00.

S4 FIGURE 6: Existing highway network within Metropolitan Area



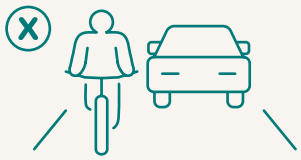
S4 FIGURE 7: Congestion within the Metropolitan Area



4.2.4 Current and Future Transport Challenges

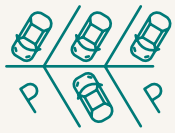
The current and future transport challenges facing the Metropolitan Area are broad and varied. There are a vast range of different transport demands that are placed upon the area's network and with the combined council's LDP's outlining up to 37,200 new homes within the area, pressure on the public transport and highway network is expected to grow. As outlined within section 2.3, transport is cross-cutting in nature. An effective transport network can also support the delivery of transformative changes across many other areas of society including social inclusion, health and wellbeing, and the environment. Ensuring that the transport network across the Metropolitan Area functions effectively and in a way that is supportive of wider societal ambitions is therefore highly important.

Informed by a review of the existing transport network and analysis of available data, key transport challenges have been identified as follows. Information about the wider context, including economic, environmental and societal challenges faced by the region can be found in section 2.3:



Lack of coherent cycle network

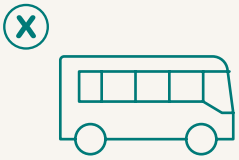
Although existing greenways serving the Metropolitan Area are of high quality, there are missing links between routes. The overall cycle network is inconsistent, with dedicated provision for cyclists being sporadic in nature forcing cyclists to often mix with general traffic to complete their journeys. This leads to actual and perceived safety concerns and acts as a key deterrent to cycle use across the area. The 2023/24 Continuous Household Survey[49] found a lack of cycle lanes and too much traffic to be the leading reasons why people were unsatisfied with existing conditions for cycling in their areas.



Data gaps in outer and fringe areas

Due to variations between council areas, multiple owners and car parking outside of town centres, there is not a consistent dataset on parking supply. This means that it is difficult to understand the current parking conditions within the fringe and beyond. In addition, it is difficult to understand the provision of accessible parking, due to limited data availability. The enforcement of parking is also an issue.

49 https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/road-safety-issues-northern-ireland-202324



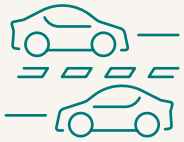
Car dominance and inconsiderate pavement parking in residential areas

Although footpaths are consistently provided across the majority of the Metropolitan Area, in some areas they can become cluttered or misused meaning that they cannot be used for their intended purpose. Inconsiderate pavement parking is a particular issue exhibited across the area, particularly in residential areas. Inconsiderate pavement parking creates a barrier to walking and wheeling movements, sometimes forcing vulnerable users onto the road which reduces safety as well as resulting in a poor experience of travel, in extreme cases preventing travel altogether.



Accommodating population growth and growing congestion

Each council has plans for growth within the Metropolitan Area. The projected population growth will lead to increased travel demand and, based upon past patterns and without intervention, up to 100,000 additional journeys are expected to destinate within the Metropolitan Area by car[50]. With the network already at capacity at peak times, these additional car trips will result in a significant increase in delays to journeys within the Metropolitan Area, with delays forecast to increase by 24-46% compared to 2023 conditions[51]. The success of the ETP will be dependent on complementary land use policies that support public transport service provision by focusing development along key public transport corridors and to sustainable densities.



Lack of bus priority

Similar to the cycle network, existing bus lanes do not provide for continuous priority across the broader Metropolitan Area, especially beyond the existing BRT routes. This means that bus journey time benefits gained within bus lanes elsewhere on the network are often quickly lost, leading to unreliable and inconsistent journey times which reduces the resilience of the wider bus network.



Variation in Park and Ride utilisation

In some locations, park and rides are overutilised, whilst others have a significant amount of spaces available. Further monitoring would be beneficial to understand locations where this is the case, as encouraging the use of sustainable modes, via the park and rides, is essential. Targeted investment in the active travel and public transport networks will rebalance the transport network, providing attractive sustainable travel options to overcome these challenges and accommodate planned growth in a more sustainable way.

50 Based on modelled transport conditions under BCC's growth scenario
51 Based on modelled transport conditions

4.3 Area-wide Vision

The development of the ETP is following a Vision-led approach, to move away from historic patterns of travel which has resulted in an overdependence in the private car. Whilst the ETP must seek to accommodate the growth proposed by the Councils, it must be delivered in a sustainable manner and in line with the Transport Strategy. Central to the Vision and as outlined in section 2.6 of this transport plan, nine Place and Movement Framework (PMF) categories have been applied to the ETP's transport network. The categories have been applied in order to capture the long-term aspiration for change across the network.

Each PMF category has a bespoke hierarchy of modes. In defining the Vision PMF for each part of the transport network, ETP is therefore committing to ensure that any changes made to the transport network within the Plan period align with the defined modal hierarchies. This ensures:

- **Any transport schemes identified as part of this Transport Plan** will align with the modal hierarchy defined for that part of the network through the relevant Vision PMF; and
- **Any other changes to the transport network** identified after the publication of this Transport Plan will be developed in accordance with the relevant Vision PMF.

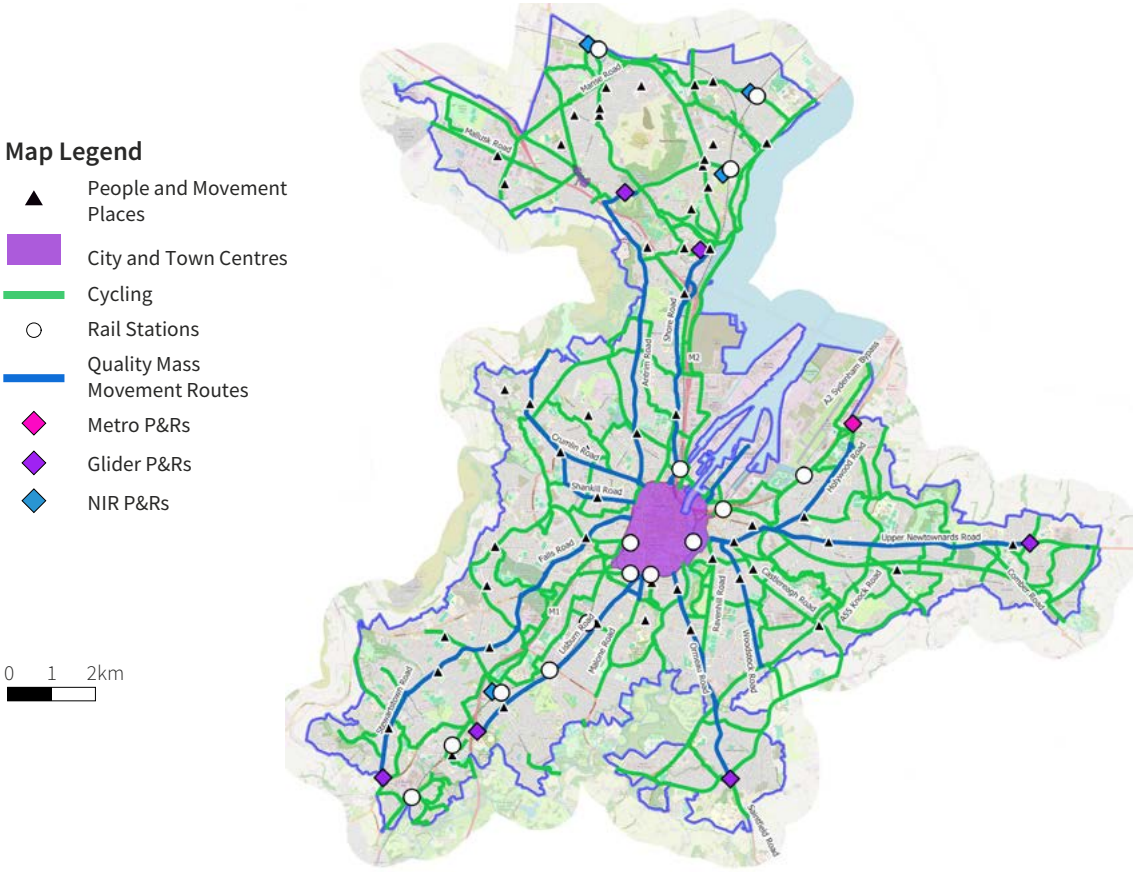
The full Vision PMF for the Metropolitan Area can be found in Annex E[52], with a summarised version presented in Figure 8. The details of these aspirations are described further in the following sections.

It is neither necessary nor realistic to expect that enhancements to the entire Metropolitan Area transport network can be delivered within the Plan period. The remainder of this Chapter sets out the overarching proposals for each mode of transport for the area. The identified vision across the Metropolitan Area will need to be delivered in stages, so each section also confirms the transport interventions expected to be delivered within the 2035 Plan period. Interventions will progress as funding becomes available. By ensuring that each individual scheme aligns with the identified strategy, improvements will work well in combination and cumulatively to provide recognised benefits across the area.

Implementation of any individual scheme will be progressed following appropriate guidance and aligning with relevant planning requirements. Engagement with local communities and other relevant stakeholders will be undertaken throughout scheme development and design stages. As schemes are progressed to more detailed design and planning, there will be a requirement to carry out further assessment work of both environmental and social issues. This could include, where appropriate, Environmental Impact Assessments, Habitats Regulation Assessments or assessments such as Health Impact or Equalities Impact. Environmental Management Plans will also be developed ahead of construction.

52 Link to PMF viewer

S4 FIGURE 8: Metropolitan Area Vision Proposals



4.4 Walking and Wheeling

The Plan proposes improvements to walking and wheeling facilities across the Metropolitan Area, focused on improving safety (including the perception of safety) and enhancing connections between residential areas and local retail, education, employment and leisure destinations as well as to public transport services.

4.4.1 Vision

As depicted in the PMF for the Metropolitan Area, walking and wheeling is seen as the priority mode across much of this Area, including within:

- **People Places:** covering predominantly residential areas, where most people start and end their everyday journeys;
- **Traffic Free Routes:** which connect the Metropolitan Area with Belfast City Centre and neighbouring settlements;
- **People and Movement Places:** which are defined by the councils and typically centre on clusters of shops and other local amenities across the area; and
- **Connecting Movement Routes:** forming connections between different areas within, into and out of the Metropolitan Area.

In placing walking and wheeling at the top of the modal hierarchies for each of these PMF categories, ETP is committing to ensuring that any transport interventions within the Plan period first consider and address the needs of walkers and wheelers.

Central to aligning with this modal priority is the proposal to review traffic speed limits across the area, with many residential and community streets anticipated to have new **20mph speed limits** put in place. There are demonstrable links between reduced traffic speeds and reductions in collisions and fatalities[53]. There is also evidence to suggest that slower traffic speeds lead to an increased uptake of people choosing to walk, wheel or cycle due to the increased perception of safety. Expanding the areas covered by this low-speed limit will help to ensure that walking and wheeling is an attractive and safe option for travelling within the area.

In addition to speed limit changes, the ETP Guiding Principles (section 2.6) provide example measures that should be considered when making changes to these parts of the transport network within the Plan period. These measures have also been considered during option development of schemes to be included within the Plan. Interventions that will support ETP's vision for walking and wheeling across the Metropolitan Area include:

- Lowering traffic speeds to create safer walking environments;
- Ensuring that footpaths are of suitable widths, are uncluttered and are well maintained;
- Prioritising walkers and wheelers at existing and new crossing facilities whilst balancing modal priority at junctions;
- Widening footways to unlock community focused spaces for people to walk, wheel and spend time;

53 Pedestrian fatality risk as a function of car impact speed (Erik Rosén, Ulrich Sander)

- Enhancing wayfinding, including signposting walk distances to key destinations; and
- Upgrading existing walking and wheeling routes to ensure they are appropriately lit and furnished.

Interventions will be targeted in areas most in need, for example those with known pedestrian safety challenges and within identified People and Movement Places. The People and Movement Places shown in Figure 9 represent clusters of local services, e.g. shops, health services and community facilities, around which the councils will consider densification of development. 54 Local Centres have been identified in partnership with Belfast City Council, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council across the Metropolitan Area. In support of these, transport-related improvements to footways and crossing facilities, supporting public realm within these areas (see Annex D for example toolkit of measures) and from the surrounding communities will be progressed in order to make walking and wheeling a more attractive and convenient option for local journeys.

Although not at the top of their respective modal hierarchies, walking and wheeling facilities will also be an important consideration on all other parts of the Metropolitan Area transport network. For example, on **Quality Mass Movement Routes** and **Strategic Movement Routes**, enhanced pedestrian crossing facilities should be provided as required along the corridors.

4.4.2 ETP Proposals

Figure 9 illustrates the proposals planned to be delivered within the Plan period, each of which contributes towards the long-term vision for walking and wheeling. Schemes focused on individual areas will be progressed as funding becomes available or opportunities for change arise. By ensuring that each individual scheme aligns with the identified vision, improvements will work well together and provide recognised benefits across the area.

Implementation of individual schemes will be progressed following appropriate guidance and aligning with relevant statutory processes. Engagement with local communities and other relevant interest groups will be undertaken throughout any scheme development and design stages.

Alongside the delivery of these individual proposals, investment in improvements to existing footways and crossings will also continue across the Plan period, as well as reallocating space for public realm.



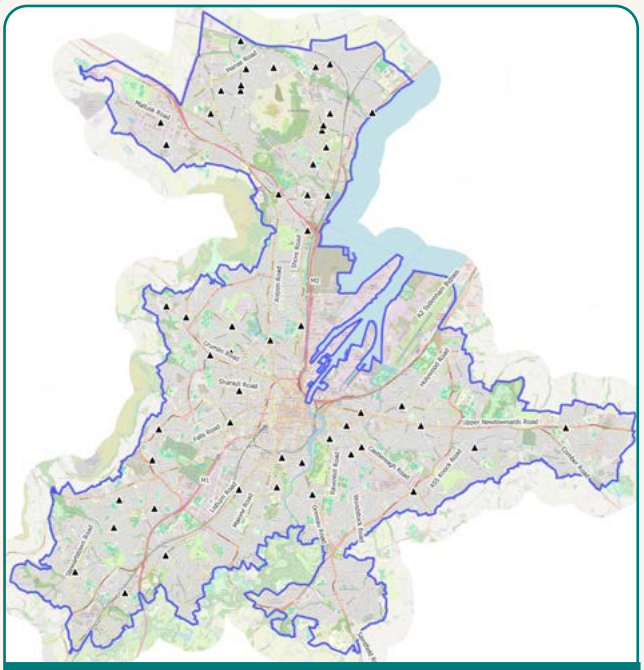
S4 FIGURE 9: Metropolitan Area - Walking and Wheeling Plan Proposals

01 Targeted improvements to footways and crossings

02 ANBC People and Movement Places

03 Metropolitan Area 20mph speed limit

04 LCCC People and Movement Places



Metropolitan Area Vision for People and Movement Places



Image of Ballyhackamore PMP

S4 FIGURE 9 ANNOTATIONS: **Metropolitan Area - Walking and Wheeling Plan Proposals**

01 Targeted improvements to footways and crossings

Targeted improvements to footways and crossings as a need is identified, including within People Places, Quality Mass Movement Routes and Connecting Movement Routes as required.

02 ANBC People and Movement Places

17 local centres have been identified within Metropolitan Newtownabbey.

In support of these, the long term vision aspires to make transport-related improvements to footways and crossing facilities within these and surrounding areas to help make walking and wheeling a more attractive and convenient option for local journeys.

Within the Plan period, a study area centred on the two local centres of Abbot's Cross and Cloughfern will be the focus of interventions: These locations have the potential to benefit a comparably high number of people, including those that may experience limited access to a car or van, as well as having the potential to connect into the wider sustainable transport network. The study area has been defined as all areas within approximately a 10-minute walk time of each local centre, however this may be subject to refinement as any proposals are progressed.

Transport interventions will be developed collaboratively with the local community and council, drawing on suggestions outlined in the ETP Guiding Principles and People and Movement Places toolkit (see Annex D).

03 Metropolitan Area 20mph speed limit

Speed limit reductions to 20mph across all People Places and People and Movement Places within the Metropolitan Area will make residential areas and local high street areas safer and more attractive places to walk or wheel.

04 LCCC People and Movement Places

Three People and Movement Places have been identified within Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council within Metropolitan Lisburn and Castlereagh. To support enhancement of these locations, the long term vision aspires to make transport-related improvements to footways and crossing facilities within these areas and from the surrounding communities in to help make walking and wheeling a more attractive and convenient option for local journeys.

Within the Plan period, Dundonald has been selected due to the potential to benefit a high number of people in the surrounding residential area, and due to strong connections with the existing Glider route and Park and Ride.

Interventions will be developed collaboratively with the local community and council, drawing on suggestions outlined in the ETP Guiding Principles and People and Movement Places toolkit (see Annex D).

05 BCC People and Movement Places

Within Belfast City Council, 33 local centres have been identified.

The long term vision aspires to make transport-related improvements to footways and crossing facilities within these and surrounding areas to improve community access to these locations.

In line with the Belfast Agenda Community Plan 'Our Place Action Plan', four place based exemplar areas will be delivered within the Plan period to demonstrate not only what can be achieved, but also to establish a best practice process that can be followed to deliver community-led, co-designed solutions. These will be located at Andersonstown, Antrim Road, Ballyhackamore, and Ormeau Road. These locations have been selected due to the potential to benefit a high number of people and due to the potential to tie into wider multi-modal improvements.

Interventions will be developed collaboratively with the local community and council, drawing on suggestions outlined in the ETP Guiding Principles and People and Movement Places toolkit (see Annex D).

06 Glengormley Town Centre

The ETP vision for Glengormley is as follows.

- Support Public Realm improvements proposed by ANBC.
- Speed limit reduction to 20mph to further support walk, wheeling and cycle safety.
- Improve connection to BRT2 O'Neill Park and Ride
- Enhanced bus stop waiting facilities in line with the new ETP Performance, Service and Infrastructure Standards.
- Parking – Consideration of Glengormley town centre as an area of parking restraint within the LPP.



4.5 Cycling

ETP aims to encourage more people to cycle by considering the needs of cyclists as part of scheme development and design. This reflects cycling's second place in modal priority in the hierarchies for:

- **People Places:** covering predominantly residential areas, where most people start and end their everyday journeys;
- **Traffic Free Routes:** which connect the Metropolitan Area with Belfast City Centre and neighbouring settlements;
- **People and Movement Places:** which centre on clusters of shops and other local amenities across the area; and
- **Connecting Movement Routes:** forming connections between different areas within, into and out of the Metropolitan Area.

This means that, following consideration of the needs of walkers and wheelers, any schemes progressed on these designated parts of the network should aim to implement measures that will enhance conditions for cyclists before the needs of motorised vehicles are considered. The ETP Guiding Principles (section 2.6) provides example measures that should be considered when making changes to these parts of the transport network within the Plan period. These measures have also been considered during option development of schemes to be included within the Plan (see Table 1).

An updated Belfast Cycling Network (BCN) (which now supersedes the BCN Delivery Plan) has been developed as part of the ETP, focusing on building a more comprehensive network of safe and accessible routes across the area. The new BCN reflects the defined modal priorities outlined in the PMF Vision for the Metropolitan Area and provides assurance around the deliverability of routes alongside proposals for other modes. The resulting proposals will be delivered in stages, with 'priority' routes identified for delivery within the Plan period (2035), and 'future' routes likely to be delivered over the longer term. Together, these form the long-term Vision for cycling across the Belfast City Council area which will connect seamlessly into proposals outlined in the Everyday Active Travel: The Urban Delivery Plan.

The Department have developed a wider Everyday Active Travel: The Urban Delivery Plan which covers all areas of NI outside of the Belfast City Council area. These identify a series of priority active travel routes for delivery within the next ten years, aligned with the Plan period. The Priority and Future routes for these areas are also shown as part of the proposals in Figure 10.

Additional interventions that will support ETP's vision for cycling across the Metropolitan Area include:

- Lowering traffic speeds to create safer cycling environments;
- Providing new supporting infrastructure including secure cycle storage and supporting ongoing cycle hire options;
- Enhancing wayfinding, including signposting cycle distances to key destinations; and
- Upgrading existing cycling routes to ensure they are appropriately surfaced, maintained and lit.

Although lower in the priority of their respective modal hierarchies, targeted improvements for cycling will also be considered on all other parts of the Metropolitan Area transport network. For example, on **Quality Mass Movement Routes** and **Strategic Movement Routes** dedicated provision for cyclists may be delivered where a key demand is identified or where a cycle link is required to close a gap in a longer distance cycle route.

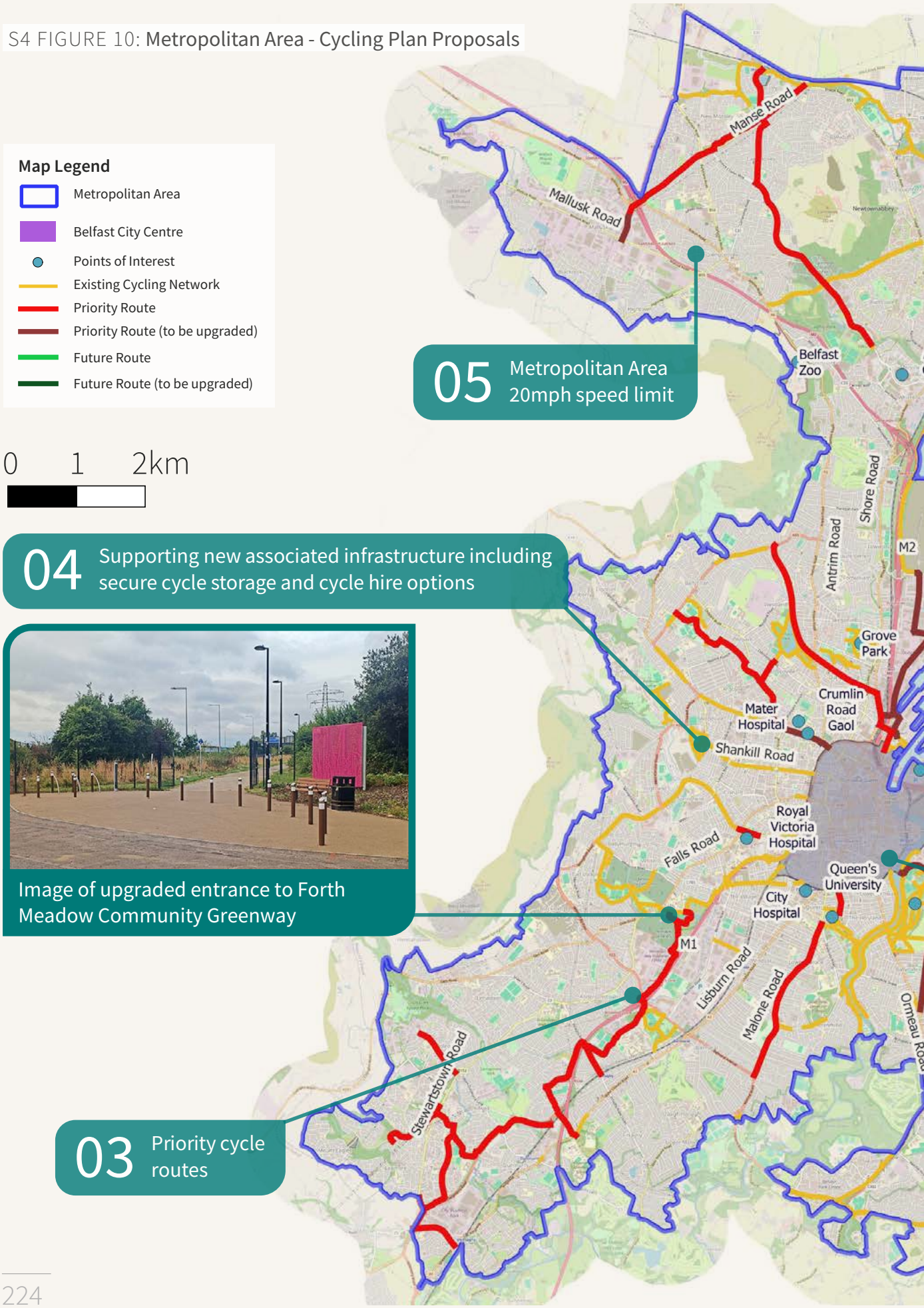
4.5.1 ETP Proposals

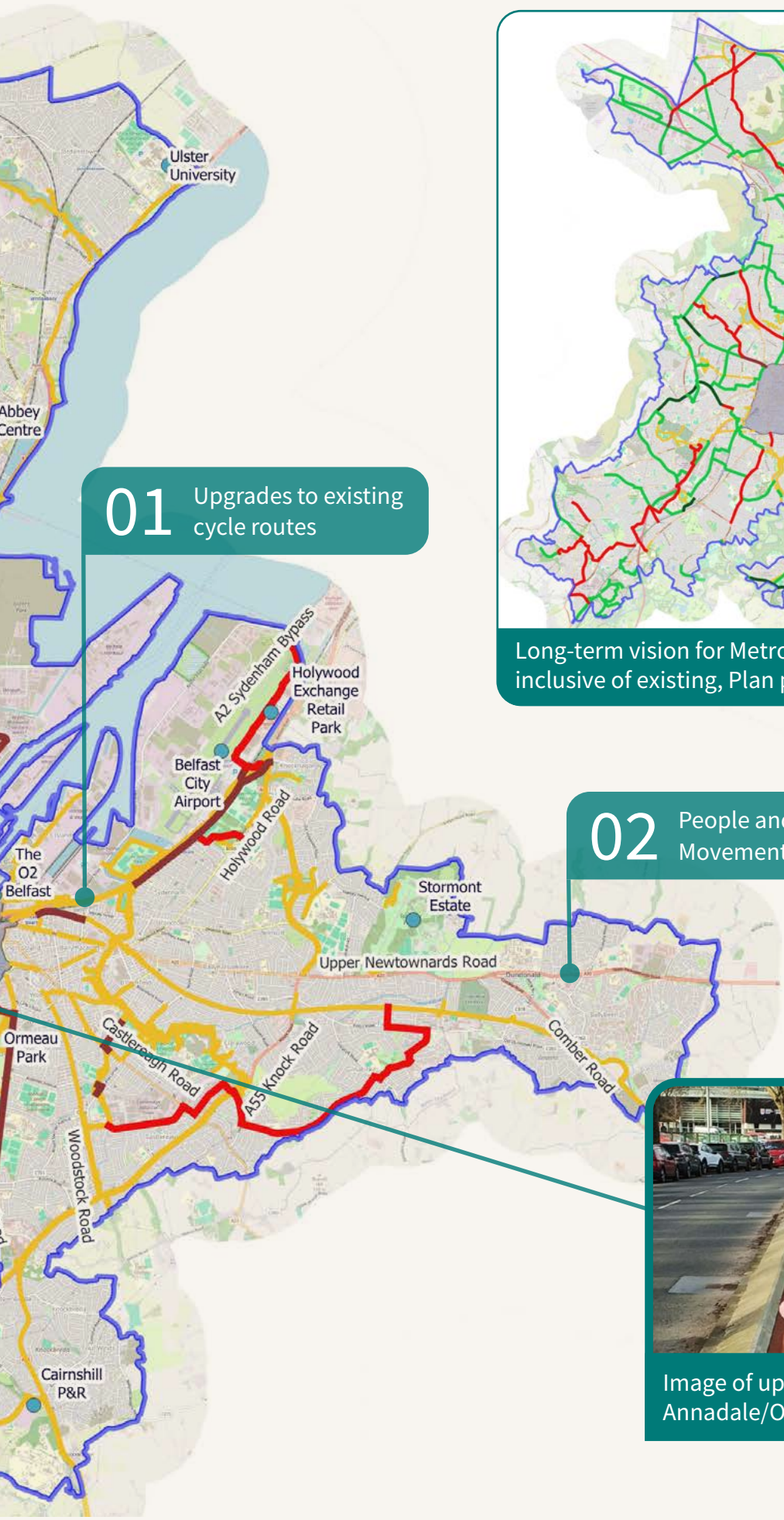
Figure 10 summarises the Plan proposals related to cycling, identified for delivery within the Plan period. The Plan proposes significant improvements to cycling provision within the Metropolitan Area, aiming to enhance connectivity for those who choose to cycle. The priority routes will form the core focus for delivery of enhancements within the Plan period, however targeted upgrades to existing routes will also be considered and progressed as required.

Implementation of individual schemes will be progressed following appropriate guidance and aligning with relevant statutory processes. Engagement with local communities and other relevant stakeholders will be undertaken throughout scheme development and design stages.

Alongside the delivery of these individual proposals, targeted improvements to existing cycle routes will be progressed where need arises across the Plan period.

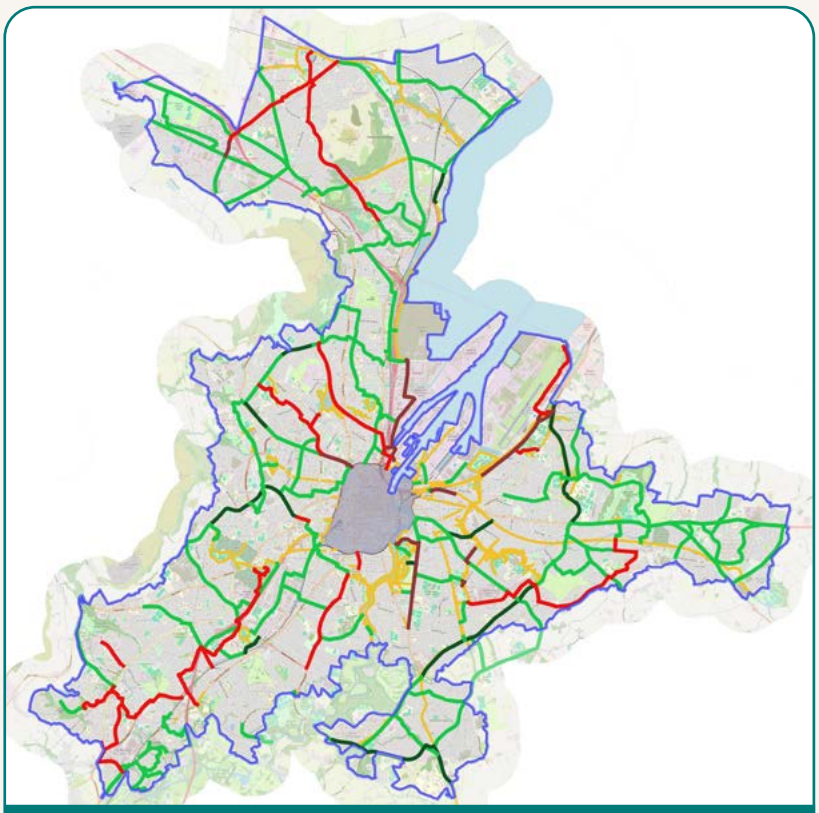
S4 FIGURE 10: **Metropolitan Area - Cycling Plan Proposals**





01 Upgrades to existing cycle routes

02 People and Movement Places



Long-term vision for Metropolitan Area cycle network, inclusive of existing, Plan proposals and Future routes



Image of upgraded cycle route via Annadale/Ormeau Embankment

S4 FIGURE 10 ANNOTATIONS: **Metropolitan Area - Cycling Plan Proposals**

01 Upgrades to existing cycle routes

Where necessary, improvements to existing cycle routes will also be delivered. For example, to provide improved separation between cyclists and motor traffic, or in the resurfacing of degraded routes.

02 People and Movement Places

Interventions to be progressed within the seven initial People and Movement Places, described further in section 4.2.1, will consider the needs of cyclists. Interventions may involve improved wayfinding for cyclist, introduction of new or improved cycle storage and introduction of new cycle lanes connecting the amenities in the local centre to the wider cycle network

03 Priority cycle routes

New high-quality, segregated cycle routes will be delivered along key routes across the Metropolitan Area. These have been carefully identified to close gaps in the existing cycle network and introduce new travel options serving corridors that have low levels of existing cycle priority. These have been carefully identified to close gaps in the existing cycle network and introduce new travel options serving corridors that have low levels of existing cycle priority infrastructure.

Together with existing routes and connections within Belfast City Centre, these priority cycle routes will help to make cycling a more attractive and realistic travel choice for many in the city.

04 Supporting new associated infrastructure including secure cycle storage and cycle hire options

To support end-to-end journeys and unlock cycling as an opportunity mode for people that do not own their own bikes, the Department will continue working with partners to support the provision of secure cycle storage and cycle hire options across the region.

05 Metropolitan Area 20mph speed limit

Speed limit reductions to 20mph across all People Places and People and Movement Places within the Metropolitan Area will make residential areas and local high street areas safer and more attractive places to cycle.



Image courtesy off Brian Morrison / Walk Wheel Cycle Trust

4.6 Bus and BRT

Existing bus and BRT services form the mainstay of public transport provision for most residents within the Metropolitan Area. However, due to inconsistent provision of bus lanes across the network, bus services are impacted by increasing levels of congestion, leading to unreliable journey times and negatively impacting passenger experience.

The introduction of the Glider in 2018 represented a step-change in service provision for the area. As a BRT solution, it provides enhanced service frequencies and reliability, modern tram-style vehicles, high levels of bus priority along its routes, off board ticketing and high-quality waiting facilities.

ETP identifies a series of key corridors as Quality Mass Movement Routes across the Metropolitan Area. These largely align with the twelve existing Metro bus corridors and two existing Glider routes and represent corridors serving the greatest level of demand across the area.

In classifying these corridors as Quality Mass Movement Routes, ETP is committing to ensuring that the needs of buses (and future Glider network expansions) are the foremost consideration when designing changes to the transport network in these locations. The defined Quality Mass Movement Routes are presented in Figure 11.

Any interventions progressed on these corridors, either within and beyond the Plan period, should include infrastructure measures, service improvements and operational improvements such as:

- Increasing the extent of bus lane provision, as well as targeted bus priority at junctions, to support improved bus journey times and reliability;
- Introducing bus lane enforcement cameras to prevent bus lanes from becoming blocked by unauthorised loading or parking activity within enforcement hours;
- Improving the quality and consistency of bus stops and associated infrastructure; and
- Reducing the complexity of bus routeings and bus route variants along each corridor, which will lead to an overall increase in bus frequency along each corridor.

4.6.1 ETP Proposals

The priority measures to be delivered within and beyond the Plan period have been identified. Figure 11 shows the corridors along which existing and committed (BRT2) Glider services run, as well as identifying two further corridors to be delivered within the Plan period: Shore Road and Lisburn Road.

On other identified Quality Mass Movement Routes, including Shankill Road, Holywood Road and Cregagh Road, where need arises and funding is available during the Plan period, enhanced provision of bus lanes and other priority measures will be delivered during the Plan period. This will also help people accessing services and facilities from beyond the Metropolitan Area. Within the Plan period it is anticipated that refinements to Metro service routeings and upgrades to bus stops will be made across all corridors, resulting in an improvement in service frequencies and passenger experience across the area.

To guide this enhanced delivery, the Department will develop a new set of Bus Performance, Infrastructure and Service Standards and a new Bus Passenger Proposition.

Implementation of individual schemes will be progressed following appropriate guidance and aligning with relevant statutory processes. Engagement with local communities and other relevant stakeholders will be undertaken throughout scheme development and design stages.

Other complementary measures

In addition to the proposals outlined in Figure 11, which will be progressed by DfI during the Plan period, the Plan also acknowledges the following proposals which are relevant to the area and will complement the ETP proposals:

- ETP considers that the BRT2 proposal (new Glider services along Antrim Road and Ormeau Road) is a committed scheme to be delivered within the Plan period.

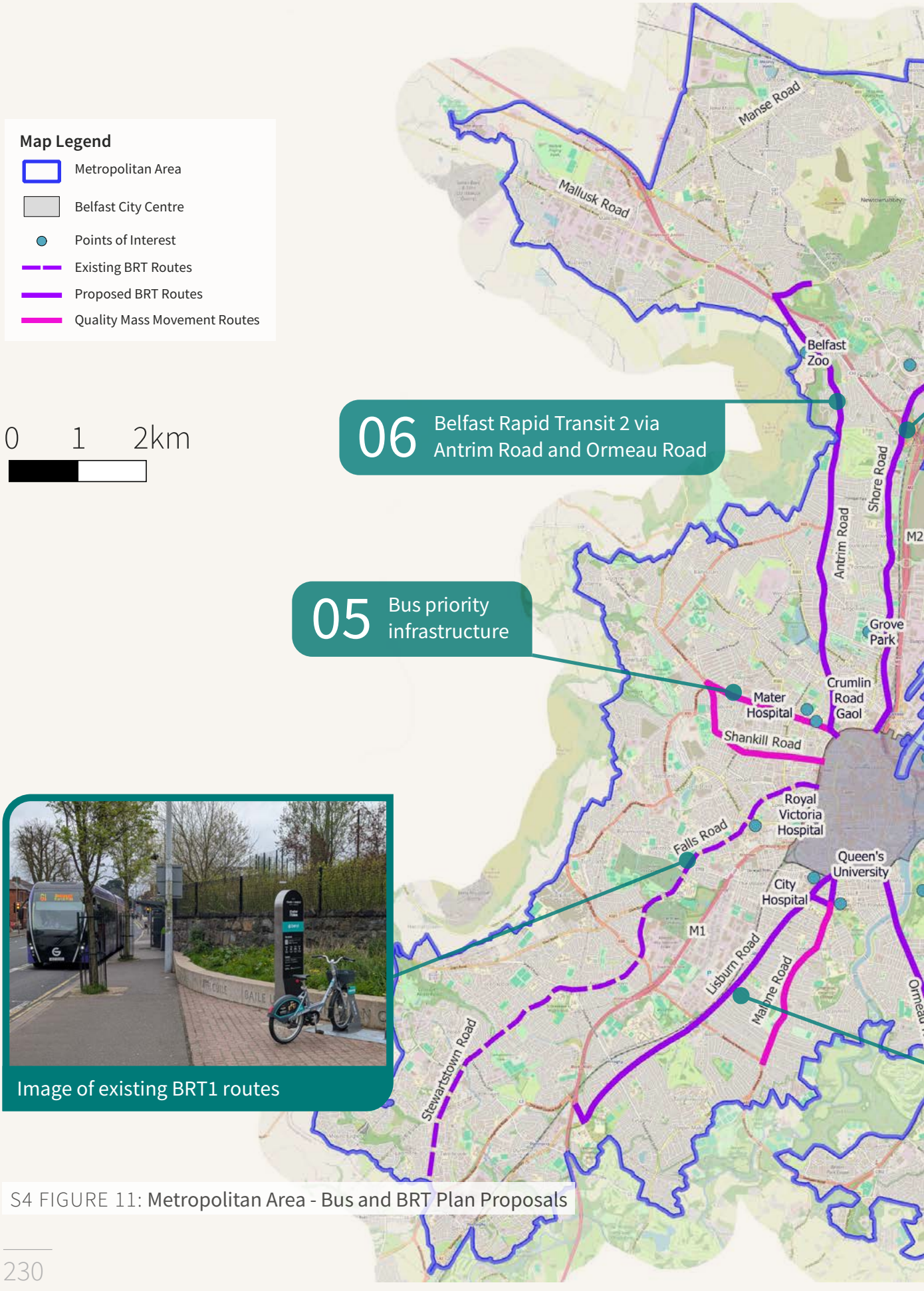


Image of existing BRT1 routes

S4 FIGURE 11: Metropolitan Area - Bus and BRT Plan Proposals



01 Belfast Rapid Transit 3 via Shore Road

02 Enhanced Bus Passenger Proposition



Image of existing BRT1 routes

03 Development of enhanced Bus Performance, Infrastructure and Service Standards

04 Belfast Rapid Transit 3 via Lisburn Road

S4 FIGURE 11 ANNOTATIONS: **Metropolitan Area - Bus and BRT Plan Proposals**

01 Belfast Rapid Transit 3 via Shore Road

Shore Road has been identified as a priority corridor for delivery of future Glider services. The Shore Road proposal would operate from a new Park and Ride in Metropolitan Newtownabbey serving Shore Road, connecting to Belfast City Centre and beyond.

During the Plan period, progression of appraisal and design work will continue ahead of scheme delivery. The scheme will include delivery of high levels of bus priority (bus lanes) along the corridor in line with the proposals for Quality Mass Movement Routes, as well as implementation of new Glider services and installation of Glider halts.

02 Enhanced Bus Passenger Proposition

A new, Bus Passenger Proposition will be developed. DfI will work with Translink to identify opportunities to improve the overall passenger proposition, including a review of Metro service routeings, with the aim of delivering a simplification in bus routeings and leading to an improvement in service frequencies and passenger experience across the area.

This will also include a review of fares, integrating payment mechanisms and ticketing to improve the information available to existing and prospective bus users.

These benefits will be felt across the full Metropolitan Area bus network.

03 Development of enhanced Bus Performance, Infrastructure and Service Standards

A new Bus Performance, Infrastructure and Service Standard will be developed in close collaboration with Translink. These will establish the high-quality aspects for the bus and BRT network including:

- Fixed infrastructure, vehicles, operations and customer services;
- High standards of reliability with punctual service operation and predictable journey times;
- Delivery of a complete system with a consistent approach to every aspect and component of the system design;
- Integration at all levels, including policy areas such as social inclusion and economic regeneration, and with other modes of transport including walking, wheeling, cyclists and car users.

04 Belfast Rapid Transit 3 via Lisburn Road

Lisburn Road has been identified as a priority corridor for delivery of future Glider services.

The Lisburn Road service will connect Belfast City Centre to the south-west of the city, with a potential connection to the existing Black's Road Park and Ride facility.

During the Plan period, progression of appraisal and design work will continue ahead of scheme delivery. The scheme will include delivery of high levels of bus priority (bus lanes) along the corridor in line with the proposals for Quality Mass Movement Routes, as well as implementation of new Glider services and installation of Glider halts.

05 Bus priority infrastructure

Associated with the new Bus Performance, Infrastructure and Service Standards, enhancements to existing bus stops and associated infrastructure, including implementation of real-time passenger information, will be delivered along identified Quality Mass Movement Routes in anticipation of the future expansion of bus priority measures and future Glider phases.

Implementation of the Standards will also result in increased levels of bus priority measures (bus lanes and priority at signalised junctions) leading to improvements in bus journey times and reliability.

06 Belfast Rapid Transit 2 via Antrim Road and Ormeau Road

ETP considers that the BRT2 proposal (new Glider services along Antrim Road and Ormeau Road) is a committed scheme to be delivered within the Plan period.



Photo credit: Translink

4.7 Park and Ride

Within the Metropolitan Area, DfI and Translink operate eleven existing bus and rail-based Park and Ride sites. Across Northern Ireland as a whole, 61 Park and Ride sites operate, the majority of which provide bus or rail service options to Belfast.

ETP, along with other transport plans for the region, supports the sustained and expanded provision of Park and Ride services as a means to connect people, including those living in more rural areas, to opportunities within our towns and cities. The Department will work with Translink to enhance the existing provision of Park and Ride sites and services, across the region as well as working to ensure appropriate access to Park and Ride facilities.

The Regional Strategic Transport Plan will provide recommendations relating to changes to Park and Ride sites that focus on providing long-distance, strategic transport connections across the region, including to and from the Metropolitan Area. This will include a strategic review of potential new Park and Ride sites and expansion schemes at existing locations.

However, more local journeys can also be accommodated using Park and Ride services. In particular, the locations of the existing sites at Black's Road, Cairnshill and Dundonald perform a dual role of capturing long distance car journeys for their final leg into Belfast city as well as providing onward bus journey options for residents that walk, cycle or drive short distances from within or close to the Metropolitan Area.

The long-term vision for Park and Ride is that they form a complementary, multi-modal offer alongside Quality Mass Movement Routes, including tying in with existing and future Glider services for the Metropolitan Area. This will mean that people that don't live directly along a Glider or high-quality bus route will still be able to benefit from these high-frequency and reliable public transport services.

The Transport Strategy Measure CC04 states "The Department will invest in high quality interchange facilities and/or Mobility Hubs to ensure that the full benefit of transport investment is realised by linking services and infrastructure". As such, through the development of Park and Ride facilities within the ETP area, further consideration will be given to maximise their potential reach beyond traditional Park and Ride users. Complementary measures may include information on transport, information on the local area, improved seating/waiting areas, cycle parking and changes to hours of operation to facilitate potential local community uses.

4.7.1 ETP Proposals

Within the Plan period, ETP aims to enhance the attractiveness of Park and Ride use within and beyond the Metropolitan Area. Part of doing this includes introducing measures to improve bus journey times and reliability for journeys from peripheral Park and Ride sites into the city - the proposed enhancements along the Quality Mass Movement Routes will support this (section 4.6). However, there is no longer a desire to promote the use of the existing Eastside and Northside Park

and Rides due to their locations within the built-up area of Belfast. Alternative uses for these sites will be considered during the plan period, aiming to prioritise transport uses where necessary.

Additionally, to maximise the benefits of the proposed Quality Mass Movement Routes, it is proposed that new Park and Ride sites are considered for introduction on the periphery of the Metropolitan Area. These sites will help to connect people living beyond the Metropolitan Area with key destinations within Belfast via the enhanced bus and Glider services running along Quality Mass Movement Routes.

As outlined in section 4.6, the BRT2 proposals for the next phase of Glider services via Antrim Road and Ormeau Road are considered to be committed schemes and are therefore not included within the Plan proposals. Part of these proposals include introducing a new Park and Ride facility at O'Neill Road, serving as the terminus point of the Glider Phase 2 via Antrim Road, and connecting the Ormeau Road link into the existing Park and Ride at Cairnshill.

ETP includes proposals for two further Park and Ride sites within the Metropolitan Area: one to connect into the end of the existing G1 Glider service at the end of McKinstry Road, and one to connect into planned bus priority enhancements along Holywood Road. Work to identify suitable lands and pursue development of these new sites will be undertaken within the Plan period. The potential to connect future Glider routes into new and existing Park and Ride sites will also be explored during the development of BRT3 proposals during the Plan period.

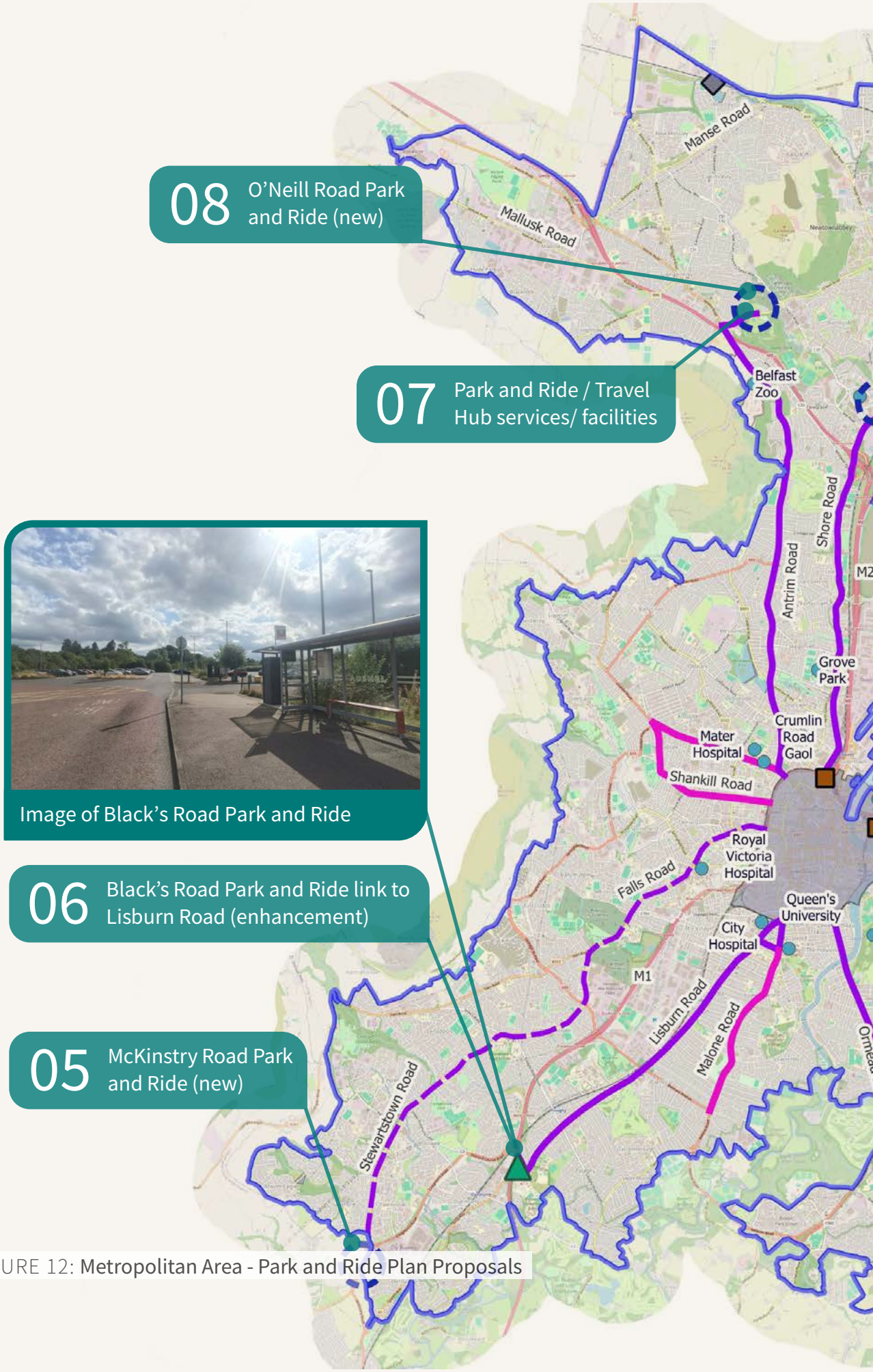
Figure 12 summarises the Plan proposals related to new and enhanced Park and Ride sites for delivery within the Plan period. Given the close alignment between some Park and Ride proposals and bus and BRT plans, references to associated bus and BRT schemes are also therefore included.

Implementation of individual schemes will be progressed following appropriate guidance and aligning with relevant statutory processes. Engagement with local communities and other relevant stakeholders will be undertaken throughout scheme development and design stages.

Other complementary measures

In addition to the proposals outlined in Figure 12, which will be progressed by DfI during the Plan period, the Plan also acknowledges the following proposals which are relevant to the area and will complement the ETP proposals:

- ETP considers that the BRT2 proposal, serving the Antrim Road corridor and including a new Park and Ride site at O'Neill Road, is a committed scheme to be delivered within the Plan period.



S4 FIGURE 12: Metropolitan Area - Park and Ride Plan Proposals

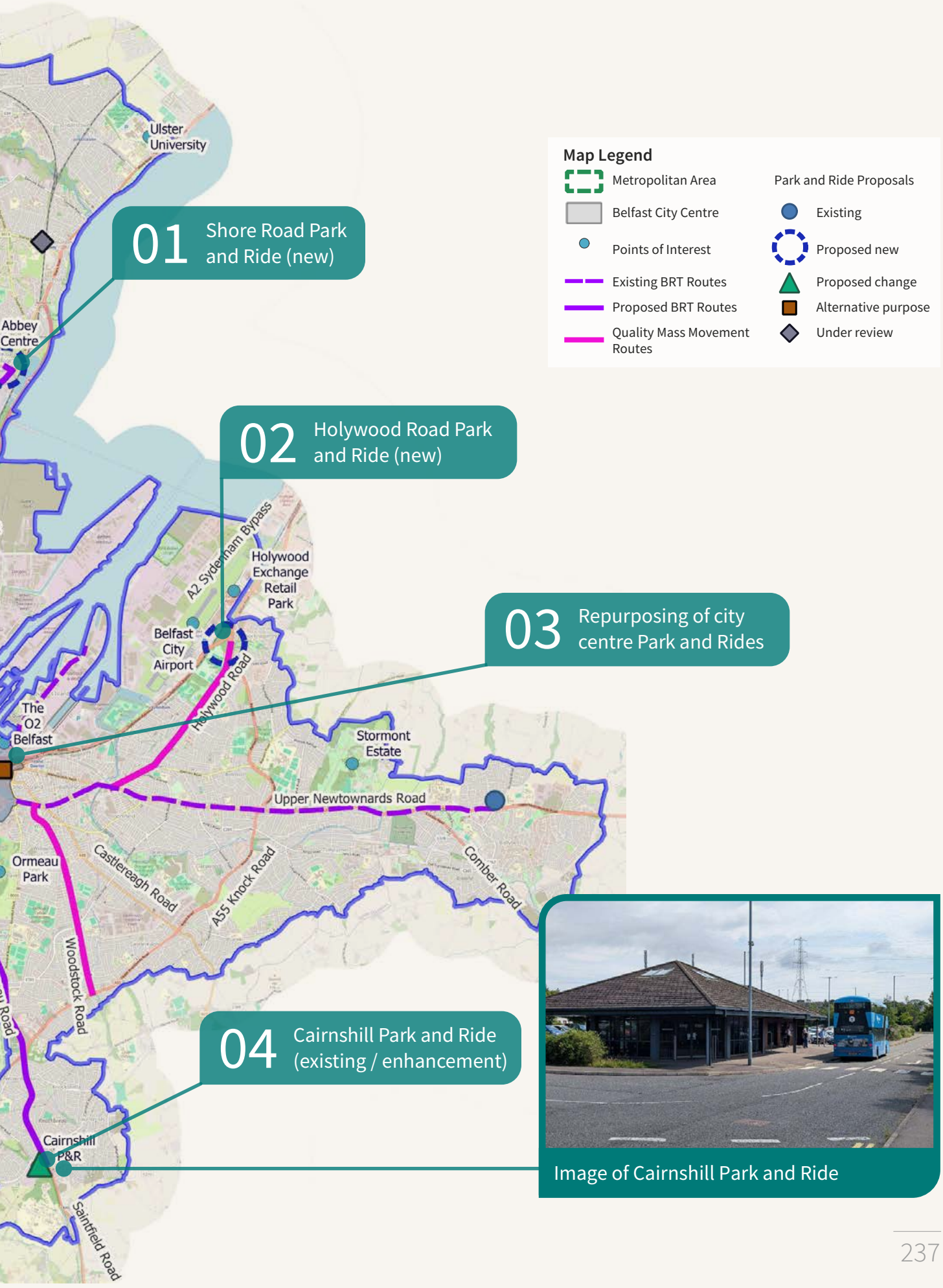


Image of Cairnshill Park and Ride

S4 FIGURE 12 ANNOTATIONS: **Metropolitan Area - Park and Ride Plan Proposals**

01 Shore Road Park and Ride (new)

As part of BRT3 proposals, it is recommended that a new Park and Ride site is introduced to capture trips from the north of the Metropolitan Area and beyond, connecting into a new BRT Phase 3 Glider service.

Site selection, design and bus service changes associated with delivery of this site will be progressed alongside wider BRT3 proposals during the Plan period.

02 Holywood Road Park and Ride (new)

Options to introduce a new Park and Ride site serving the Quality Mass Movement Route along Holywood Road will be pursued within the Plan period.

03 Repurposing of city centre Park and Rides

Alternative transport related uses for Eastside and Northside Park and Rides will be considered during the plan period.

04 Cairnshill Park and Ride (existing / enhancement)

ETP supports BRT2 proposals to connect new Glider services into Cairnshill Park and Ride.

05 McKinstry Road Park and Ride (new)

To build on the success of the existing BRT Phase 1 G1 Glider route, it is proposed to introduce a new Park and Ride to serve this corridor. Works to identify a suitable site and progress its development will be undertaken within the Plan period.

06 Black's Road Park and Ride link to Lisburn Road (enhancement)

In support of Quality Mass Movement Route and BRT Phase 3 proposals via Lisburn Road, opportunities to connect existing and new bus and Glider services serving Lisburn Road into the existing Park and Ride at Black's Road will be progressed.

07 Park and Ride / Travel Hub services/ facilities

Across all existing and planned Park and Ride sites, options to introduce new and improved mobility services will be considered. For example, introducing improved or expanded provision of cycle parking and cycle hire.

08 O'Neill Road Park and Ride (new)

ETP supports BRT2 proposals to introduce a new Park and Ride connecting into the new Glider route via Antrim Road.



Photo credit: Translink

4.8 Rail

Rail plays an important role in the movement of people across the region. Increased use of the regional rail network will help to reduce pressure on the area's highway network and reducing the number of vehicles on the roads will support a reduction in associated levels of air and noise pollution, bringing wider environmental benefits. Rail will continue to play an important role in transferring people from the car trips to public transport journeys. This is particularly the case for longer journeys and during peak periods when journey times are comparable to private car journeys.

The Regional Strategic Transport Plan will outline the changes to the rail network, due to the cross-cutting, regional nature of travel by rail. ETP proposals aim to complement planned investment in rail infrastructure, for example through improvement of connections to existing rail stations, and will help to ensure that the existing stations can be accessed with the widest range of active and sustainable transport modes throughout the Metropolitan Area.

The expansion of the Glider network along Lisburn Road may provide opportunities to enhance rail journey times along the Lisburn line through the reduction of stopping frequencies for rail services within the Metropolitan Area. Synergies will be explored during the development of appraisal and design work for BRT3 proposals.


Stena Line
M3 The WEST, The SOUTH (A12), (M1), Docks (S)
The NORTH, Docks (N) International Airport M2
NCP
Translink

4.9 Traffic Management and Parking

The ETP acknowledges that car travel will always have an important, and in some instances necessary, role to play in the transport network. It would be impossible for the active travel or public transport network to effectively cater for the vast and varied travel demands of all residents and visitors. The proposed changes to the transport network relating to provision for general traffic, as well as freight, goods vehicles and coaches, are presented in relation to each of the PMF categories. The proposed interventions reflect the level of priority given to motorised vehicles in each category's modal hierarchy.

The proposals presented below reflect the long-term aspirational changes to traffic management arrangements across the Metropolitan Area.



4.9.1 People Places

Within People Places, which cover predominantly residential areas where most people start and end their everyday journeys, provision for car parking and loading activity will be maintained. However, measures to reduce conflict between modes will be introduced as follows:

+ In addition to the expanded 20mph speed restriction proposed for Belfast City Centre, introducing **lower speed limits across People Places** within the Metropolitan Area will support the creation of safer streets for walkers, wheelers and cyclists. Some streets already operate at or below this speed limit, however the expansion of the area in combination with calming measures will help to further deter unnecessary rat running and enhance safety for all road users.

+ Inconsiderate parking on the footways can obstruct and seriously inconvenience pedestrians, people in wheelchairs or with visual impairments and people with prams or pushchairs. In November 2025, the Minister for Infrastructure announced plans to **tackle inconsiderate pavement parking** including bringing forward legislation which will ban parking wholly on a pavement, parking across dropped kerbs for pedestrian access, and double parking. As well as pursuing legislative changes to tackle this issue, the Department will, with support from PSNI, work to strengthen enforcement measures and behaviour change initiatives to prevent issues around obstruction of and damage to footways.

+ The Department will work with Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Belfast City Council and Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council to ensure that **appropriate car, coach parking and servicing arrangements are put in place across new developments within People Places**, including providing adequate space for people with disabilities where appropriate.

4.9.2 People and Movement Places

Maintaining adequate parking and servicing facilities within **People and Movement Places,** which centre on clusters of shops and other local amenities, will be important over the Plan period. However, these locations are also focal points for proposed enhancements to active travel and public transport facilities. It is envisaged that, as access to these locations via sustainable transport modes improves, the need for extensive parking provision will decrease. Traffic management measures anticipated to deliver the aspiration for change in these locations include:

+ **20mph speed limits will be put in place across all People and Movement Places** within the Metropolitan Area. Coupled with changes to street design, e.g. introduction of gateway features or surface treatments, the speed reduction will support pedestrian and cyclist safety and tie into wider proposed enhancements to streetscape within these local high street locations. While these slower speeds may have a slight impact on overall journey times for cars, limited impact on bus journey times are anticipated due to journey time savings elsewhere on their routes and increased stopping activities within these high street locations.

+ **Rationalisation of on street parking provision** where necessary to accommodate bus lanes, cycle lanes and / or footway widening. The designs for new bus lanes and associated bus infrastructure will be developed over the course of the Plan period and will include liaison with local communities and businesses to ensure that access and servicing requirements along the corridors are appropriately maintained or relocated.

+ Within the Belfast City Council area, the ETP recommends the **expansion of existing areas of parking restraint,** within which more restrictive parking standards are applied **to new development,** to include within **100m of a Local Centre (People and Movement Places). This also supports BCC LDP Policy HOU4 in reference to Local Centres.**

4.9.3 Quality Mass Movement Routes

Quality Mass Movement Routes have been identified for corridors where there is high demand for travel and aligned with the existing key Metro bus service routes. The focus on these corridors will be to introduce increased levels of bus priority. Traffic management and parking measures along Quality Mass Movement Routes will include:

+ **Rationalisation of on street parking provision** to accommodate extended bus priority measures. The designs for new bus lanes and associated bus infrastructure will be developed over the course of the Plan period and will include liaison with local communities and businesses to ensure that access and servicing requirements along the corridors are appropriately maintained or relocated.
+ Within the Belfast City Council area ETP recommends the **expansion of existing areas of parking restraint**, within which more restrictive parking standards are applied **to new development**, to include within 50m of a Quality Mass Movement Route. This also supports BCC LDP Policy HOU4 in reference to City Corridors.

4.9.4 Connecting Movement Routes

Connecting Movement Routes provide key connections between different areas within, into and out of the Metropolitan Area. The modal hierarchy along these routes mean that some changes to traffic movements and parking will be required, however the changes are expected to be less extensive than on other parts of the network. Proposals will include:

+ **Targeted amendments to on street parking and loading activity** to accommodate required improvements to walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure, including to enable delivery of proposed cycle routes. Any changes will be delivered in collaboration with local communities and businesses to ensure that access and servicing requirements along the corridors are appropriately maintained or relocated.
+ **Targeted changes to speed limits** to ensure that traffic speeds are appropriate to the nature of the road and activity on it. For example, part time 20mph speed limits will continue to be introduced at schools that do not already have them.

4.9.5 Strategic Movement Routes

Strategic Movement Routes are designated where part of the Regional Strategic Transport Network (RSTN) intersects the Metropolitan Area and where the movement of longer-distance, strategic traffic, including freight, is required to traverse the settlement. As such, the interventions proposed on these routes have been jointly considered during the development of the Eastern Transport Plan and Regional Strategic Transport Plan. The measures recommended through the ETP for these routes are focused on ensuring that local movements that need to use the RSTN within ETP settlements can be accommodated efficiently and safely. Proposals include:

+ **Introducing new south facing slip roads at the Black's Road junction of the M1** (junction 3). The new slips would enable access to south Belfast and Metropolitan Lisburn, reducing pressure on alternative Connecting and Quality Mass Movement Routes. The slips would enable direct access from the M1 to Black's Road Park and Ride for traffic travelling from south of Belfast. This will relieve pressure on alternative bus and rail-based Park and Ride sites along the corridor and will enable people travelling to Belfast from Lisburn City and other settlements to the south to access proposed new Glider services via the Lisburn Road, as well as express bus and Park and Ride services that use the M1.
+ **Targeted hard shoulder running on M1 and M2 to improve reliability and punctuality of bus services**. This involves permitting buses and coaches to use the motorway hard shoulders as a dedicated running lane during specific time periods e.g. peak commuter times or special events. This will enable bus and coach passengers to bypass traffic congestion, thereby enhancing the attractiveness of services and park and ride as an alternative to travelling by car into Belfast.

4.9.5.1 Legacy Scheme Protection Lines

During the development of the ETP and RSTP, an extensive review of historic planned road schemes has been undertaken to confirm priorities to be taken forward within the coming Plan periods. This has included a review of known scheme protection lines within the Belfast City Council area, which are reviewed and confirmed within the Local Development Plan. Other scheme protection lines within the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council areas will be considered within each Council's chapter of ETP. The BCC scheme protection lines are summarised as follows:

Name	Source	ETP recommendation
A2 Sydenham By-pass	BMAP (Map 27)	Protection to be retained for original purpose
A55 Outer Ring Road	BMAP (Map 29)	Protection retained for local purposes
Black's Road Link	BMAP (Map 34)	Protection amended and retained for Black's Road south facing slips element only
City centre ring road - Bankmore Link	BMAP (Map 26)	Protection amended and retained to reflect latest scheme design for sustainable transport corridor
Connsbank Link and Holywood Arches bypass	BMAP (Map 30)	Protection to be abandoned due to lack of residual need for scheme and misalignment with current transport policy
CITI	BMAP (Map 28)	Protection to be abandoned due to lack of residual need for scheme and misalignment with current transport policy
WWAY	BMAP (Map 33)	Protection to be abandoned due to lack of residual need for scheme and misalignment with current transport policy
Crumlin Road East	BUAP (W7)	Protection to be abandoned due to lack of residual need for scheme and misalignment with current transport policy
Ormeau Embankment extension to Albertbridge / Short Strand	BUAP (E20)	Protection be retained for extension of traffic-free route
Ormeau Park Link	BUAP (S14)	Protection to be abandoned due to lack of residual need for scheme and misalignment with current transport policy
Ormeau Road, Cromac Street to Ormeau Bridge	BUAP (S12)	Protection to be abandoned due to lack of residual need for scheme and misalignment with current transport policy
Ormeau Road/Saintfield Road, Rosetta to Grahamholm	BUAP (S18/B11)	Protection be retained for extension of traffic-free route

In addition to the proposals outlined above, the Plan also acknowledges the following proposals which are to be considered within the RSTP and will complement the ETP proposals:

- Delivery of an improved highway network and junction, with associated active travel measures, around York Street Interchange;
- Progression of options to enhance the A2 Sydenham By-pass;
- Consideration of safety measures along the existing single carriageway section of the A55 Outer Ring Road (Knock Road);
- Progression of options to widen the M1 between Black's Road and Sprucefield.

4.10 Management of the Metropolitan Area Transport Network

4.10.1 Introduction

Implementation of the transport infrastructure proposals outlined throughout this chapter alone will not be sufficient to achieve the desired benefits of the transport plan. Unlocking the true value of the proposals also relies on achieving widespread travel behaviour change across the whole of the area. Management and enforcement of the infrastructure proposals will therefore be critical in achieving this.

4.10.1.1 Enforcement

Key areas that will need to be suitably managed and enforced across the Metropolitan Area including traffic regulations relating to:

- On- and off-street parking;
- Use of bus lanes;
- Parking in cycle lanes;
- Access to streets that are otherwise closed to general traffic;
- Loading and unloading arrangements;
- Adherence to yellow boxes; and
- Traffic speed limits.

It is an important design principle that the enforcement of traffic regulations represents the "last resort" – i.e. transport users should feel willing and able to abide by the new restrictions without conflict. In designing the proposed schemes, the user behaviour required by any scheme should be clear, reinforcing and socially-acceptable. This means that schemes are designed with the end user in mind, ensuring that any changes are developed in collaboration with, and clearly communicated to affected road users and that any resulting signage and road markings are clear and easy to use. The success of the ETP, in implementing local schemes and changing travel behaviour, will therefore require effective communications and marketing along with community support.

It is acknowledged, however, that the ETP proposals represent a significant increase in extents of enforceable restrictions, additional resource will therefore be required to ensure suitable management. Some elements of enforcement and management will require increased coordination between DfI and the partnering Local Councils. The Department will clearly articulate roles and responsibilities for enforcement and maintenance where appropriate.

4.10.1.2 Use of information and technology

As outlined earlier, effective monitoring and evaluation of the transport plan will be crucial to ensure that proposals are being implemented in accordance with the ETP vision and objectives, and with respect to the PMF modal designations. Monitoring and review will also be important to inform whether the desired outcomes and benefits are being achieved.

DfI already have in place a series of data capture mechanisms which will allow for monitoring of certain impacts, however there are gaps in information availability which should be closed within the Plan period.

Suggested technology enhancements to be considered throughout the Plan period include smart sensors with assistance from Artificial Intelligence, data linkages, footfall monitoring, automatic passenger counting on public transport, traffic lights and crossing technology. This is likely to change over the lifetime of the Plan. As a result, DfI and the partnering Local Councils across the Metropolitan Area will remain open to new products, or suppliers as they may arise.



4.11 ETP Proposals for the Metropolitan Area

This chapter highlights the key interventions proposed to be brought forward within the Plan period of most relevance to each individual mode discussed. Table 1 combines these together to summarise a comprehensive list of ETP proposals for the Metropolitan Area.

In preparing the ETP, a wide range of potential transport interventions have been considered and assessed to ensure that the resulting package of proposals represents best fit in terms of alignment with the ambitions of the Plan. Both qualitative and quantitative appraisal of impacts have been undertaken to understand the benefits and potential drawbacks of proposals, alone and in combination.

Implementation of all individual schemes will be progressed following appropriate guidance and aligning with relevant planning requirements. Engagement with local communities and stakeholders will be undertaken throughout scheme development and design stages.

S4 TABLE 1: **2035 Plan for the Metropolitan Area**

Scheme	Reference	Summary of interventions
Metropolitan Area 20mph speed limit	MA - 01	Speed limit reductions to 20mph across all People Places and People and Movement Places within the Metropolitan Area will make residential areas and local high street areas safer and more attractive places to walk or wheel.
BCC People and Movement Place	MA - 02	Belfast City Council have identified 33 local centres within their Local Development Plan, representing locations that conveniently provide accessible shopping and services for local communities. Transport-related improvements to footways and crossing facilities within these and surrounding areas will be progressed to improve community access to these locations. In line with the Belfast Agenda Community Plan 'Our Place Action Plan', four place based exemplar areas will be progressed within the Plan period to demonstrate not only what can be achieved, but also to establish a best practice process that can be followed to deliver community-led, co-designed solutions.

Scheme	Reference	Summary of interventions
BCC People and Movement Place	MA - 02	These will be located at **Andersonstown, Antrim Road, Ballyhackamore,** and **Ormeau Road**. These locations have been selected due to the potential to tie into wider multi-modal improvements and benefit a high number of people. Interventions will be developed collaboratively with the local community and council, drawing on suggestions outlined in the ETP Guiding Principles and People and Movement Places toolkit at the end of this document.
Glengormley Town Centre	MA - 03	The ETP vision for Glengormley is as follows. • Support Public Realm improvements proposed by ANBC. • Speed limit reduction to 20mph to further support pedestrian and cycle safety. • Improve connection to BRT2 O'Neill Park and Ride • Enhanced bus stop waiting facilities in line with the new ETP Performance, Service and Infrastructure Standards as proposed in MA-11. • Parking – Consideration of Glengormley as an area of parking restraint within the LPP.
ANBC People and Movement Places	MA - 04	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council's Local Development Plan identifies 17 local centres within Metropolitan Newtownabbey. These represent areas that provide (or have the potential to provide) a range of shops and services to a surrounding community. In support of these, transport-related improvements to footways and crossing facilities within these and surrounding areas will be progressed to help make walking and wheeling a more attractive and convenient option for local journeys.

Scheme	Reference	Summary of interventions
ANBC People and Movement Places	MA - 04	Within the Plan period, a study area centred on two local centres will be the focus of interventions: **Abbot's Cross** and **Cloughfern** local centres. These locations have the potential to benefit a comparably high number of people, including those that may have more limited access to a car or van, as well as having the potential to connect into the wider sustainable transport network. The study area has been defined as all areas within approximately a 10-minute walk time of each local centre, however this may be subject to refinement as any proposals are progressed. Transport interventions will be developed collaboratively with the local community and council, drawing on suggestions outlined in the ETP Guiding Principles and People and Movement Places toolkit.
LCCC People and Movement Places	MA - 05	Three potential People and Movement Places have been identified by Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council within Metropolitan Lisburn and Castlereagh. To support enhancement of these locations, transport-related improvements to footways and crossing facilities within these areas and from the surrounding communities will be progressed in order to make walking and wheeling a more attractive and convenient option for local journeys. Within the Plan period, Dundonald has been selected due to the potential to benefit a high number of people in the surrounding residential area, and due to strong connections with the existing Glider route and Park and Ride.

Scheme	Reference	Summary of interventions
LCCC People and Movement Places	MA - 05	Interventions will be developed collaboratively with the local community and council, drawing on suggestions outlined in the ETP Guiding Principles and People and Movement Places toolkit at Annex D.
Targeted improvements to footways and crossings	MA - 06	Targeted improvements to footways and crossings as a need is identified, including within People Places, Quality Mass Movement Routes and Connecting Movement Routes as required.
Upgrades to existing cycle routes	MA - 07	Where necessary, improvements to existing cycle routes will be delivered. For example, to provide improved separation between cyclists and motor traffic, or in the resurfacing of degraded routes.
Providing new supporting infrastructure including secure cycle storage and cycle hire options	MA - 08	To support end-to-end journeys and unlock cycling as an opportunity mode for people that do not own their own bikes, the Department will continue working with partners to support the provision of secure cycle storage and cycle hire options across the region.
People and Movement Places	MA - 09	Interventions to be progressed within the seven initial People and Movement Places, described further in section 4.4.2, will consider the needs of cyclists. Interventions may involve improved wayfinding for cyclists, introduction of new or improved cycle storage and introduction of new cycle lanes connecting the amenities in the local centre to the wider cycle network.
Priority cycle routes	MA - 10	New high-quality, segregated cycle routes will be delivered along key routes across the Metropolitan Area. These have been carefully identified to close gaps in the existing cycle network and introduce new travel options serving corridors that have low levels of existing cycle priority infrastructure.

Scheme	Reference	Summary of interventions
Priority cycle routes	MA - 10	Together with existing routes and connections within Belfast City Centre, these priority cycle routes will help to make cycling a more attractive and realistic travel choice for many in the city.
Development of enhanced Bus Performance, Infrastructure and Service Standards	MA - 11	A new set of Bus Performance, Infrastructure and Service Standards will be developed in close collaboration with Translink. These will establish the high quality aspects for the bus and BRT network including: • Fixed infrastructure, vehicles, operations and customer services; • High standards of reliability with punctual service operation and predictable journey times; • Delivery of a complete system with a consistent approach to every aspect and component of the system design; • Integration at all levels, including policy areas such as social inclusion and economic regeneration, and with other modes of transport including walking, wheeling, cyclists and car users
Enhanced Bus Passenger Proposition	MA - 12	A new, Bus Passenger Proposition will be developed. DfI will work with Translink to identify opportunities to improve the overall passenger proposition, including a review of Metro service routeings, with the aim of delivering a simplification in bus routeings
Enhanced Bus Passenger Proposition	MA - 12	and leading to an improvement in service frequencies and passenger experience across the area. This will also include a review of fares, integrating payment mechanisms and ticketing to improve the information available to existing and prospective bus users.

Scheme	Reference	Summary of interventions
Enhanced Bus Passenger Proposition	MA - 12	These benefits will be felt across the full Metropolitan Area bus network.
Bus priority infrastructure	MA - 13	Associated with the new Bus Performance, Infrastructure and Service Standards, enhancements to existing bus stops and associated infrastructure, including implementation of real-time passenger information, will be delivered along identified Quality Mass Movement Routes in anticipation of the future expansion of bus priority measures and future Glider phases. Implementation of the Standards will also result in increased levels of bus priority measures (bus lanes and priority at signalised junctions) leading to improvements in bus journey times and reliability.
Belfast Rapid Transit 3 via Lisburn Road	MA - 14	Lisburn Road has been identified as a priority corridor for delivery of future Glider services. The Lisburn Road service will connect Belfast City Centre to the south-west of the city, with a potential connection to the existing Black's Road Park and Ride facility. During the Plan period, progression of appraisal and design work will continue ahead of scheme delivery. The scheme will include delivery of high levels of bus priority (bus lanes) along the corridor in line with the proposals for Quality Mass Movement Routes, as well as implementation of new Glider services and installation of Glider halts.
Belfast Rapid Transit 3 via Shore Road	MA - 15	Shore Road has been identified as a priority corridor for delivery of future Glider services. The Shore Road proposal would operate from a new Park and Ride in Metropolitan Newtownabbey serving Shore Road, connecting to Belfast City Centre and beyond.

Scheme	Reference	Summary of interventions
Belfast Rapid Transit 3 via Shore Road	MA - 15	During the Plan period, progression of appraisal and design work will continue ahead of scheme delivery. The scheme will include delivery of high levels of bus priority (bus lanes) along the corridor in line with the proposals for Quality Mass Movement Routes, as well as implementation of new Glider services and installation of Glider halts.
Park and Ride / Travel Hub services	MA - 16	Across all existing and planned Park and Ride sites, options to introduce new and improved mobility services will be considered. For example, introducing improved or expanded provision of cycle parking and cycle hire.
McKinstry Road Park and Ride (new)	MA - 17	To build on the success of the existing BRT Phase 1 G1 Glider route, it is proposed to introduce a new Park and Ride to serve this corridor. Works to identify a suitable site and progress its development will be undertaken within the Plan period.
Black's Road Park and Ride link to Lisburn Road (enhancement)	MA - 18	In support of Quality Mass Movement Route and BRT Phase 3 proposals via Lisburn Road, opportunities to connect existing and new bus and Glider services serving Lisburn Road into the existing Park and Ride at Black's Road will be progressed.
Holywood Road Park and Ride (new)	MA - 19	Options to introduce a new Park and Ride site serving the Quality Mass Movement Route along Holywood Road will be pursued within the Plan period.
Repurposing of city centre Park and Rides	MA - 20	Alternative transport related uses for Eastside and Northside Park and Rides will be considered during the plan period.

Scheme	Reference	Summary of interventions
Shore Road Park and Ride (new)	MA - 21	As part of BRT3 proposals, it is recommended that a new Park and Ride site is introduced to capture trips from the north of the Metropolitan Area and beyond, connecting into a new BRT Phase 3 Glider service. Site selection, design and bus service changes associated with delivery of this site will be progressed alongside wider BRT3 proposals during the Plan period.
Expansion of areas of parking restraint	MA - 22	Within the Belfast City Council area ETP recommends the expansion of existing areas of parking restraint, within which more restrictive parking standards are applied, to include within: • Belfast City Centre fringe boundary; • Within 100m of a Local Centre (People and Movement Places); • Within 50m of a Quality Mass Movement Route; • Within 100m of a rail station; and • Within ANBC and LCCC, in line with local policy plans.
Rationalisation of on street parking provision	MA - 23	Rationalisation of on street parking provision where necessary to accommodate bus lanes, cycle lanes and / or footway widening.
Targeted amendments to on street parking and loading activity	MA - 24	Rationalisation of on street parking provision to accommodate extended bus priority measures. The designs for new bus lanes and associated bus infrastructure will be developed over the course of the Plan period and will include liaison with local communities and businesses to ensure that access and servicing requirements along the corridors are appropriately maintained or relocated.

Scheme	Reference	Summary of interventions
Targeted changes to speed limits	MA - 25	Targeted changes to speed limits on connecting movement routes to ensure that traffic speeds are appropriate to the nature of the road and activity on it. For example, part time 20mph speed limits will continue to be introduced at schools that do not already have them.
Introduction of new south facing slip roads at the Black's Road junction of the M1	MA - 26	Introducing new south facing slip roads at the Black's Road junction of the M1 (junction 3). The new slips would enable access to south Belfast and Metropolitan Lisburn, reducing pressure on alternative Connecting and Quality Mass Movement Routes. The slips would enable direct access from the M1 to Black's Road Park and Ride for traffic travelling from south of Belfast. This will relieve pressure on alternative bus and rail-based Park and Ride sites along the corridor and will enable people travelling to Belfast from Lisburn City and other settlements to the south to access proposed new Glider services via the Lisburn Road, as well as express bus and Park and Ride services that use the M1.
Targeted hard shoulder running on M1 and M2 to improve reliability and punctuality of bus services	MA - 27	This involves permitting buses and coaches to use the motorway hard shoulders as a dedicated running lane during specific time periods e.g. peak commuter times or special events. This will enable bus and coach passengers to bypass traffic congestion, thereby enhancing the attractiveness of services and park and ride as an alternative to travelling by car into Belfast.

4.12 Summary of Impacts

As noted earlier, an effective transport network can support the delivery of transformative changes across many areas of society. This section outlines how the package of measures / proposals for the Metropolitan Area is expected to contribute to each of the wider societal benefits. These include:



Social Inclusion



Health



Road Safety



Personal Safety



Climate Change



Environment



Economy



Resilience

It is considered impractical to measure and attribute changes in these societal outcomes directly to the transport measures as there will be many other complicating factors in play. However, the tables below identify the principal relevant transport Initiatives, the expected Output and where applicable a description of their longer-term Outcomes.

4.12.1 Transport and social inclusion



Increasing the choice of transport options available via the ETP and eliminating barriers to use will help improve access and deliver benefits for all.

PLAN OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
Delivery of new cycling routes.	Increase in sustainable connections to and from new homes and the wider Metropolitan area will enable increased social inclusion, including for those without access to a car or van.
Delivery of two new BRT routes to replicate existing Glider features.	Improved active travel provision will increase uptake and allow improved accessibility to work, education and leisure opportunities for all users.
Upgrades to bus stops and waiting facilities.	Increase in public transport passenger numbers.

4.12.2 Transport and health



The ETP aims to **support increased uptake in active modes of transport** including walking, wheeling and cycling.

PLAN OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
Improved footways and crossing facilities within People and Movement Places across in the Metropolitan Area.	Expected increase in daily walking journeys.
A more connected and cohesive cycle network throughout the area.	Expected increase in cycling.
	Residents become more active and healthier.
	Increase in public transport passenger numbers and improved regional connectivity.

4.12.3 Transport and road safety

The ETP aims to **reduce the number of collisions involving vulnerable road users** across the Plan area.



PLAN OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
Expansion of 20mph zones across the Metropolitan Area.	Travelling via active and sustainable modes becomes easier and safer due to separation from motorised vehicles.
Improved active travel provision, including an increased number of segregated cycle lanes, improved quality footways and crossing points.	Reduction in conflict between transport modes leads to a lower rate and lower severity of collisions involving vulnerable road users.

4.12.4 Transport and personal safety

The ETP aims to **help everyone feel able to get home safely**.



PLAN OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
Improvements to existing streets and traffic free routes will follow best practice in terms of provision of adequate lighting and other safety features.	Increased use of active travel, public transport and other shared modes of transport across the Metropolitan Area including in the evenings.
Simplification of bus routeings along Quality Mass Movement Routes and beyond will make it easier for people to find the right bus for their journey.	Improved personal safety / security providing a greater confidence to travel via sustainable modes.
Enhancements to neighbourhood streets in People and Movement Places will help to encourage increased footfall across the area, supporting a sense of informal surveillance and personal safety.	

4.12.5 Transport and climate change



The ETP aims to support a **reduction in carbon emissions from transport,** working towards net zero.

PLAN OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
Improved footways and crossing facilities across People and Movement Places and along other key corridors.	When factoring in planned growth and with the introduction of the Plan proposals, fewer cars are expected to use the Metropolitan Area network, compared to without the proposals.
Improved cycle network across the Metropolitan Area including new segregated cycle lanes.	More people will choose to use buses and Gliders as a result of the ETP proposals.
Improved bus journey times and reliability as a result of new bus lanes.	More people choosing to walk, wheel or cycle.
	Mode shift supports a reduction in carbon emissions within the Metropolitan Area.

4.12.6 Transport and the environment



The ETP aims to **protect the region's air quality and habitats.**

PLAN OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
Increased provision for active travel and public transport modes.	Improved natural environment and air quality on key routes across the Metropolitan Area.
Incorporation of measures to enhance biodiversity and sustainable draining during scheme development and design.	Unlocking road space to be repurposed for alternative, sustainable and green uses.
	Enhanced quality of natural environment and increase in local flora and fauna.

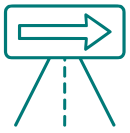
4.12.7 Transport and the economy



The ETP aims to **support housing and employment growth** across the region.

PLAN OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
More frequent and reliable public transport.	Faster and more reliable bus journey times will help boost business productivity and efficiency.
Improved public transport journey times.	Reduced journey times by public transport along with enhanced service reliability will increase the workforce that can access employment opportunities.
Increased modal choice for existing and new residents, commuters and visitors.	Increased footfall and spend within People and Movement Places.
	A transport network that can sustainably accommodate forecast growth in city centre housing and employment.

4.12.8 Transport and resilience



The ETP aims to **improve the resilience of the region's transport network.**

PLAN OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
Expanded network of bus lanes across key Quality Mass Movement Routes.	Increase in the number of viable alternative journey options for those travelling within the Metropolitan Area.
Enhanced bus frequencies and new Glider services connecting the city centre to the rest of the Metropolitan Area and the wider region.	Improved emergency vehicle response times especially during 'gridlock' occurrences due to increase in bus lanes that can be used by emergency services and other vehicles to support response to crises.
	The anticipated reduction in carbon helps to work towards a decarbonised transport network and protect against climate change, which leads to extreme weather events.

4.13 How does the Metropolitan Area Transport Plan contribute towards the wider ETP Vision and Objectives?

The ETP Vision and Objectives are repeated as follows:

Deliver an integrated and re-balanced transport network in favour of sustainable, efficient modes, which connects communities creating an accessible, inclusive, safe and prosperous economic region by delivering carbon reduction, improving air quality, enhancing the built and natural environment and facilitating healthy and sustainable travel choices over unnecessary private car travel.

01 Reduce travel distances by promoting safe, inclusive and connected neighbourhoods, supported by integrated planning.

Improved integration amongst transport, planning and land use is a wholly positive measure. Ensuring that people, places and homes are connected easily and simply will ensure that more people, more often will choose to use either public, or active transport for everyday journeys across the Metropolitan area. The Plans proposals for the Metropolitan Area include extensive enhancements to existing and new active travel routes and facilities. These will help to better connect communities across the ETP areas, as well as connecting into areas of planned housing and employment development. This will have positive economic impacts on the local economy and the people within it.

02 Deliver a reduction in carbon emissions by increasing accessibility for all to jobs, services and recreation by sustainable travel modes.

The Metropolitan Area Plan proposals include the addition of approximately 15km of new bus lanes, changes to bus routings and the introduction of new Park and Ride sites. Combined with two new Glider routes. This will support a reduction in bus journey times and an increase in bus journey time reliability. This helps connect people to jobs, services and recreation opportunities across the metropolitan area. This will be supported by an over 50km of new or upgraded cycle routes. These will significantly improve the health and wellbeing of those who use them.

03 Promote healthy and inclusive communities by developing safe sustainable travel modes that respect the local built and natural environment.

Alongside the introduction of new bus priority measures, expanded 20mph zones, over 50km of new or

upgraded cycle routes, expansion of existing walking and wheeling priority areas and enhancements to other pedestrian facilities will provide further safety benefits. During design, development and delivery of Plan proposals, all schemes will be subject to, as appropriate, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) to ensure that designs complement and enhance the local build and natural environment.

04 Reduce unnecessary use of the private car by implementing effective demand management measures.

To accommodate the identified sustainable transport improvements across the Metropolitan Area, the Plan proposals will result in a reduction in road space available for use by general traffic. On-street parking provision will also be reduced, except for provision of blue badge parking spaces which will be expanded to accommodate journeys that cannot otherwise be made by public transport.

05 Improve air quality and the environment by encouraging the use of sustainable travel modes and vehicles which utilise sustainable fuels.

As part of the ETP development process, there has been an assessment of air quality and the wider environmental impacts through the supplementary ISA report. It concludes that, should the ETP process proposals be delivered, the Plan will have overall beneficial impacts to air quality through the expected reduction of reliance on private motor vehicles and a rebalancing towards public transport, or active travel modes of travel. The ISA also makes recommendations relating to the incorporation of measures to enhance the local environment and biodiversity during scheme design stages, for example through the incorporation of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

06 Enhance the resilience and safety of the transport network to support the economy and meet the challenges of climate change.

The Metropolitan Area proposals, combined with integration into the city centre will increase the range of transport options available to all travellers. This is in addition to providing more liveable and walkable streets across identified People and Movement Places. The expanded provision of bus lanes will provide resilience benefits to emergency services. An anticipated reduction in reliance on private car use will lead to a reduction in carbon emissions from transport, improving climate resilience.

07 Support the efficient, sustainable movement of goods and people and enhance connectivity to regional networks including access to airports and ports.

The movement of goods and services across areas is vital for sustainable economic growth. The ETP's Place and Movement Framework approach highlights the importance of retaining the strategic purpose of certain roads across the area. Strategic routes across the ETP Metropolitan Areas will continue to act as an important regional link between not only the city centre specifically but the rest of the region more broadly. Improved connections between the strategic / regional and local transport networks will be achieved through the introduction and / or expansion of Park and Ride sites at strategic locations within or serving the Metropolitan Area.

AtkinsRéalis thepaulhogarthcompany Walk Wheel Cycle Trust

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