

Individual submission – Mark O'Connor, Henry Street resident.

NO to kerbside traffic lane as currently planned.

Yes to making Henry St one way from Clareview Terrace to Arthur's Quay.

Yes to herringbone parking format.

Yes to improving our neighbourhood.

Yes to reducing traffic.

Yes to bike lanes.

Yes to using Limerick's lanes as bike paths.

Long story short / Point of consensus – A way forward that should suit all stakeholders in this area is to make Henry Street one way from Clareview Terrace to Mallow st and continue to Arthur's Quay. Retain existing parking for residents and businesses by using a herringbone formation, providing safety from traffic for pedestrians and also preventing long vehicles parking on this street. This single lane, rather than double, will give sufficient space for bike lanes, landscaping, resident and business parking and one way traffic downhill. A herringbone parking structure will allow cars easily pull into and out of their parking space safely.

Predominantly One Way Traffic on Henry Street Already:

In preparing this submission, I attended 2 of the consultation sessions and the residents meeting in Sexton's pub. Speaking with the engineers involved, we discussed the traffic survey they conducted.

I along with others looked at the traffic flow on Henry Street at different times using timelapse video recordings and counting the totals of cars in both directions. The results conclusively show that most of the traffic goes in a one way direction down the hill of Henry Street.

I have contacted [REDACTED] Punch Engineers for the traffic study that was conducted on this project to look at their findings. Unfortunately, these were not provided prior to the submission deadline. I think the ratio of uphill vs downhill traffic should be examined to establish fuller picture.

See full playlist of timelapse videos [REDACTED]

Monday 17 October 6.30pm – 74 downhill 17 uphill

Tuesday 18 October 8.40AM – 131 downhill 22 uphill

Thursday 20 October 8.45AM – 71 downhill 14 uphill 2 unclear – between Clontarf and Newenham

Thursday 20 October 8.18AM – 98 downhill 24 uphill Clontarf to Newenham timelapse

Friday 21 October 1 PM – 105 downhill 26 uphill Newenham Hartstonge

Tue 25 October 2 PM – 102 downhill 40 uphill – Oriental Supermarket Parking study – Note: Zero cars reversed into their parking spots

Tue 25 October 5.30pm – 335 downhill 98 uphill - Full Hour Timelapse recording.

By making this section of Henry street one way, a number of problems automatically cease to be. Namely, from the **Road Safety Audit**, Point 3.2.23 Naughton's Place left turn, 3.2.24 Clontarf Place left turn, 3.2.28 Lower Hartstonge St left turn.

I note also

It appears from this plan, there is a suggestion to have a stretch of bike lane that passes adjacent to a bus lane travelling in the opposite direction. This raises major safety concerns.



On the South Circular Road side, is it expected for cyclists expected to wait at pedestrian lights coming off the bike lane from the Portland park bike lane? If going to the Crescent shopping centre, they will be tempted to just take the bus lane over the bridge.

Sustainable transport vs double car lane?

If this plan is serious about promoting sustainable transport, how can that align with having double lane traffic on this section of Henry Street?

The residents of this street need their cars and to have access to their properties for business, working from home and transport of disabled and elderly.

The green party and other government parties stress the importance of our climate responsibility and to think global and act local.

The inclusion of a double car lane in this plan is directly contradictory to this.

I note from the recent COP26 program (I attended COP 6 some 20 years ago) this conversation around co-benefits and trade-offs for improving air quality. My cousin Fiona O'Connor presents her research on this [REDACTED]

The benefits of reducing traffic and improvement to air quality and life expectancy await all residents, businesses and visitors to Henry Street if planned correctly. A kerbside traffic lane will not achieve this.

I note from the DMURS publication ([Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets](#)) introduction "...traffic taken in isolation can be a totally destructive force in the formation of human settlements."

This quote is from the Paper entitled 'The Visual and Social Problems of the Design of Residential Areas Today', Ruairi Quinn, Streets for Living Conference, Dublin 1976. The DMURS introduction goes onto say

'The above has remained more accurate than ever, but given the extent to which policy and legal frameworks have advanced in recent years, it is now possible to achieve change.'

The let us have this. Remove the kerbside traffic lane in favour of our 200+ year old human settlements.

Parking removal and impact on the area

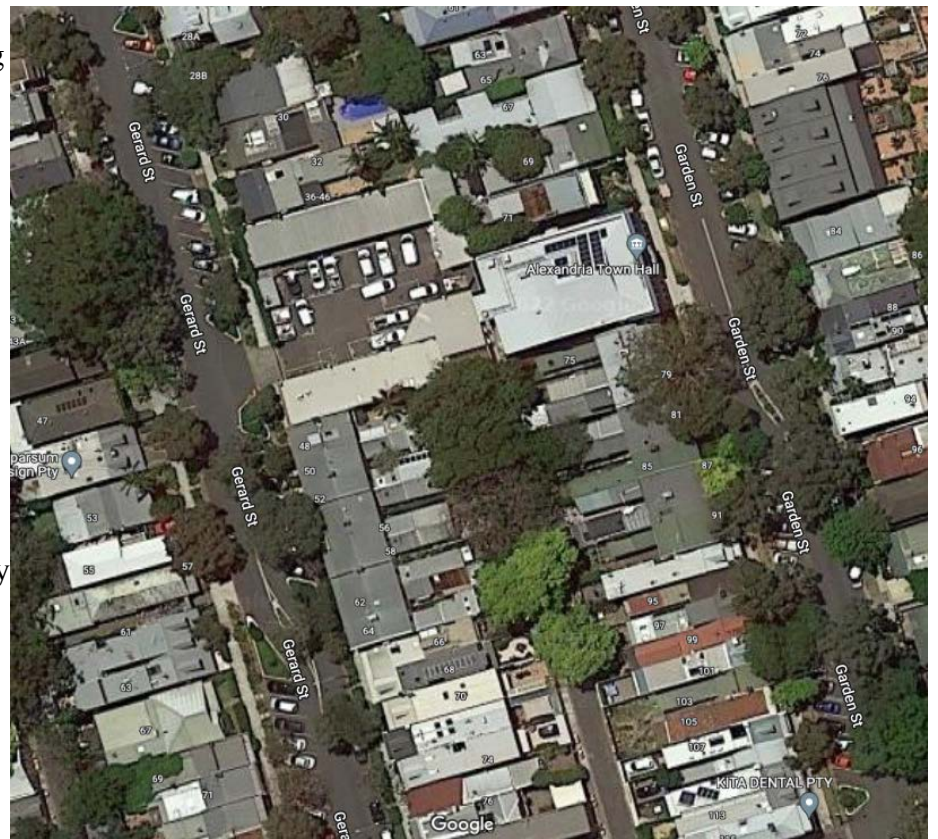
Removal of parking will impact on all businesses and residents in this area including Alphonsus St

residents and people attending concerts in Dolans music venues, the new Lidl that is being put in and access routes to same, Grow mental health service, Mosque Al Furqan, Post Office, Souths pub, Bobby Byrnses pub, Windmill Pub, Alfie Earls Pub, Sextons pub, Limerick Tutorial School, and smaller businesses including myself, Hodgkinson Eccliaistical decorators, Khan superstore, Asian supermarket, 24 hour shop among others who need to load in and load out of their respective premises. Retention of parking via a one way Henry Street will be welcomed by all.

Herringbone parking example

This screenshot is from a neighbourhood in Sydney, where I lived for 4 years. Note the use of Herringbone parking along with traffic calming measures, planting and mature trees. These were pleasant streets in which to walk, bike and convenient for residents to park in.

Sydney is a city of 5 million people. Limerick approximately 100,000. Conversations around transport solutions should compare like with like. Bigger cities have greater numbers to account for and can give direction. Limerick may never have a train network run as widely or as often as Sydney. But perhaps our biking infrastructure can approach it. Sydney and Georgian Limerick being roughly the same age and having similar retrofitting challenges in old streets.



Other cities I have enjoyed biking in are New York and Berlin. I attach cycling maps from each of these cities as part of this submission. Note the use of riverside locations (path to UL/Corbally being an excellent example), parks (can People's Park be used to connect Pery Square to Hyde road?) and chicanes where necessary to access quieter streets (see Limerick Lanes proposal below).

End to heavy vehicles parking on the street:

Conversely, earlier this week, on Henry St, this occurred. A fully loaded construction lorry carrying earth parked on already compromised roadway and overhead Georgian cellars.



Demonstrating structural concerns for this part of Henry Street – Georgian cellars -

This year and last year, as the council will remember, this section of road has seen extensive necessary renovation work due to a burst Irish Water pipe. Significant subsidence of road surfaces and underfill occurred on street and into the cellars below. Some pics of damage caused and dates/duration of repairs are shown below.

I believe this raises serious concerns around the proposal to install a kerbside traffic lane over these cellars. On safety grounds alone, for both structures and pedestrians, it must be taken off the table.

Nov / Dec 2021, storm Barra:
Hole in road into underground cellar first occurred.



Jan 2022 – Sandbags from bollards falling through hole into cellar with resultant water ingress.



Feb 2022 – Bollards attracting litter.



March 2022 – Stone slabs falling through road hole into cellar



April/May 2022 – Council fixes problem. Excellent job done finally.
Duration to get the job done – 6 months.

August 2022 – Same Irish Water pipe bursts. Further works required.



Substandard repair work. Structurally unsound and an eyesore.



For reference again, this lorry was parked on that section of road this week.



It is the case that Irish Water will need to replace this section of piping. What will be the duration of these repairs? This adds to the unworkability of the current plan. Kerbside traffic lane must be taken off the table.

A single lane one way solution with herringbone parking will prevent heavy trucks from jeopardising these period homes, safeguard pedestrians and facilitate the installation of the proposed bike lanes and landscaping.

Wider Context – Limerick city – Motorists and Cyclists:

I am a third generation resident of the Henry St area (my father and grandfather lived on Clareview Terrace), a cyclist and a motorist. I need my car for work. I use the TFI green bikes and my own bike to get around Limerick. I never lock my bike in public having had them stolen over the years. I've biked for over 40 years and been a motorist for 30 years. I believe secure city centre bike parking should be included as part of this infrastructure.

In the past, Bedford Row (my and many Limerick folk's birthplace) and Thomas St were double lane, double parking streets that further choked up the city. (pic [@Limerickcitycitizens](#))



Now they are pedestrianised and are some of the more pleasant streets to visit.

Our section of Henry street resembles this old era of Limerick, left behind somewhat in the development of the city. But this Active Travel funding is an excellent chance to similarly improve our neighbourhood.

Conversely Streets like Henry St near the Gardens International building, the Southside of Shannon Bridge or the Dock Road are hostile places for pedestrians. Kerbside traffic lanes threaten serious injury or death just a footstep away. Pedestrians are naturally deterred from using these.

In its current form, this Active Travel plan proposes to move the 2 lanes of traffic towards the kerb and doorsteps of all the residents of this section of Henry St. This is completely unacceptable. How did this get in the plan? Every building between Hartstonge St and Newenham St on this side of the street is **residential**. How was it ever a good idea to remove everyone's parking and allow dangerous traffic to prevail instead?

And would anyone offering submissions through this process accept such a suggestion in their neighbourhoods or outside their front doors? Of course not.

Good design looks at the requirements of a problem and designs around that. I understand, from discussing this with Brian Leddin TD, in city planning, and with reference to the [DMURS guide](#), the hierarchy of priority is – pedestrian, cyclist, motorist. Then let's have that. A kerbside traffic

lane is a death trap for pedestrians of this neighbourhood. Remove it from the plan. Let sense prevail.

Living City Initiative –

Also of concern, it is the case that the Living City team, along with every business and resident in the area, were unaware of this Active Travel plan. The consultation process for this project has been lamentable.

How can the council expect positive engagement by presenting this plan with little over a month's lead time and have submissions in by November 10th?

But that this consultation has not managed to cross between apparent silos, this design team and the Living City team, within the council is very concerning. The Living City team has a plan and a remit and parts of the Active Travel plan is at variance with this. I have fed this back to the Living City team via their recent online survey. And I call for it here, that when the Active Travel plan does cross their desk, that they adhere to common sense and good design principles, remove the kerbside traffic lane as proposed, and offer meaningful support to residents and businesses of this area to improve their area, to retain essential parking and not make it a less attractive place to live.

Bike lanes for scooters also?

The plan refers to bike lanes. Are these intended to be used by scooters also? Have these concerns been addressed in the plan?

Other points of concern in the city:

Outside the Red Tech building, landscaping and road narrowing has recently been put in place. I cycled by there recently and found it completely impassable as a cyclist when cars were stopped at the traffic lights. How did this come into being? This raises serious concerns around landscaping / spatial planning if this is the type of bottleneck it signs off on. However it came to be, it is currently an unsafe section of road for cyclists.

Park Road – I often use the canal bank as a biking route. This is the road bridge that connects the Corbally side with the Musgraves Cash and Carry road. There is an example of a workable solution for parts of this plan in place here.



Here the one way car lane is shared with bikes and a RHS bike lane adjoins the canal biking route. This makes both options possible in a smaller space. Could something like this be looked at for Clareview Terrace/South Circular Road and allow residents to keep their parking? Put one uphill bike lane in, shared downhill car/bike lane and retain some parking?

MIC Student welfare:

One of the charms/realities of inner city living is the constant flow of pedestrians and passers by outside. And things that go bump in the night. The Punch Engineering offices may be familiar with them, being located above the Limerick Post offices.

During term time, drunk students pass up and down Henry Street on a nightly basis. And good luck to them. College days are the best days of your life some say.

What few if any submissions have mentioned, is the thought of drunk students being put alongside a kerbside traffic lane is in this plan as is. It is an accident waiting to happen. It should not be allowed to go ahead. Rather, the current set up of parked cars between traffic and pedestrians/drunk students provides a safety barrier that works fine. Let's leave it in place.

I note the submission from MIC SU makes no mention regarding their students' use of Henry St at night time. The only case they make is around parking for students commuting due to the accommodation crisis. In any case, I trust the safety of students will be taken into consideration by the design team.

Oriental Supermarket parking:

Having consulted with the management of this business, they were not aware of this plan as late as late October. And as of today, the day of the deadline, had still not read the plan online. I informed them of the plan and the website to make a submission. That this work may have such a likely impact on their business and for the planners not to reach out to them again is concerning.

In the plan, section 3.2.27 of the Road Safety Audit, a recommendation was made to 'omit the perpendicular parking bays'. This was rejected. But that it was actually suggested reflects how removed this plan is from reality. The Oriental Supermarket needs this parking. Such a suggestion would have had a massive impact on their business. How was it ever suggested?

In any case, this parking is private property and the idea would never have been an option.

So with the retention of this parking, the challenge of visibility of cyclists by cars reversing from this space remains.

By making Henry St one way, this will in some way manage the volume of cars parking in these spaces. The real challenge is bikes and scooters coming down the hill with speed. There should be a sign for cyclists to beware of reversing cars and this should suffice.

Similarly, as I discussed with some of the design team, if the yellow traffic island is continued out into the one way street, cars intending to park can put on their blinkers and pull into this parking bay safely. Possibly even reverse into it, as preferred below.

I note also point 4.3.16 of the Road Safety Audit with the recommendation: 'Provide signage to encourage reversing into the parking spaces.' In each of my previously mentioned timelapse videos, **zero** of the cars parking reversed into their spaces. All parked head first, facing into the shop front. How do the design team propose to change this behaviour?

Submissions from cyclists:

I feel some of the representations from cyclists have regrettably at best appeared short sighted and worse, come across as tone deaf when compared to the genuine concerns of residents and fears of people with mobility concerns and the elderly. Installing a bike path used by bikes and scooters is a serious matter to these members of the community. Scooters and bikes can approach silently and

are challenging and frightening for elderly folk.

While there may be an understandable sense of being caught between a rock and a hard place with the climate change crisis, it doesn't further the cause to not consider all viewpoints when putting forward one's own.

I understand many submissions have come from folks not resident in this area or even residing in Limerick. I trust the council will apply a weighting to such contributions.

I note some submissions in favour of this saying this plan as is will make the city more attractive and liveable for residents and businesses. A kerbside traffic lane makes being a resident less attractive and makes the neighbourhood less liveable.

I note also a veiled threat from one submission to politicians and council officials doing their jobs. It reflects poorly on cyclists in general and certainly does not represent me. I trust those that this remark is directed at will disregard it accordingly.

Quote – “It is essential that decision-makers such as the NTA, local engineers, the executive and elected representatives remember the huge percentage of residents and voters from the suburbs of Limerick City West that will benefit from this and to keep their interests at the centre of their decision making.”

It also presumes that a 'huge percentage' of residents agree with their position. This remains to be seen. Use of the term 'rat run' may not land well.

I also note: Quote “It is quite clear that there has been extensive consultations with residents in advance of this part 8 consultation phase.”

This is not correct. All the neighbours and businesses I consulted with knew nothing about this scheme.

And to quote from Randel Hodgkinson's submission:

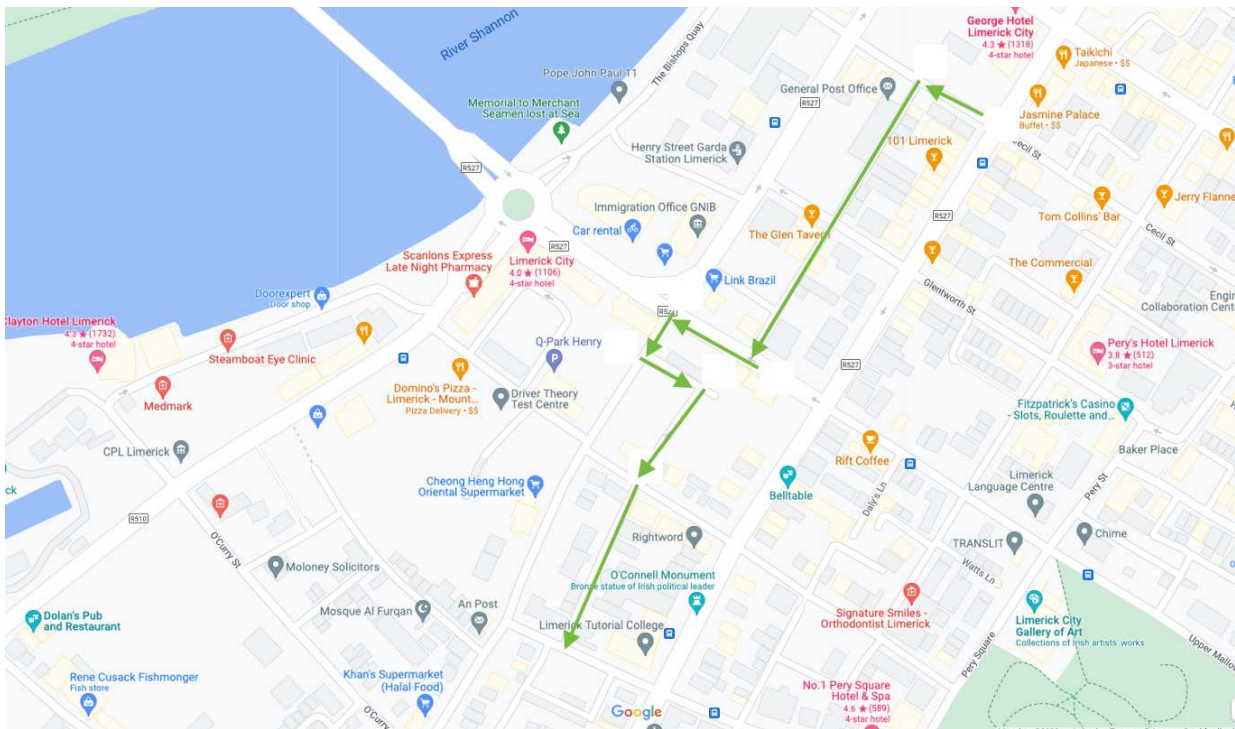
“If this Active Travel Scheme goes ahead as planned, it will fail , because, as the planners have shown they have no awareness of the complexities of the area they are dealing with, as they have not spoken to one person living or working on this complete route.”

Limerick Lanes for bike lanes?

Have the lanes of Limerick been seriously looked at as a viable option for bike lanes? They are a full network of unused, amply sized thoroughfares that would offer safe, silent and shortcut routes to bike users. I have found the best bike lanes to be those located where there are no cars, e.g. The riverside path to UL. I note bike lanes have been included in the new works on O'Connell St. These end around Shannon St.

In the future, with pedestrians accessing the new Rugby Museum, is it likely to see a zebra crossing at the Cecil St junction? What if bikes could be allowed a south western route across the city, as shown below, by accessing Post Office Lane, Theatre Lane, then one way down Mallow St and left onto Henry St Lane and onto Jesuit Lane.

Consider the following: If Henry Street is made fully one way, then the junction of Mallow Street and Henry Street also becomes a one way with only downhill traffic. While on a red light for cars, cyclists coming up from the Mill lane side would not have to worry about traffic taking a left onto Henry from Mallow. They could easily cross here and get onto the lanes for 2 blocks using Henry St lane and Jesuit Lane. If going east, they can head for the People's Park. If going further south, they could join Henry St.



Alternate routes for cycleway:

I note there already exists a bike path around Raheen and connects with a stretch along Portland Park. Was it ever looked at to connect this up with Rosbrien Road and Lord Edward Street? This would then connect with the existing Parnell Street bike lane.

Also the John Henry Newman campus as an access route to MIC. I know I use it every time I need to bike to MIC.

Wolfe Tone Street bike lane plan

I note no mention of the plan to insert a bike lane and remove resident parking on Wolfe Tone Street in this plan. Piecemeal development is open to being challenged. If that is part of the plan at a future time, why is it not considered in the context of this plan?

The suggestion to make St Gerard Street will directly affect Wolfe Tone St residents and users and will mean they effectively will face a T junction at the end of their road.

This street has even less space to work with, so perhaps a one way system may be an option to look at here also.

To finish, a story from Sydney:

One Saturday morning I took part in a 50Km cycle from the Sydney Harbour Bridge out to the Olympic park. For one morning, cyclists had the run of the place. And I never felt less safe on a bike in my life. It was a free for all going across the harbour bridge. I mean, at least with a car in the lane beside you, you know where you are. But with tens of bikes whizzing around each other at different speeds, it was all too random.

Happily, as we found our way to the great cycling paths, things settled down and it was a pleasant day of cycling, with the usual blue skies, the exact opposite to Limerick's grey. As we neared ANZ stadium and the Olympic park, the tiredness was kicking in. Now the hazards came from in front and behind you in the bike lanes. One wobble or touch of your neighbour's wheel and you were gone.

For a finish, we made it to the finish line in one piece, relieved. And a sense of achievement. We raised money for a good cause, took our photos, had a beer and went home.

That night, I went to bed exhausted but happy. Before putting out the light I had a look at my

phone to see what news from Ireland. It was 16 October 2016. Oh no. Axel Foley RIP. #ofwff

I never owned a car in Sydney. I used my bike and trains. Imagine if towns like Ennis, Castleconnell, Kिलaloe, Shannon could all be just a regular train ride away? It shrank the city, connected regional towns. You could jump on a ferry with the bike to Manley. Or a train and bike it to Bondi.

I do hope the best ideas make it to the design team, I hope some I've shared here, and they do right by this beautiful part of town and the people who have chosen to live and work here. Best of luck.

p.s. My radio show about all this. Take the dog for a walk and have a listen. And mind the cars/bikes/scooters! <https://www.mixcloud.com/LCCR/the-craic-october-23rd-2022/>