

A Smart Future
NAVAN
2030



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

Navan Town Centre

Integrated Public Realm and Movement Plan

Project Overview

May 2017



1 INTRODUCTION

Navan is an attractive town, with historic streetscapes and a more modern shopping centre at the town centre, and a rich cultural and landscape heritage in its surrounds. Navan has a large population, and substantial growth is forecast in the coming years.

Navan town centre needs to build on its existing appeal to ensure it can accommodate future growth, and must also be able to position itself as an attractive location for retail, commercial, cultural, employment and amenity purposes that can attract additional investment and visitors to the town and its environs.

A high quality and accessible town centre, offering a full range of services, facilities and experiences, will underpin Navan a great place to live, work and to visit, and will drive economic growth in the town.

Navan 2030 considers two key and related elements that are critical to supporting and promoting the development of a vibrant and attractive County Town:

1. Enhancing the **physical attractiveness** of the town; and,
2. Improving **movement and access** in and out of the town centre.



Figure 1: Aerial view of Navan Town Centre looking along Trimgate Street.

Meath County Council, supported by the National Transport Authority, appointed a multi-disciplinary design team comprising Urban Planners, Engineers, Landscape Architects and Public Realm consultants to prepare the *Navan Town Centre Integrated Public Realm and Movement Plan*.

The objectives of this integrated plan are to:

- Facilitate the future successful **growth** of Navan;
- Create an **enhanced environment** for people living, working and visiting the town through **public realm enhancements** – encouraging economic growth;
- **Enhance accessibility** of the town for all;
- Create **multi-functional streets** that balance movement and ‘place’ and provide **safety for all** within a traffic calmed environment;
- Maximise **connectivity** – facilitating footfall around the town centre; and,
- **Improve access** to and from public transport services.

The focus of the plan is the **core of the town**, which is the historic centre defined by Trimgate Street, Ludlow Street, Watergate Street and Market Square, as well as the more recent Shopping Centre/Kennedy Plaza area.

Achieving greater **connectivity to, from and within this urban** core area, particularly for pedestrians, is fundamental to the future vitality of Navan town.

Outside the immediate core, connections to Railway Street, the Solstice Arts Centre, County Hall, Fair Green, Abbey Road and beyond to the Kells Road, River Boyne, River Blackwater and the residential population surrounding the town are also essential.



Figure 2: Focus of the Navan Town Centre Integrated Public Realm and Movement Plan.

2 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Old and the New

Navan town centre today, in broad terms, can be described as a town of two halves, with the historic streetscapes to the south, and the shopping centre area to the north. Kennedy Plaza lies between them and has great potential to enhance pedestrian connectivity between the old and new, and also to provide additional facilities that make more use of the space.

By making more day-to-day use of Kennedy Plaza, more people will pass through, making it a more active public space that serves to connect the old and the new, and to strengthen the overall town centre.

Traffic Congestion

The Kells Road was built in the 1980s to alleviate traffic congestion in the town centre at the time. Around the same time however, the new shopping centre and multi-storey car parking was developed. In conjunction with rapid expansion of residential settlements around the town, there was a consequent increase in demand for vehicular access into the town centre. Access to the existing car parks is essential to Navan, however, as the population expands further, more people entering the town centre are likely to do so by foot and by public transport.

The streets of Navan town centre can be made to cater for greater numbers of people in a safe and attractive environment while maintaining access to the existing car parks.

Visiting Navan

The M3 motorway caters for traffic passing Navan in both directions, and facilitates many who commute from Navan every day to work elsewhere. The motorway makes Navan very accessible for potential growth in commercial, retail and tourism sectors, however to date, it has tended to draw retail and commercial value from Navan to the larger urban centres.

Navan town centre must develop a more compelling retail and amenity reputation for its own population, and also compete as a town centre destination for visitors and tourists.

Through Traffic

The town now faces similar challenges to the 1980s – only on a larger and on a growing scale. Vehicular congestion detracts from both the convenience and appeal of the town, and in turn, negatively impacts on access to the town, the viability of businesses in the centre, and on the quality of the urban environment as perceived by both the local and visiting population.

Vehicles that are only passing through the town centre and along key town centre streets can be diverted around the centre to everyone's benefit.

Facilitating Growth

Navan is identified as a primary development centre in the *Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022*, and in the *Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019*. Therefore, the population of Navan will continue to grow.

Now is the time to plan for and to deliver an integrated approach to town centre usage and access so as to ensure that Navan can function efficiently as a commercial centre for its growing population, and can also compete with other settlements and town centres for visiting trade.

The streets of Navan town centre must be able to cater a growing population, in a safe, convenient and attractive manner that will benefit the businesses and the people of the town.

Streets, Lanes and Spaces

Navan town centre retains its historic grain and structure side-by-side with the larger retail and commercial elements at Kennedy Road. The historic core includes a wealth of laneways that are key features of the town centre that can be developed as part of the identity of Navan, but also serving to connect the old and the new. A busier and more vibrant town centre is anticipated, with stronger footfall on the streets that will support business growth.

The streets, laneways and public spaces of Navan can be re-balanced over time to optimise pedestrian and vehicular access. They can become thriving and more vibrant streetscapes that are authentic and will differentiate Navan from other settlements and town centres.

Public Transport

As Navan grows, access to efficient public transport is becoming increasingly important. Public transport services must be developed so as to be convenient, accessible and reliable, and local and regional buses must be integrated. Public transport must not only provide a high quality service to the people and the town, but also should benefit Navan by bringing people into the town centre.

Public transport services must be developed as a real alternative to private transport, both for local and regional trips. Routes and services must be fully integrated, and in a manner that benefits the community of Navan and also supports the businesses in the town.

Bus Terminus and Park & Ride

At present, Market Square is frequently used as an ad-hoc terminus by regional buses. Idling bus vehicles detract from the streetscape, undermine pedestrian safety, and often result in traffic congestion along Trimgate Street and Kennedy Road.

A dedicated out-of-town bus terminus is essential so as to ensure that buses in the town centre only ever stop for drop-off and pick-up. A bus terminus on the outskirts of the town can also serve as a Park & Ride facility so as to further reduce vehicular volumes in the centre during peak hours.

3 OVERVIEW OF PROPOSALS

The plan sets out a series of **physical and management** interventions that will optimise movement into and out of the town centre for pedestrians, public transport, deliveries and private cars.

In parallel, the quality of the public realm in the streets, laneways and public spaces will be enhanced, encouraging the establishment of a wider range of retail and commercial uses, and creating a more attractive, stimulating and vibrant town centre.

One of the early tangible benefits of the plan will be the substantial **removal of buses from Trimgate Street**, the removal of the often congested bus stop from Market Square, as well as a reduction in the levels of through traffic on Trimgate Street and Market Square.

This can be achieved by making key changes to the bus and other traffic routes at the town centre. North and south bound buses will be re-routed along Kennedy Road with drop-off and pick-up bus stops located on Kennedy Road where there is sufficient space for proper setback facilities that will not obstruct other traffic.

A dedicated **out of town terminus/park and ride** site will eliminate the need for any idling busses at the town centre.



Figure 3 Artists impression of a more pedestrian friendly Trimgate Street.



Figure 4 Navan Town Centre, with the Retail/Commercial Quarter and the Cultural Quarter either side of the historic town centre.



Figure 5: 5 and 2½ minute “walkability” zones of Navan Town Centre.

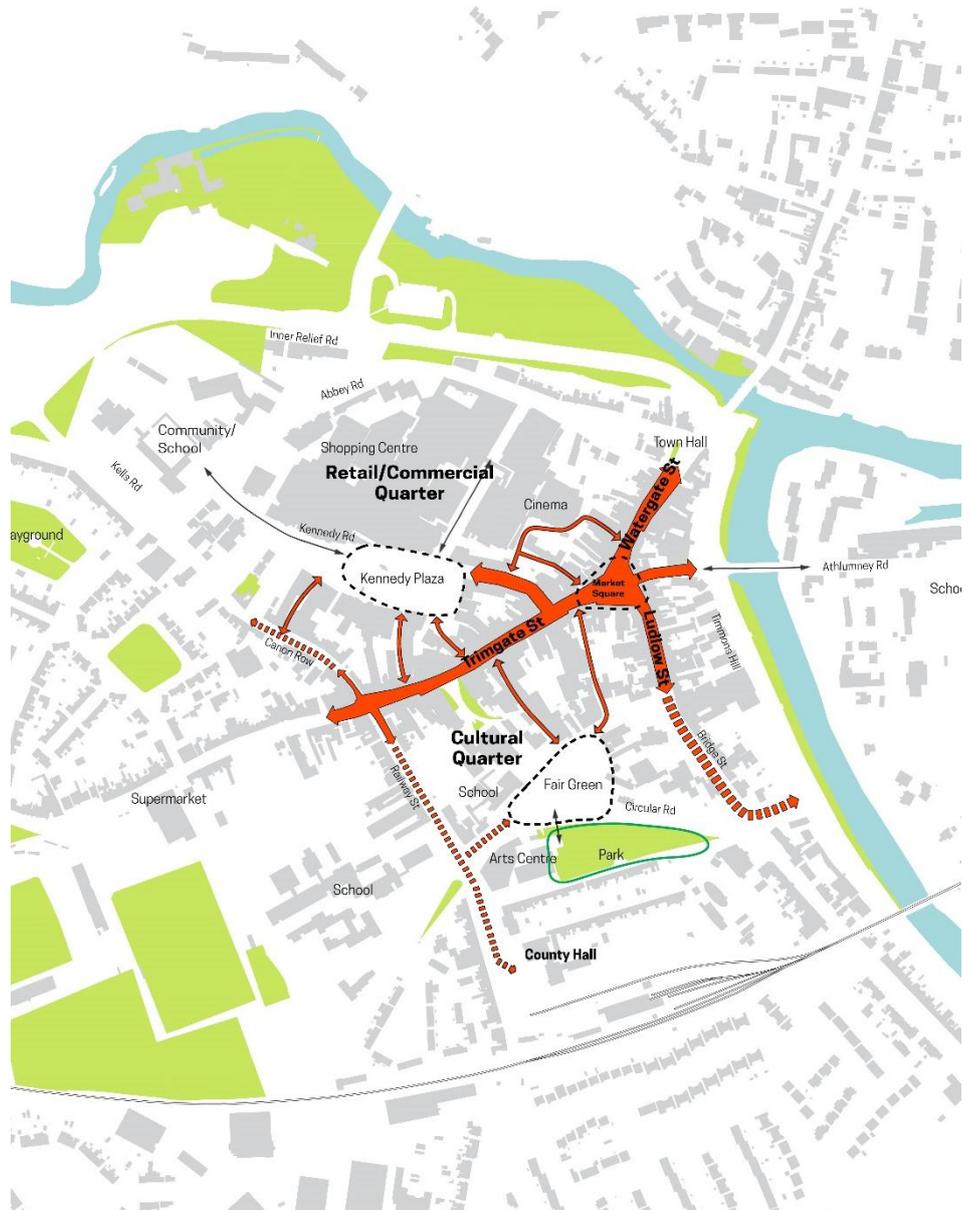


Figure 6: Original street network, and connecting historic laneways.

3.1 Townscape and Public Realm

The key objective for the public realm of Navan is to recognise the **compact and walkable scale of the town centre** and to ensure that public investment is focused towards enhancing pedestrian facilities, amenities and connections, and on improving the presentation and attractiveness of the town centre.

Planning for a walkable and high quality pedestrian environment will result in a town centre that enjoys **increased footfall, dwell time and customer spending** that will sustain the vitality of businesses in the centre.

It is not simply a question of increased pedestrian space. The need for vehicular access must also be accommodated, and both must be considered together.

There must be a **continuous and connected pedestrian network** of streets, laneways and public spaces that are attractive and interesting, where the pedestrian experience is **compelling** with variety and choice in the retail offer; **pleasurable** in the amenity and vibrancy of streets; and **safe** to wander, browse and socialise.

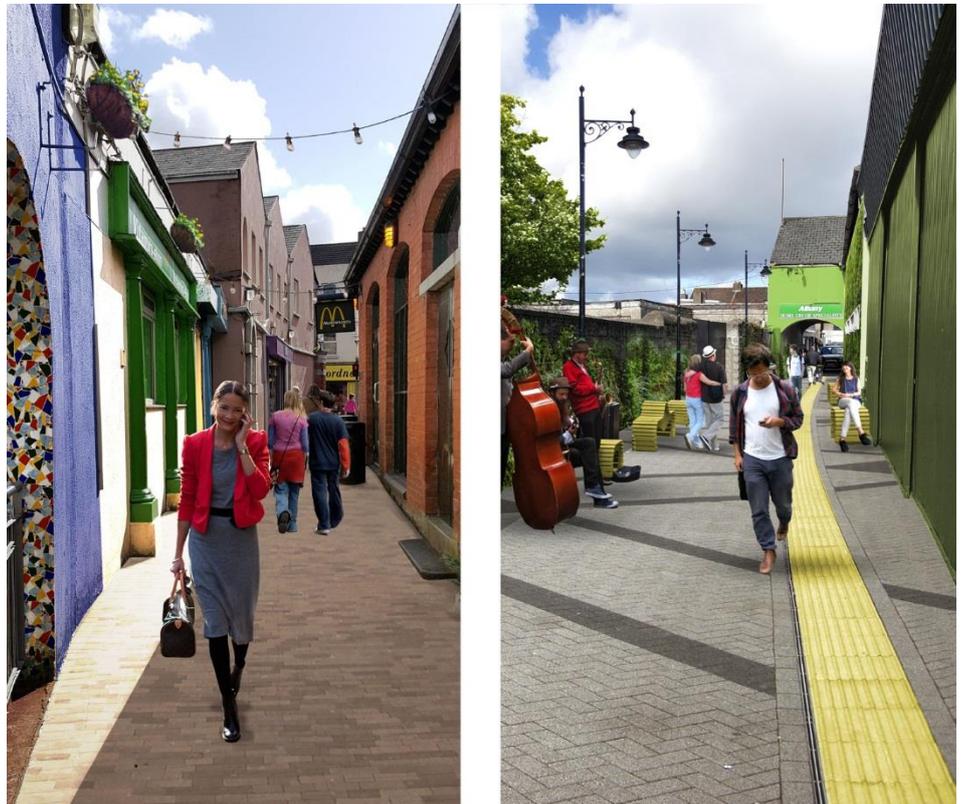


Figure 7: Rejuvenated laneways as pedestrian connections throughout the town centre.

Townscape and Public Realm Key Points

- Upgrading streets, laneways and public spaces in the historic and modern town centre with high quality pedestrian facilities and connectivity throughout;
- Establishing and promoting strong pedestrian connections between the Old and New, and the Retail/Commercial quarter and the Cultural quarter;
- Key streets include Trimgate St., Ludlow St., the laneways, Fair Green, Church Hill, Railway Street and Kennedy Road;
- Reduced traffic on Trimgate Street and Market Square thereby improving the pedestrian environment;
- New high quality paving, seating, street furniture, pedestrian crossings and lighting;
- Changing key spaces including Market Square, Kennedy Plaza, and Fair Green;
- Improved pedestrian connections, safety and facilities at Kennedy Plaza, incorporating and integrated bus stop for all routes and potential ticketing/information kiosk;
- Fair Green upgraded as 'frontage' to town centre from Circular Road; and
- Enhanced presentation of entry points/gateways to the town centre.



Figure 8: Fair Green as active frontage to Circular Road with pedestrian crossing facility to the Solstice Arts Centre and Library.

3.2 Movement and Access

Currently, local and regional bus services at Navan are disconnected, with passengers required to walk in order to make connections between services. There is a **lack of clarity over bus routing** and the location of bus stops, with some drop-off and pick-up stops for the same route often being on different streets, or the north and south bound bus both traveling in the same direction along the same street.

Only certain bus routes service the town centre, but many of these utilise narrower streets that are **not suitable for larger vehicles**. This plan will substantially remove larger vehicles from Trimgate Street resulting in a better pedestrian environment and a more vibrant shopping street. Market Square is used as an ad-hoc bus terminus, and frequently features idling buses that block traffic behind on Trimgate Street. For other bus routes, the drop-off and pick-up stops are peripheral to the town centre, and as such, those routes do not bring footfall into the town.



Figure 9: Market Square - enhanced pedestrian facilities, reduced through traffic and bus gate.

The solution is to integrate local and regional bus services along streets that are more suitable for larger vehicles and also have sufficient space to provide designated drop-off and pick-up stops. Kennedy Road is central to the core of Navan town with immediate access to both the Old and the New. It is of modern construction and has sufficient width and space alongside Kennedy Plaza to allow bus set-down and pick-up in both directions without obstructing other traffic.

Kennedy Road and Plaza can also facilitate the establishment of **co-located bus stops and taxi ranks**, and has further potential to develop ticketing/information type facilities that will improve the public transport experience and also bring additional footfall into Kennedy Plaza and the town centre.

By rationalising the bus routes, and integrating the various services at Kennedy Road, **Trimgate Street** can be improved to function and present as a more authentic and enjoyable retail street.

In turn, the **laneways can be rejuvenated** to provide additional pedestrian and retail facilities, and to create strong pedestrian connections between Trimgate Street and both the modern *Retail Quarter* on one side and the *Cultural Quarter, including Fair Green*, on the other.

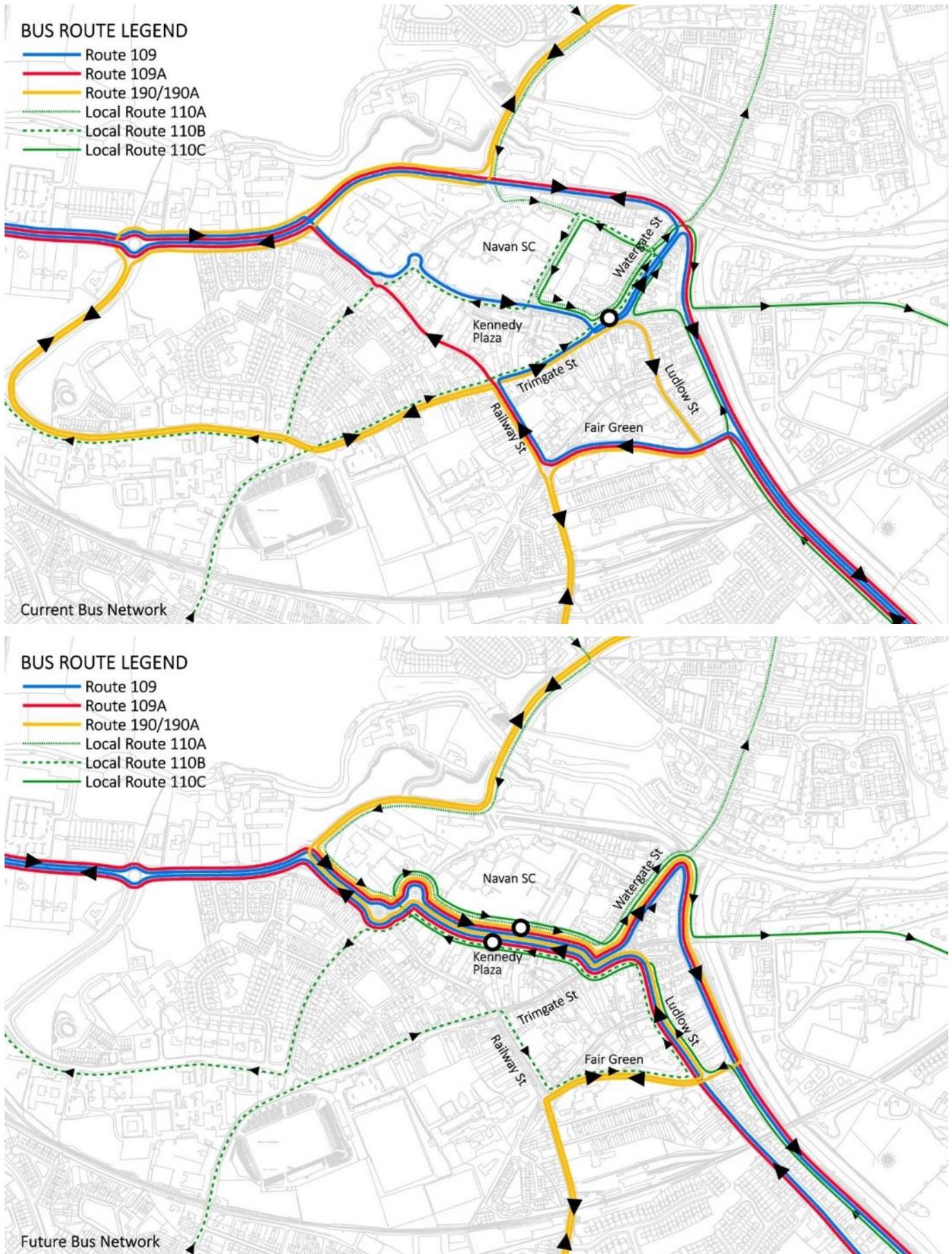


Figure 9: Current Bus Network (above) indicating lack of connectivity and confusion, and Future Bus Network (below) showing regional and local services integrated at Kennedy Road.



Figure 10: Kennedy Road, incorporating set back bus stops and taxi ranks, increased pedestrian space and potential for a new ticketing/information facility.

Movement and Access Key Points

- Re-routing of traffic including:
 - Through traffic re-routed around the town centre
 - Railway Street becomes two-way
 - Traffic flow on Ludlow Street and Bridge Street reversed
- New out-of-town Bus Terminus / Park & Ride;
- Facilitate rationalisation and integration of local and regional bus routes serving the town;
- Set-back bus stops (both directions) on Kennedy Road;
- Bus idling removed from Market Square;
- New taxi ranks on Kennedy Road, Abbey Street and Bridge Street;
- Access to all carparks maintained;
- Right turn from Kells Road to Timmons Hill removed;
- Pedestrian space increased and enhanced throughout;
- New/improved crossing facilities to ensure continuous pedestrian routes; and
- Provide safer and enhanced environment for cyclists in town centre.



Figure 11: Direct pedestrian connections to be established across the Kennedy Plaza.

4 IMPLEMENTATION

Once construction works commence, the plan could be substantially completed within an **overall three year programme**, however, different parts of the overall plan will be phased and completed within **much shorter timeframes**.

It is essential that the works are phased and managed where practicable in a manner that **minimises inconvenience** to the existing population and businesses. In this regard, all construction planning and management will involve advance consultation and effective communication with the public and stakeholders.

Delivery of the plan has been broken down into the following:

- Stand-alone projects that can be delivered independently of other work and can either precede major works or be delivered later
- Essential works are those that must be delivered together so as to facilitate the changes in traffic management, but will include the delivery of public realm works associated with streets affected
- Elements that can be undertaken once the new traffic system is in place and operational.

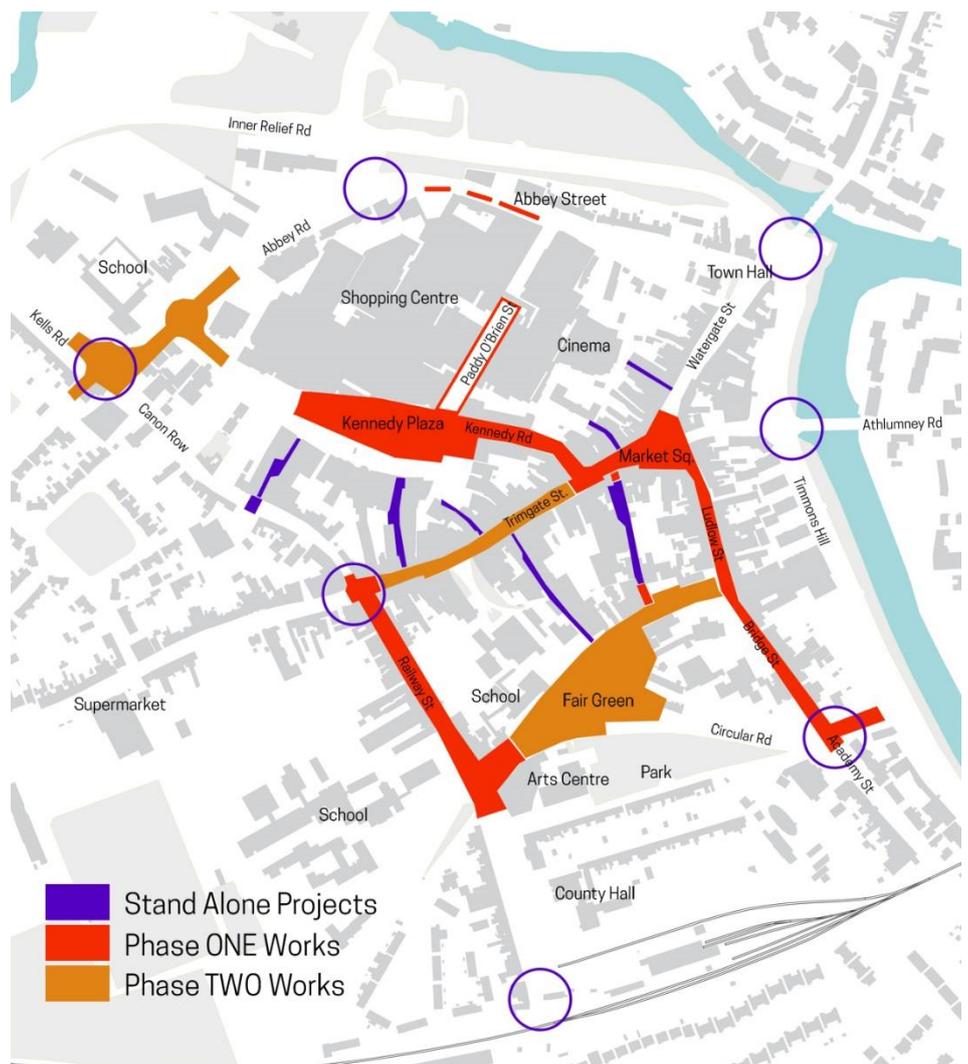


Figure 12: Overview of project phasing.

Stand-alone projects, indicated in purple, include enhancement of the gateways to Navan town centre, and refurbishment works to the historic laneways. Where gateways overlap Phase ONE or Phase TWO works, they will be delivered at the same time as the phased works.

Phase ONE essential works are those indicated in red, and include:

- making Railway Street two-way;
- provision of a new taxi rank on Abbey Road;
- changes to Kennedy Road including the provision of new bus stops;
- modifications to Market Square;
- reversal of traffic Ludlow Street/Bridge Street; and,
- modifications to the Bridge Street/Circular Road junction; and,
- out-of-town terminus / Park & Ride facility.

Although extensive within the town, actual works will be localised where practicable to distinct areas during construction so as to minimise disruption. Where works include traffic management, infrastructure changes and associated public realm works, all works including the public realm works will be undertaken in tandem so as to mitigate potential secondary disruption.

Phase TWO works, indicated in orange, include new paving, street furniture, pedestrian crossings, planting, lighting and other junction and street upgrades that can take place once the new traffic system is in operation.

The nature of these works is such that they can be undertaken in much smaller areas so as to limit disruption to short periods of time. Construction works will be planned and managed in consultation with any directly affected stakeholders so as to mitigate inconveniences to businesses and customers.