

██████████  
Email: ██████████

Re: FOI Request Response [IE\_FOI\_609]

29<sup>th</sup> August 2022

Dear ██████████

I refer to your request dated 10<sup>th</sup> August 2018 made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014, which was received on that date for records held by Iarnród Éireann your request sought:

- further details regarding any proposed development or future plans relating to the disused rail line that joins Colbert Station in Limerick City Centre to Irish Cement and Mungret.

I, Paul Hendrick, have now made a final decision to grant your request on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2022.

You have sought access to the records as listed above and I consider this an appropriate form of access in this case.

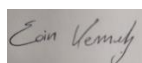
#### Rights of appeal

In the event that you are not happy with this decision you can make an appeal in relation to this matter, you can do so by writing to the FOI Unit, Corporate Communications, Iarnród Éireann Irish Rail, Connolly Station, Amiens St, Dublin 1 or by e-mail to foι@irishrail.ie. You should make your appeal within 4 weeks (20 working days) from the date of this notification, where a day is defined as a working day excluding, the weekend and public holidays, however, the making of a late appeal may be permitted in appropriate circumstances.

The appeal will involve a complete reconsideration of the matter by a more senior member of the staff of this body.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the above, please contact the FOI Officer on ██████████

Yours sincerely pp,



Mr. Paul Hendrick, Decision Maker

Freedom of Information Request:  
Schedule of Records for **IE\_FOI\_609** : Summary for Decision Making

Record No.	Date of Record	Brief Description	No. of Pages	Decision: Grant/Part Grant/Refuse	Section of Act if applicable	Record Edited/Identify Deletions
1	Sep-20	Limerick – Shannon Area Possibilities for Rail Transport	15	Part Grant	Schedule 1 Part 1 (p) - Partially Included agencies	Iarnród Éireann is exempt from FOI in so far as it relates to the operation of the freight function
2	Sep-20	Presentation James Dunne, Head of Transport Planning Capital Investments, gave to LCCC on the possibilities for rail	31	Grant		
3	7th April 2021	Note produced for the LDA with regards to Limerick-Shannon possibilities	5	Part Grant	Schedule 1 Part 1 (p) - Partially Included agencies	Iarnród Éireann is exempt from FOI in so far as it relates to the operation of the freight function
4	N/A	Worksheet on the initial assessment of station locations on the Mungret line.	1	Grant		funding not approved (no further progression)

Signed  
Eoin Kennedy  
Freedom of Information / Data Protection office

# Limerick-Shannon Area Possibilities for Rail Transport



---

## Contents

Purpose.....	3
1. Case for Change in Limerick .....	4
1.1 High-Level Policy Context .....	4
1.3 Achieving Climate Change Targets .....	5
2. Overview of Limerick Services.....	6
3. Rail Possibilities for Limerick .....	7
3.1 Limerick Suburban Rail Enhancements and Expansion .....	7
3.2 Colbert Station Enhancements.....	9
3.4 Integration with Colbert Quarter Development.....	9
3.5 Freight.....	11
4. Benefits of Sustainable Transport for the Limerick-Shannon Area .....	11
5. Benefits of the Identified Rail Possibilities for the Limerick-Shannon Area.....	12
6. Longer-term possibilities.....	12
6.1 Shannon Airport to Limerick City Rail Link .....	12
6.2 Extension to Rathkeale/Foynes.....	13
6.3 Electrification of Suburban services .....	13
7. Impact of COVID-19 .....	13
Appendix – Comparator Possibility Maps .....	14



## Purpose

This report has been prepared by Iarnród Éireann's Capital Investments Division. The purpose of this report is to;

- Provide a high-level case for change towards rail transport
- Provide an overview of the existing heavy rail network in the Limerick-Shannon Area
- Outline that the heavy rail network in the Limerick-Shannon Area can be developed and that there are a number of possibilities to facilitate it
- Set out, at a high-level, the possible strategies for improving rail services, and;
- The benefits for the existing customer base and to encourage and enable modal shift onto public transport from non-users



*Class 22000 departing Limerick Colbert Station*

## 1. Case for Change in Limerick

### 1.1 High-Level Policy Context

Project Ireland 2040 was launched by the Irish Government in 2018 and comprises of the National Planning Framework (NPF), which sets out a spatial strategy for the next 20 years, and the National Development Plan (NDP), which sets out an investment strategy for the first 10 years of the National Planning Framework; 2018-2027.

Project Ireland 2040 sets out ten National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs), supported by ten Strategic Investment Priorities, which represent a shared set of goals for every community across the country and act as a framework for the realisation for the ambition of Project Ireland 2040.

Iarnród Éireann has an important role to play in supporting the delivery of a number of the National Strategic Outcomes. Targeted investment in rail can support delivery of the following NSOs;

Figure 1: Key NSOs Rail Impacts Nationally



The National Planning Framework (NPF) 'Project Ireland 2040' sets out strong population and economic growth for Limerick City and County. This forecasts that the population will grow by between +47,000 – 56,000 by 2040. The minimum NPF target population by 2040 for Limerick City and suburbs is 141,000. This growth, both economically and in terms of population, will require public transport improvements and further integration, as well the delivery of large-scale regeneration projects for the provision of new employment and housing. It is important that the support infrastructure is in place to support these large-scale developments, and an integrated public transport hub at Limerick Colbert is a crucial element of this.

Ireland suffers from a legacy of low-density urban sprawl and an over-reliance on the private car. Project Ireland 2040 outlines the need to prioritise compact urban growth in tandem with investment in sustainable transport to change this pattern. Limerick has a low uptake of public transport services, with only a 7% share of *all trip purpose* journeys made on public transport across the whole day<sup>1</sup>. Only 6% of commuting journeys (to work/college/school) in Limerick City are by public transport compared to 60% by private car<sup>2</sup>. This narrative is mirrored in large parts of the country, highlighting the challenge for achieving sustainable mobility nationally and locally.

<sup>1</sup> CSO Census 2016

<sup>2</sup> CSO Census 2016

Limerick City is the largest urban centre in Ireland's Mid-West and the country's third largest city, making its success vital for the national and regional economy. The NPF recognises this importance and is supportive of its growth. The 'Limerick 2030' initiative is one of the key enablers for future growth in Limerick according to the NPF. Colbert Station "renewal and regeneration" is one of the main city centre transformational projects in 'Limerick 2030'.

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region is a 12-year strategic regional development framework to guide the change in population and economic growth to 2040. It establishes a broad framework for the way in which our society, environment, economy and the use of land should evolve. An investment objective for the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area as part of RSES, is to optimise the use of the rail network. This report aims to build on that objective by providing possibilities to fulfil it, and further areas for consideration in terms of optimisation.

In the Programme for Government published in June 2020, the Government committed to a 2:1 ratio of expenditure between new public transport infrastructure and new roads over its lifetime. Now is the opportunity to ensure that the Limerick-Shannon Area makes the transition to more sustainable modes of transport, with rail investment being central to this.

## 1.2 Achieving Climate Change Targets

An overarching background to the rail possibilities in this report is Ireland's climate and environmental targets. Climate change is a global challenge. There are various climate change targets to be achieved for the state at a global, European, and national level. Ireland has an overall obligation to reduce carbon emissions by 80% by 2050. Ireland also has European Union non-ETS<sup>3</sup> targets which require a 20% reduction in non-ETS sector emissions by 2020 and 30% by 2030 (relative to 2005 levels), with annual binding emissions limits set for each individual year to 2030. The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) estimate that Ireland's non-ETS emissions is on track to be just 1% lower at 2020 relative to our 2005 levels.

It is important to note at this point that at 2017 levels, the contribution from Public Transport was 4.4%, with private car contributing 51.9% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The growing economy has increased the level of transport emissions with 19.8% of Ireland's total non-ETS greenhouse gases coming from transport. Private car is estimated to have contributed to 8.2% of the non-ETS emissions nationally. To tackle this imbalance, the government's Climate Action Plan (2019) features the DART+ Programme as part of a key set of major capital investments to accelerate the modal shift to public transport.

While the infrastructure provided by DART+ is focussed in the Dublin region, it will facilitate an increase in Intercity services to Dublin from the Regions through infrastructural improvements, particularly on the mainline into Heuston with 4-tracking of the line from Heuston Station to Park West. Heavy rail also has the potential to further impact Ireland's emissions targets by increasing the service levels within and across the Regions through enhanced infrastructure and increasing fleet size.



<sup>3</sup> Any company or body within the EU that emits a large amount of greenhouse gas emissions is included in the Emissions Trading System, commonly known as the ETS for short. All greenhouse gas emissions that are not from companies in the ETS are called non-ETS emissions (SEAI, 2020)



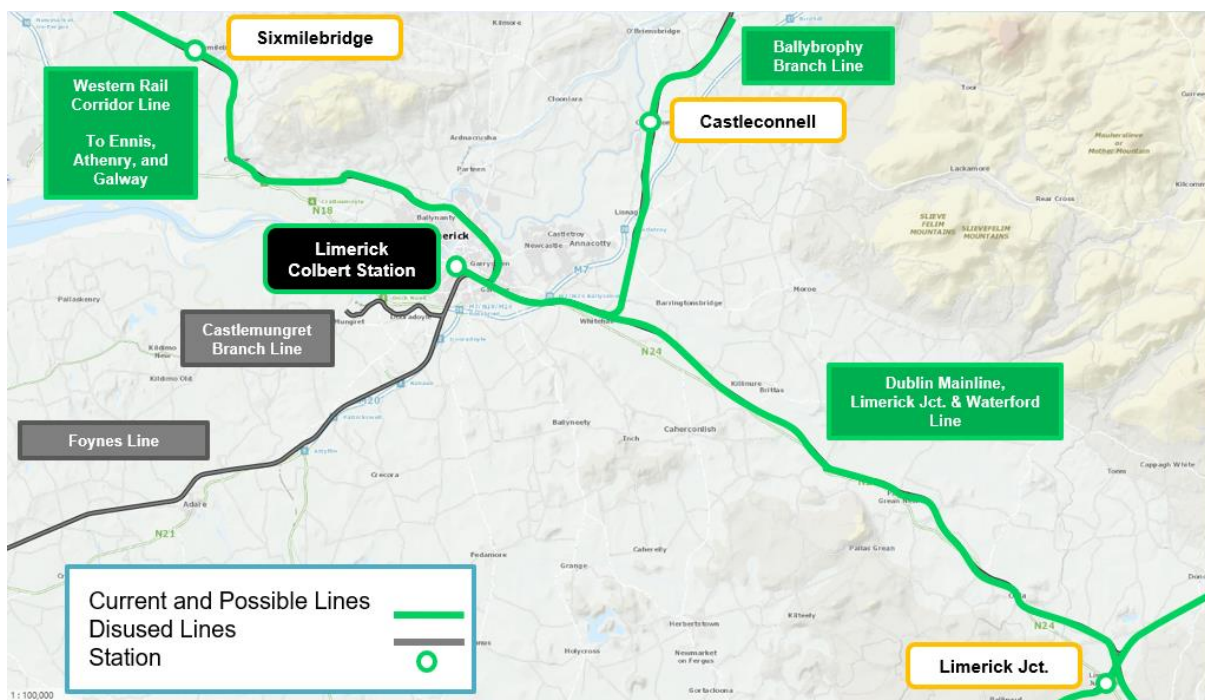
The environmental consequences of the unsustainable quantum of private cars on Ireland's road network will require action, in particular the air pollutant emissions and greenhouse gas emissions produced. Heavy rail clearly has a pivotal role to play based on the unique ability of rail services to move large numbers of people quickly and safely and is approximately six times more energy efficient than road-based transport. Heavy rail has reduced its overall emissions by 40% since 2005, significantly ahead of the EU 2020 target of 20%. There is an opportunity to continue this trajectory.

## 2. Overview of Limerick Services

### 2.1 Existing Services

Limerick Colbert Station is the main station serving Limerick City and County. There are 5 radiating rail lines that serve Limerick Colbert and city. Three of these are active, with two inactive currently.

Figure 2: Current map of orbital rail routes from Limerick Colbert Station



There are currently five services from Limerick Colbert;

- Limerick-Ennis-Athenry-Galway
- Limerick-Limerick Junction (for Dublin, Cork, or Tralee services)
- Limerick-Dublin (direct)
- Limerick-Waterford
- Limerick-Ballybrophy

### 2.2 Recent Improvements to Limerick Services

Passenger on Dublin Heuston - Limerick services have benefitted from journey time improvements, with a reduction from 2 hours 13 minutes to 2 hours, and further journey time improvements are targeted. This reduction in journey time has been achieved through;

- Resignalling of Limerick Colbert Station
- Extended, lengthened, and straightened platforms at Limerick Colbert Station.

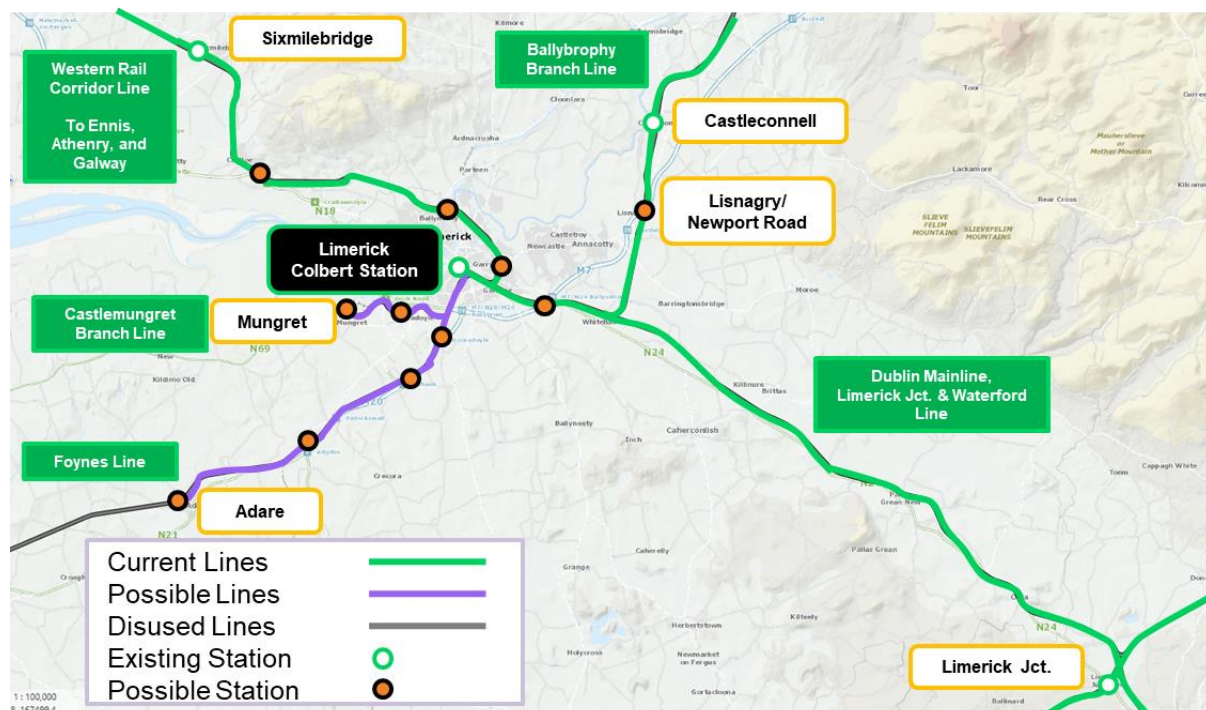
- Current process of automating the crossings between Limerick Colbert Station and Limerick Junction.
- Targeting the line speed from 70mph to 90mph from Limerick to Limerick Jct.
- Dublin Heuston-Limerick services will also benefit from line speed improvements on the Cork Mainline (in the Limerick Junction to Dublin Heuston section) in which targeting 100mph.

### 3. Rail Possibilities for Limerick

#### 3.1 Limerick Suburban Rail Enhancements and Expansion

There are a number of possibilities for improving the suburban rail offering in Limerick. All possibilities are subject to Business Case evaluation and peer review under the Public Spending Code<sup>4</sup> of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) and shall adhere to the guidance of the Common Appraisal Framework (CAF)<sup>5</sup> for Transport Sector Capital Projects & Programmes from the Department of Transport, Tourism, and Sport (DTTAs).

*Figure 3: Map of orbital rail routes from Limerick Colbert Station with possible re-opened lines and stations - all subject to evaluation through formal Business Case*



The key possibilities for improving the suburban rail offering in the Limerick Area are;

- Re-opening the Foynes Branch to Adare and/or Mungret including;
  - Launching a new suburban service to Adare and/or Mungret
  - Possible four new stations (at six locations)
  - Direct curve added to Foynes branch from Colbert Station via old alignment
  - Through services connection made directly to Galway via Colbert
- Possible new station and Park and Ride at Ballysimon and/or Lisnagry for example
- Potential turnback and/or passing loop at either Sixmilebridge or Cratloe
- 3 possible new stations on the line to Ennis/Galway

<sup>4</sup> December 2019

<sup>5</sup> March 2016

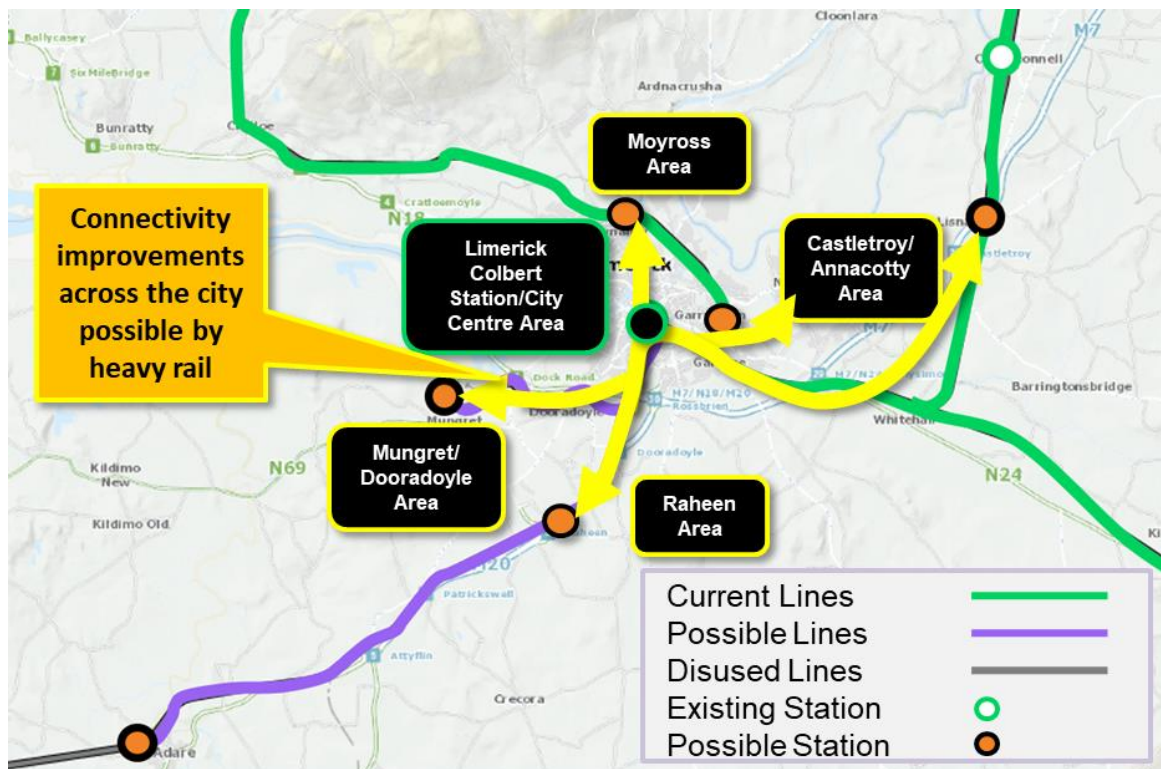


Additional fleet will be required in the short to medium-term due to the current lack of availability of additional fleet for these enhancements. The cascading of the fleet from DART+ to the Regions will begin from potentially 2025. To operate a 3 trains per hour (per direction) service between Sixmilebridge or Cratloe and Adare, there is a minimum requirement of six 2-car sets.

Figure 4: Limerick Suburban Rail Possibilities – Station Locations and Amenities



Figure 5: Limerick Suburban Rail Possibilities – Connectivity Impact



### 3.2 Colbert Station Enhancements

The National Transport Authority, Limerick City and County Council (LCCC), Bus Éireann and Iarnród Éireann wish to develop an integrated hub at Colbert Station. Planning was granted in 2014 with a planning extension granted in 2019, now valid until 2024. The design addresses a number of objectives identified in Limericks City and County Economic & Spatial Plan, 'Limerick 2030', by creating



*New Colbert Bus Station and Interchange Impression*

a transport hub within the station and provision of a new public plaza. Colbert Station renewal including a new public transport interchange and enhanced station environment is also an objective of the RSES for the Southern Assembly. The overall objective of the project is to enhance and develop the existing passenger facilities at Colbert Station, to improve intermodal transfer between rail, bus, taxi, private vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians, and to improve accessibility between the station and the city centre. The project will deliver the following key elements to achieve the objectives:

- Improvement works to extend the main entrance, concourse and public facilities
- New accessible ticket offices, retail units and toilets
- Increase in bus bays from 12 to 21 with new extended canopy
- Increased capacity in the carpark - 328 total passenger car spaces

### 3.3 Intercity and Regional Services

There are possibilities to improve on the Intercity and regional services provided by Iarnród Éireann. These include;

- Increased frequency on Dublin services
- Increased Ennis/Galway services
- Increasing Waterford Services

The increased connectivity provided by a new expanded suburban service with a higher frequency Intercity service would transform passenger journeys in the Limerick Area. Intercity electrification forms part of a long-term strategy to de-carbonise the heavy rail network and provide the benefits of significant journey time savings, improved reliability, enhanced passenger quality and lower operating costs.

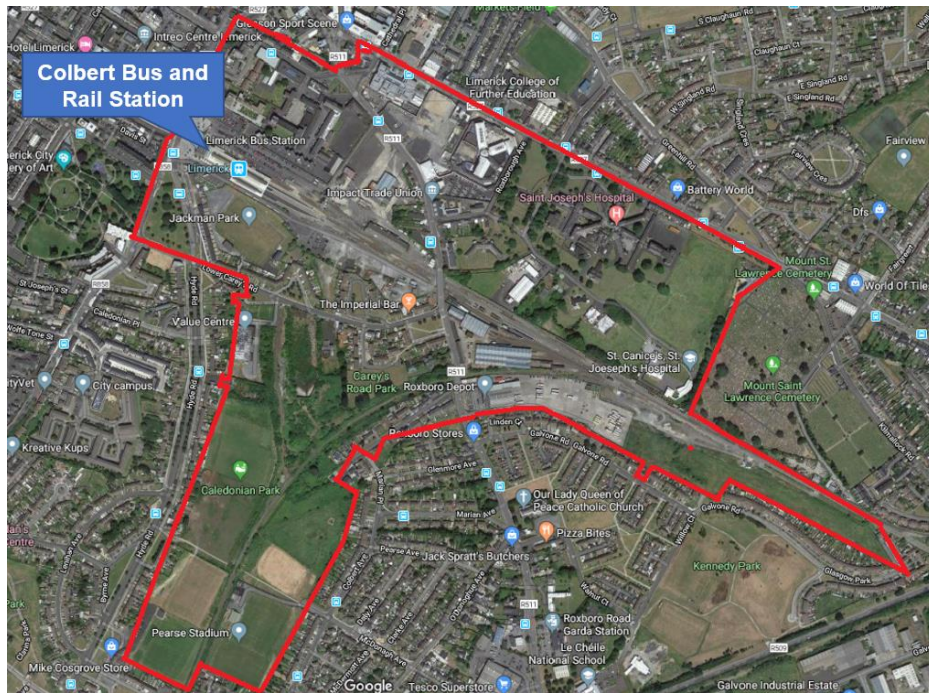
### 3.4 Integration with Colbert Quarter Development

The Land Development Agency (LDA) are seeking to develop the area to the North, East and South of Colbert Station with the station itself the central element to this largely residential development which is anticipated to accommodate one third of Limericks population growth of 50,000 to 2040.

IEs parent company, CIÉ, along with the LDA, Limerick City and County Council and other stakeholders have committed to the development of Colbert Quarter. It is seen as one of the key signals of confidence in Limerick City and the Mid-West region. The availability of sustainable modes of travel (walking, cycling, and public transport) for such a large compact development will be key to its success and appeal, both for residents and any prospective employers. The possible reopened and existing disused railway lines penetrate the site of the Colbert Quarter development.

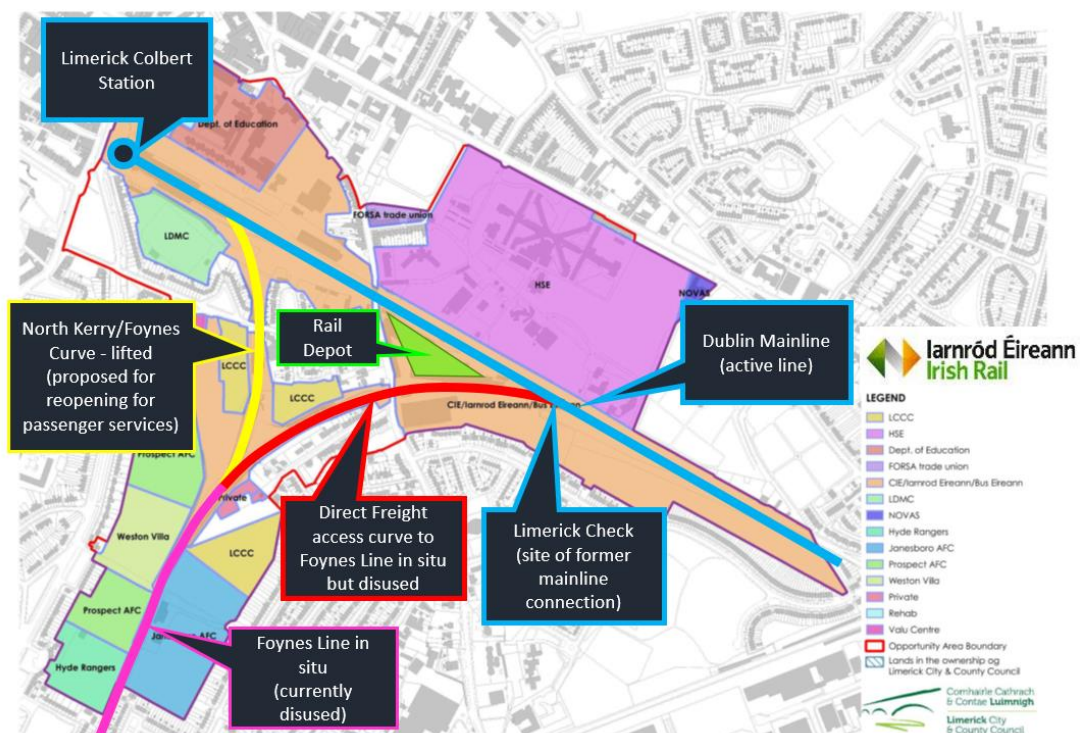


Figure 6: LDA Colbert Quarter Site



This presents an opportunity to provide the Colbert Quarter development with access to a high-level of service of both Intercity and suburban rail services at an integrated transport hub at Colbert Station from the outset, providing a leading example of transport orientated development (TOD). TOD is an approach to urban development that provides residential, business and leisure space within walking distance of public transport and has been used successfully internationally to enhance development around major transport hubs. Colbert Quarter has the potential to be the example of optimised integrated transport and land-use planning, with sustainable public transport options for the developments residents and employees when complete, reducing the need for car journeys.

Figure 7: LDA Colbert Quarter Site showing ownership and railway lines



### 3.5 Freight

[REDACTED];

- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



## 4. Benefits of Sustainable Transport for the Limerick-Shannon Area

It is recognised that interventions in the transport sector must be based on a long-term strategic vision for the sustainable mobility of people and goods. This is driven by the principle that policies of a structural character take a considerable time to implement and must be the subject of detailed advanced planning. The possibilities for heavy rail present an opportunity to develop the foundation, and begin the implementation, of a sustainable integrated transport system. The benefits of a sustainable integrated transport system for Limerick-Shannon Area includes;

- Providing the modern mobility system required to support the population and economic growth projected for Limerick City and County.
- Increased interchange between modes at mobility hubs.
- Integrated ticketing across all modes, ensuring simple interchange and improved experience.
- Enables and encourages model shift from the private car to more sustainable public transport and active modes through quality of service and frequency.
- Reduces the levels of congestion in the city, and the wider Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area by promoting and prioritising public transport and active modes over the private car.
- Improves the quality of life for citizens of the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area by reducing emissions caused by private cars, increasing accessibility, and growing the labour catchment for employers, and employment opportunities the labour force.
- Ensures mobility and accessibility to amenities for an aging population, with the number of people over the age of 65 is expected to reach 1.4 million nationally by 2040.
- Communicates that Limerick City on a national and European level is committed to leading the sustainable mobility transformation in Ireland.
- An enhanced environmentally friendly mobility system, and the improved quality of life it brings in Limerick-Shannon, can positively impact the Mid-West Regions appeal for Foreign Direct Investment from multinational companies.

## 5. Benefits of the Identified Rail Possibilities for the Limerick-Shannon Area

- **Maximises the value of the existing railway network in the Limerick-Shannon Area** through targeted investment that will enhance its efficiency and effectiveness in supporting national and regional spatial planning priorities.
- **Greater rail catchment in the Limerick-Shannon Area across existing lines:** Increased catchment for rail in populated locations in Limerick on the Ennis/Galway line, creating new rail markets to increase public transport use, and;
- **Re-opening of markets to rail:** Opening rail markets in the densely populated area of Dooradoyle, industrial area of Raheen, the new development at Mungret Park, and the towns of Patrickswell and Adare. Towns further south, such as Croom, would be able to interchange to rail at a P&R at Patrickswell.
- **Enabling and encouraging compact growth:** supports long-term concentrated development along largely established population centres, while also offering scope for new areas to develop along public transport corridors that can support growth into the future.
- **Progresses the case for Limerick Colbert Quarter LDA and LCCC Masterplan development:** by enhancing the development project through the c a sustainable transport-oriented development for the city and region with new connections and stations for the new urban living district around Colbert Station (which includes housing, work, cultural and play areas, along with public services such as health and educational facilities).
- **Greater punctuality for Limerick:** Heavy rail is the only fully segregated transport system in Ireland, avoiding congestion and conflicts associated with road traffic, providing greater punctuality.
- **Increased operations between Limerick and Ennis:** the new turnback and/or passing loop at Sixmilebridge or Cratloe will break the section between Ennis and Limerick providing increase operations in the section allowing for increased services to Ennis and Galway.
- **Alignment with projected population growth:** This would be hugely beneficial to the planned demographic increase in Limerick, as these possibilities can be integrated in-line with any planned development to accommodate the increase. It allows rail to be an integral part of any new development around the railway boundary.
- **Enables modal shift to public transport** as the railway forms part of an enhanced integrated transport system, providing options to citizens and encouraging a move away from private cars.
- **Secures long-term future of Foynes Line to Adare:** and could facilitate possible extension to Shannon Foynes Port in the future.
- **Increased Intercity and Regional connectivity:** achieved through greater service levels
- **No need for CPO on property to complete the possibilities for rail**
- **Minimal disruption to surrounding area** - All works can be predominantly achieved within Iarnród Éireann's existing footprint.
- **Increased contribution from Limerick-Shannon to the carbon reduction targets set at the European level and in the Climate Action Plan** with the average rail passenger km creating approximately 28g of greenhouse gases (GHGs) vs. 102g for road vehicles, proving a step change in improving air quality levels.
- **Leading example of transport orientated development (TOD):** Providing the Colbert Quarter development with a high-level of service for both Intercity and suburban rail services, centred at an integrated transport hub at Colbert Station, promotes Limerick City as a leading example of transport orientated development (TOD).

## 6. Longer-term possibilities

The possibilities identified in Section 3 of this document, could be implemented in the short-medium term. This section aims to outline longer-term possibilities to enhance the sustainable transport offering in the Limerick-Shannon Area.

### 6.1 Shannon Airport to Limerick City Rail Link

The Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Southern Region sets an ambition to create a rail link between Limerick City and Shannon Airport. This is also supported in the Mid-West Regional Planning



Guidelines (2010-2022). The possible line would diverge from the Limerick to Ennis line at the possibly re-opened Cratloe Station and continue west towards Shannon Airport. The line from Cratloe Station could also serve the popular tourist town of Bunratty and Shannon town, before terminating at the airport. It would provide a reliable end-to-end sustainable transport service to the airport from Limerick City and the wider regional centres.

### 6.2 Extension to Rathkeale/Foynes

The possible reopening of the Foynes Line as far as Adare will secure the long-term future of the line. It could facilitate a further extension to Shannon Foynes Port for freight services over the medium-long-term. In the longer-term, passenger services could possibly be extended to Ballingrane Station (near Rathkeale) to serve the town of Rathkeale and the key town of Newcastle West via a park and ride. This extension of passenger services would also connect the rail network to the Great Southern Trail Greenway when the remaining part of the greenway trail to Ballingrane Station is complete, creating a prime tourist interchange point and increasing the environmentally friendly mobility options for Limerick County.

### 6.3 Electrification of Suburban services

The possible suburban service identified in this report in the short-medium term could be electrified over the medium-long-term to provide a zero emissions suburban rail network<sup>6</sup>, further helping Ireland achieve its environmental targets and improve the operational efficiency of the service.

In the Appendix to this document, a set of comparator maps provide an overview of the phased development of the heavy rail possibilities.

## **7. Impact of COVID-19**

To conclude this document, it is important to acknowledge that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has caused wide-ranging challenges and uncertainty throughout society on a global, European, and national level. It has altered some aspects of the way we live our lives and move about. It is likely to have an impact on the population and economic targets projected as part of the Project Ireland 2040 initiative, the levels of which, as of yet, are unclear.

Although it is not yet possible to determine the full impact on the public transport sector, in the short to medium term, COVID-19 impacts will include a reduction in the number of people in employment, migration to remote and home working and a switch towards more individual modes of transport. In this new environment, the immediate priority for Iarnród Éireann will be to rebuild customer confidence in our services and develop flexibility in longer-term rail development plans to allow us respond quickly to emerging threats and opportunities.

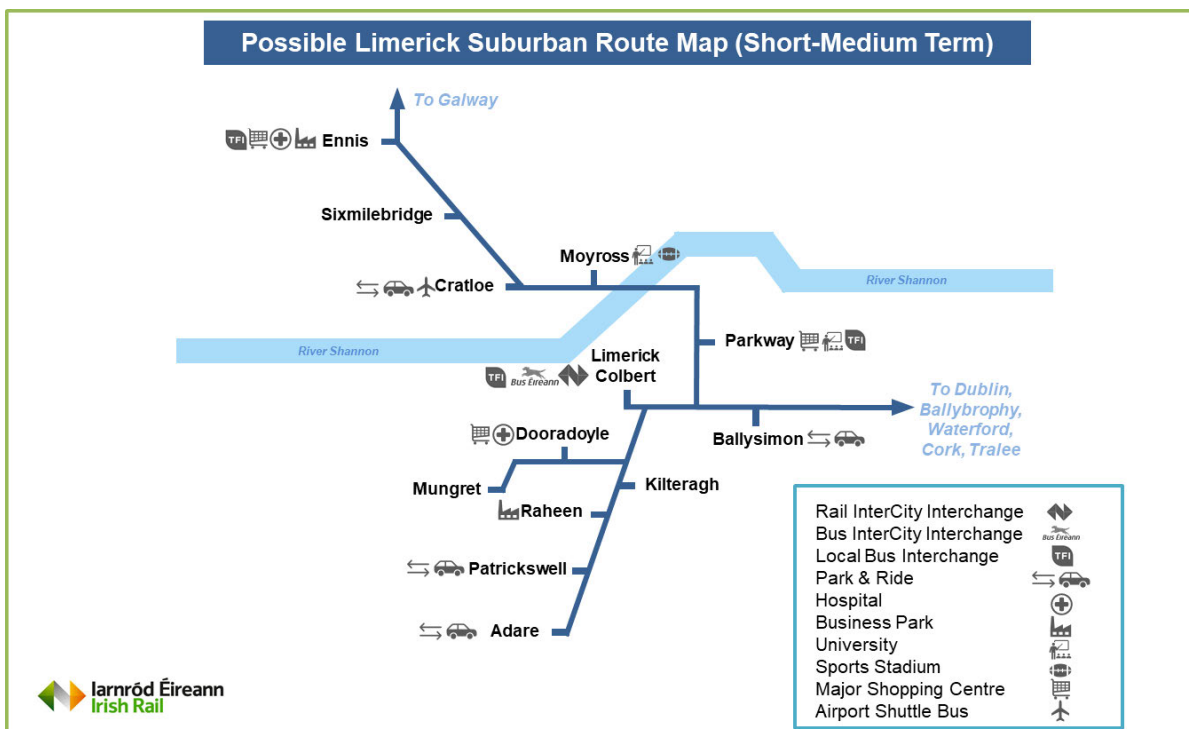
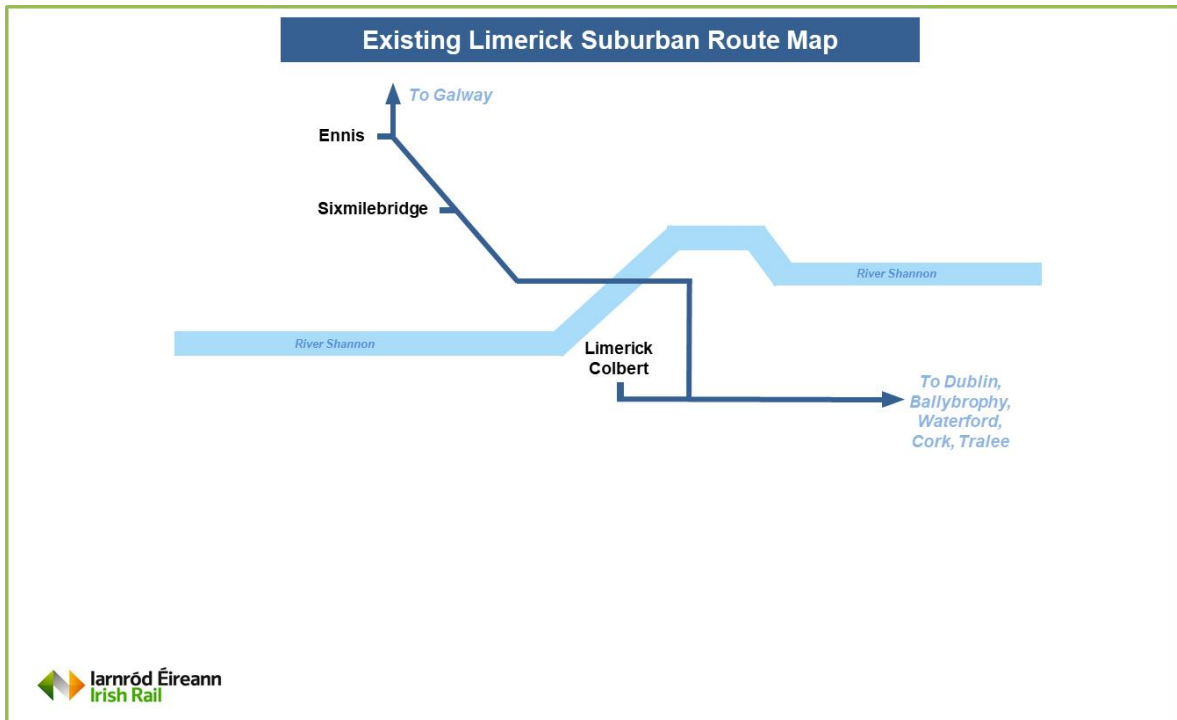


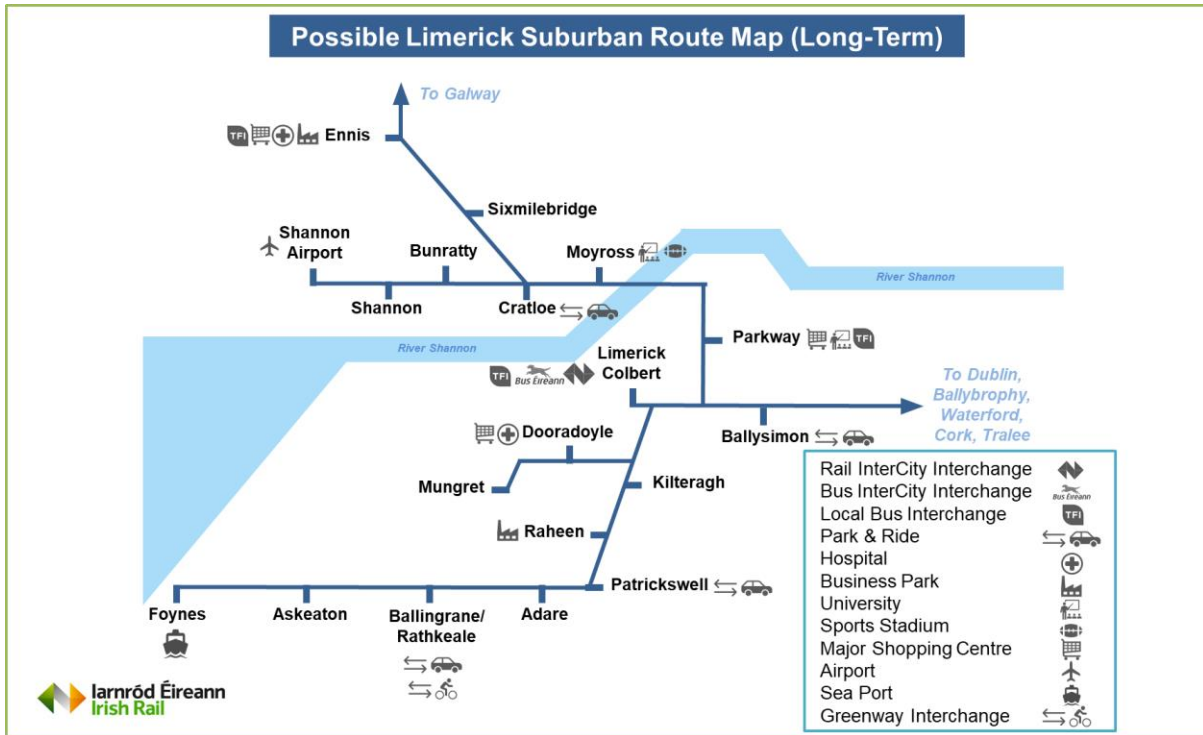
From the perspective of developing a sustainable integrated transport system, COVID-19 does present an opportunity to change habits, and the promotion and priority of sustainable transport as key driver for the recovery of growth should be considered as part of the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Transport Strategy (LSMATS) and new Limerick City and County Development Plan for the period 2022-2028. The development of a sustainable integrated transport network for the Limerick-Shannon area can be a springboard to economic recovery through the jobs it creates during its implementation, and it sustains post-completion.

---

<sup>6</sup> At the point of use.

**Appendix – Comparator Possibility Maps**





# Limerick-Shannon Rail Possibilities

Limerick City and County Council  
Presentation – September 2020



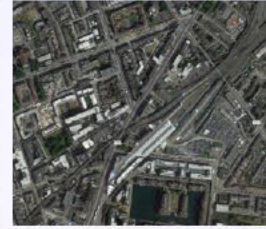
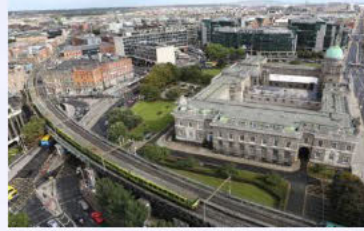
James Dunne  
Head of Capital Investment Transport Planning





# Presentation Overview

1. Iarnród Éireann: Overview
2. Existing Services and Recent Improvements
3. Limerick Future - LSMATS
4. Limerick Future - Possibilities for Rail





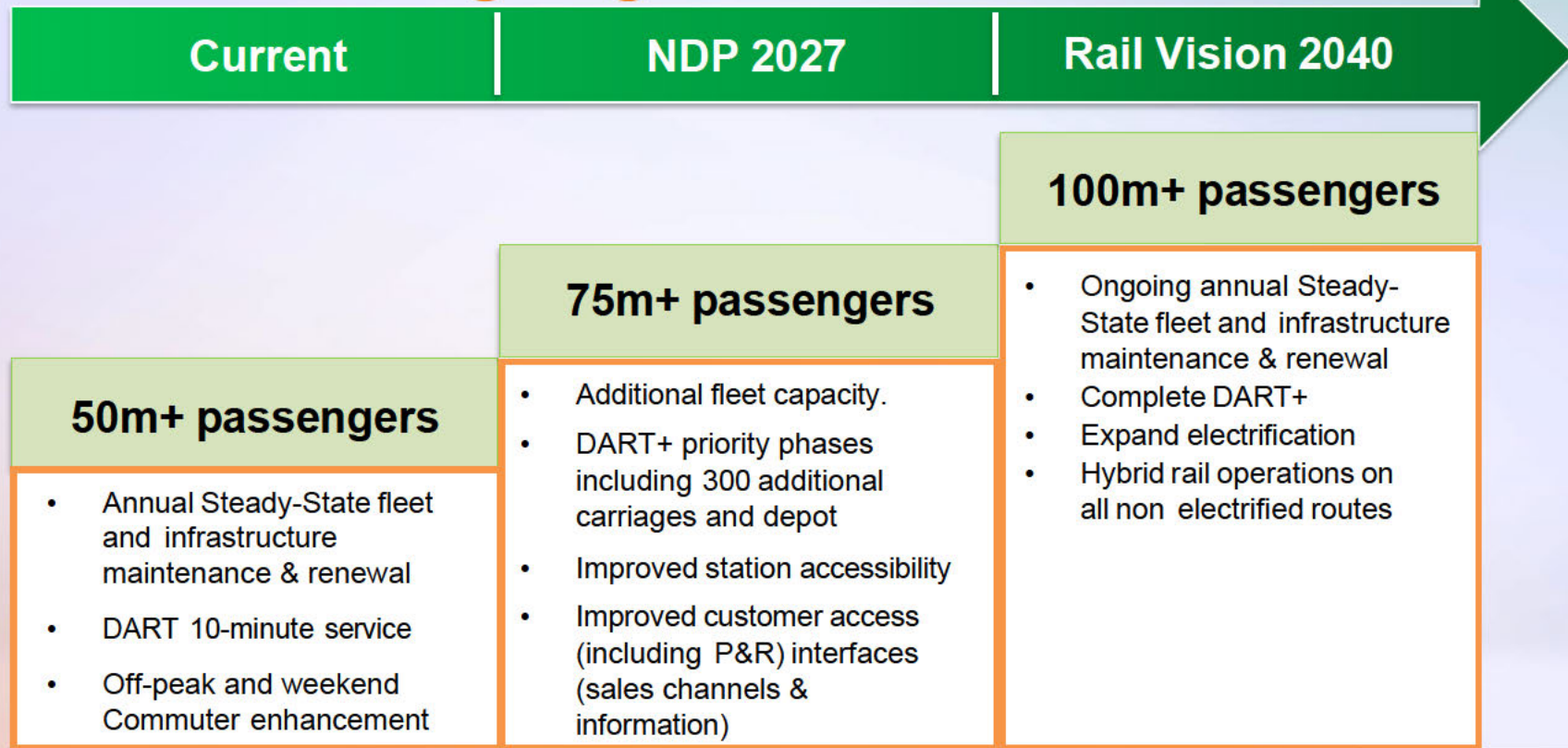
# Where we are: Demand Surge for Rail Pre-COVID

Passenger journeys (millions)



Journeys (m)	2017	2018	2019	
Intercity	11.4m	12.4m	13.4m	+7.8%
Commuter	14.0m	14.6m	15.5m	+6.0%
DART	20.1m	20.9m	21.8m	+4.3%
TOTAL	45.5m	47.9m	50.1m	

# Where we are going



# Existing Services and Recent Improvements





# Limerick Colbert Station Services

## Frequent Services for Limerick City

- **60 Passenger Services Weekdays** (Including 7 Direct Mainline : 10 Galway WRC: 5 Nenagh branch)
- **52 Passenger Services Sundays** (Including 12 Direct Mainline : 8 Galway WRC: 2 Nenagh branch)
- **Better than an hourly service**
  - Limerick has in access of this with the **direct and indirect services**



## Passenger journeys Increasing\*

- **1.1 million passenger journeys** were made on the Limerick to Dublin rail line in 2019, the highest figures ever recorded on the route. 6.% increase on 2018.
- **531,000 journeys** on the Limerick to Galway route – exceeded half a million for the first time, up 16% from 2018.



# Average journey time reduction from speed increases

*JT reduction in recent years and we're improving*



**Was 2hrs 13mins**

**Currently 2hrs**

**Aim 1hr 50/45mins**

## **How have we achieved that?**

- *Resignalling of Limerick Colbert*
- *Extended, lengthened, and straightened platforms.*
- *Currently automating the crossings between Limerick and Limerick Jct.*
- *Targeting the line speed from 70mph to 90mph from Limerick to Limerick Jct.*
- *Main line – Lim Jct. to Heuston – targeting 100mph*





# Limerick Colbert Station - Transport Hub

- *We want to finish the transport plan for Colbert Station*
- *Colbert Station is a multi-modal transport hub with high level of bus and train frequencies*
- *Bus station is key to this*
- *URDF funding sought for new bus station this year*



# Limerick Future: Limerick-Shannon Area Metropolitan Transport Strategy

MOVING INTO THE FUTURE...

East Limerick | Shannon  
METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2040





# LSMATS Rail Elements

## Short-Term

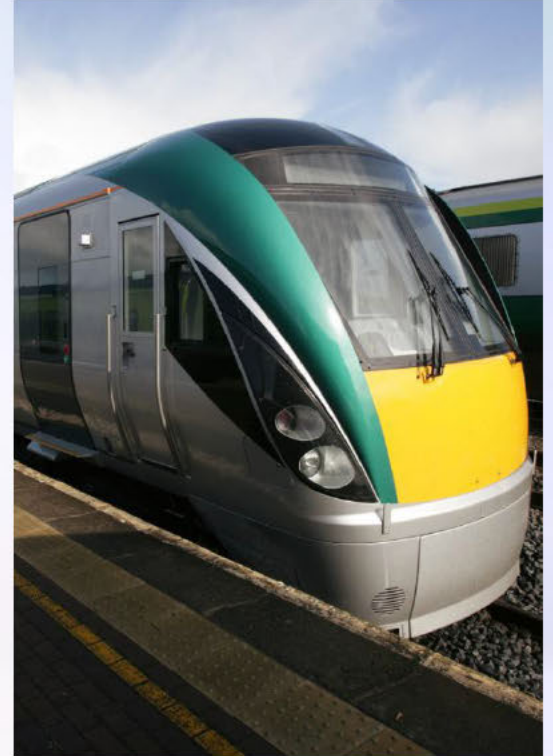
- Review to examine the improvements in journey times and investment in high-speed rail between Belfast, Dublin, Limerick Junction and Cork;
- Examine the feasibility of a dual-track between Limerick Colbert Station and Limerick Junction; and
- Design and implement the upgrade of Ballycar rail line to alleviate flooding.

## Medium-Long Term

- Implementation of dual track between Limerick Colbert and Limerick Junction; and
- Investigate opportunities for Public Transit Oriented Development along Metropolitan rail lines.

## Long-Term

- Electrification of rail lines; and
- Investigate the potential for new stations including a station to support the Park and Ride at Ballysimon.







# Limerick Future Possibilities for Rail



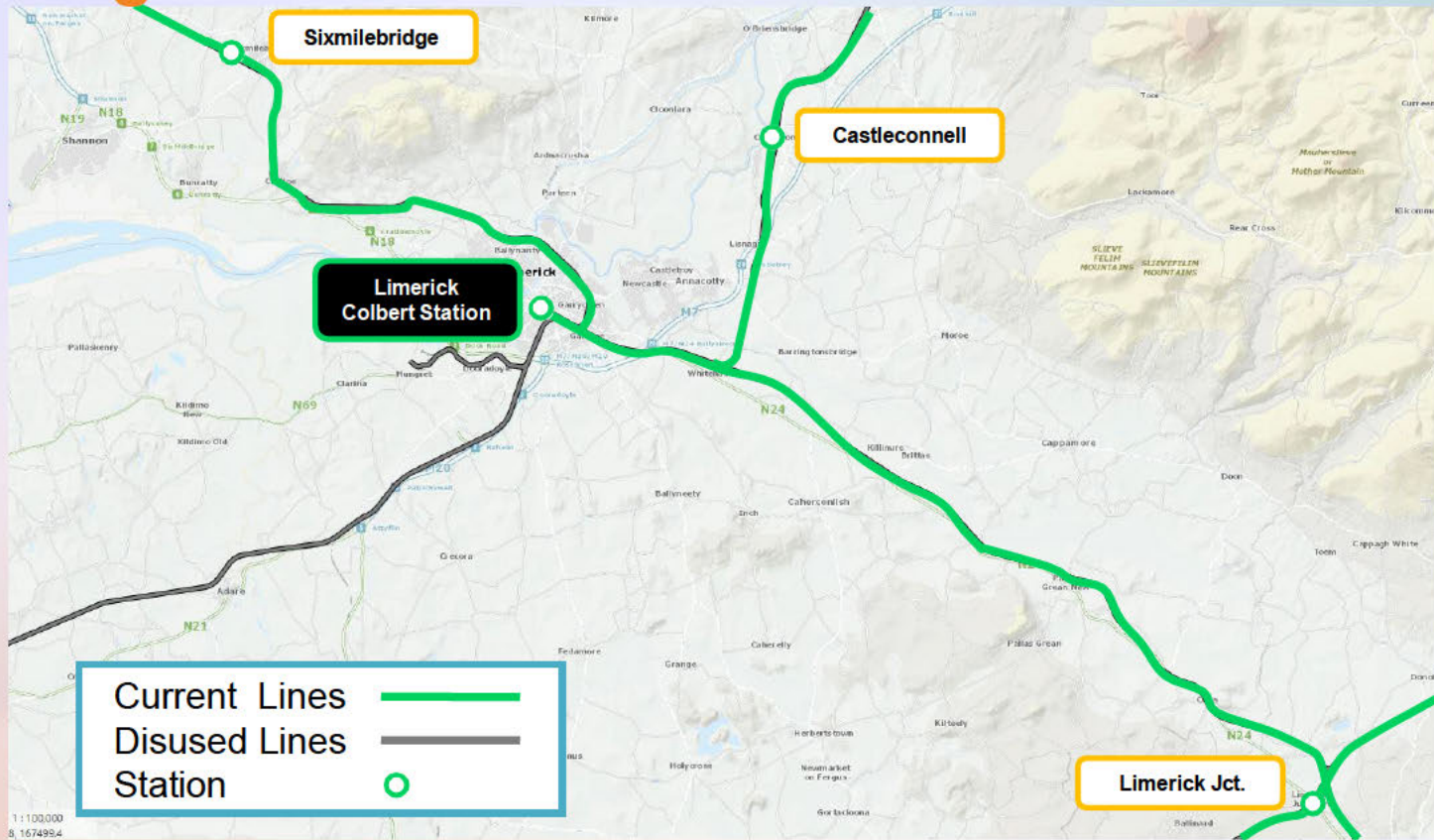
MOVING INTO THE FUTURE...

bridge

Shannon

Limerick  
Colbert

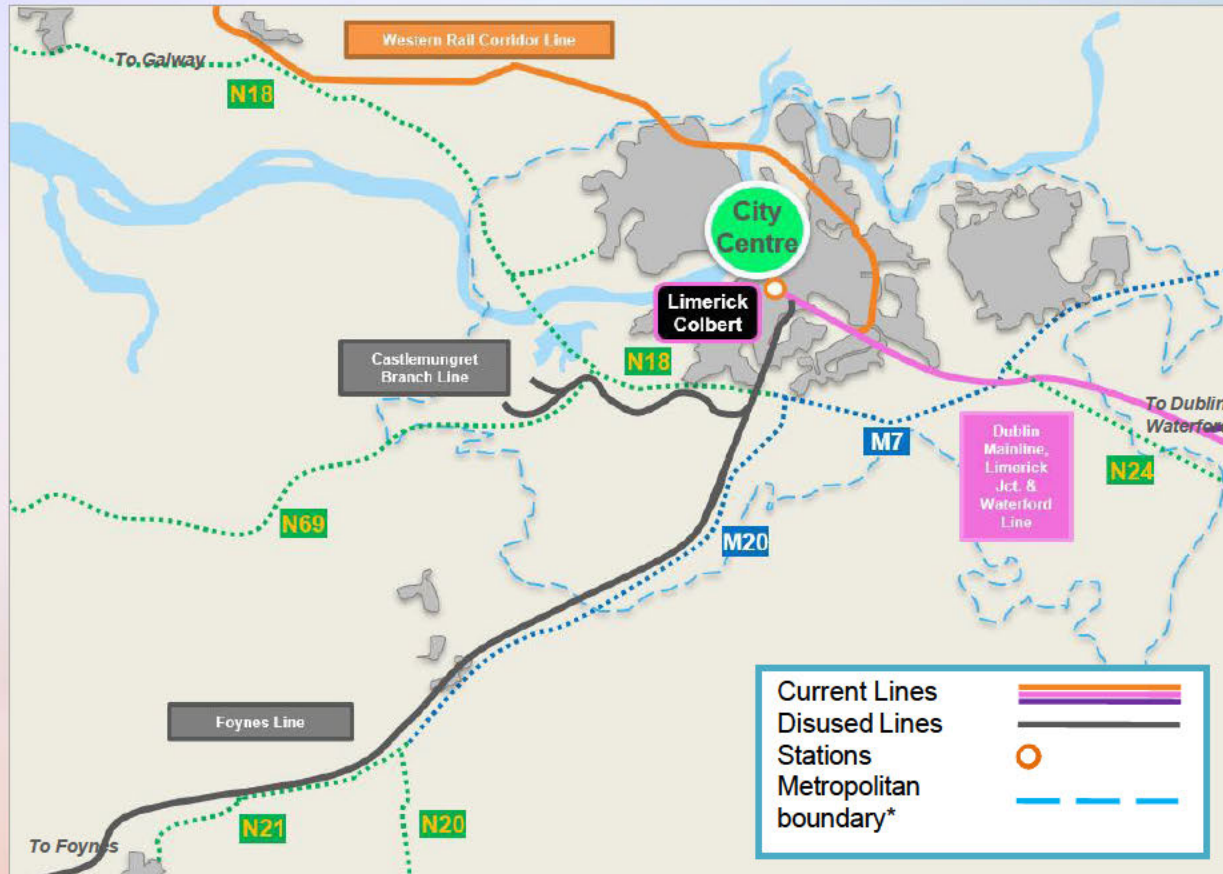
# Existing Rail Network in the Limerick Area



1:100,000  
8,1674994

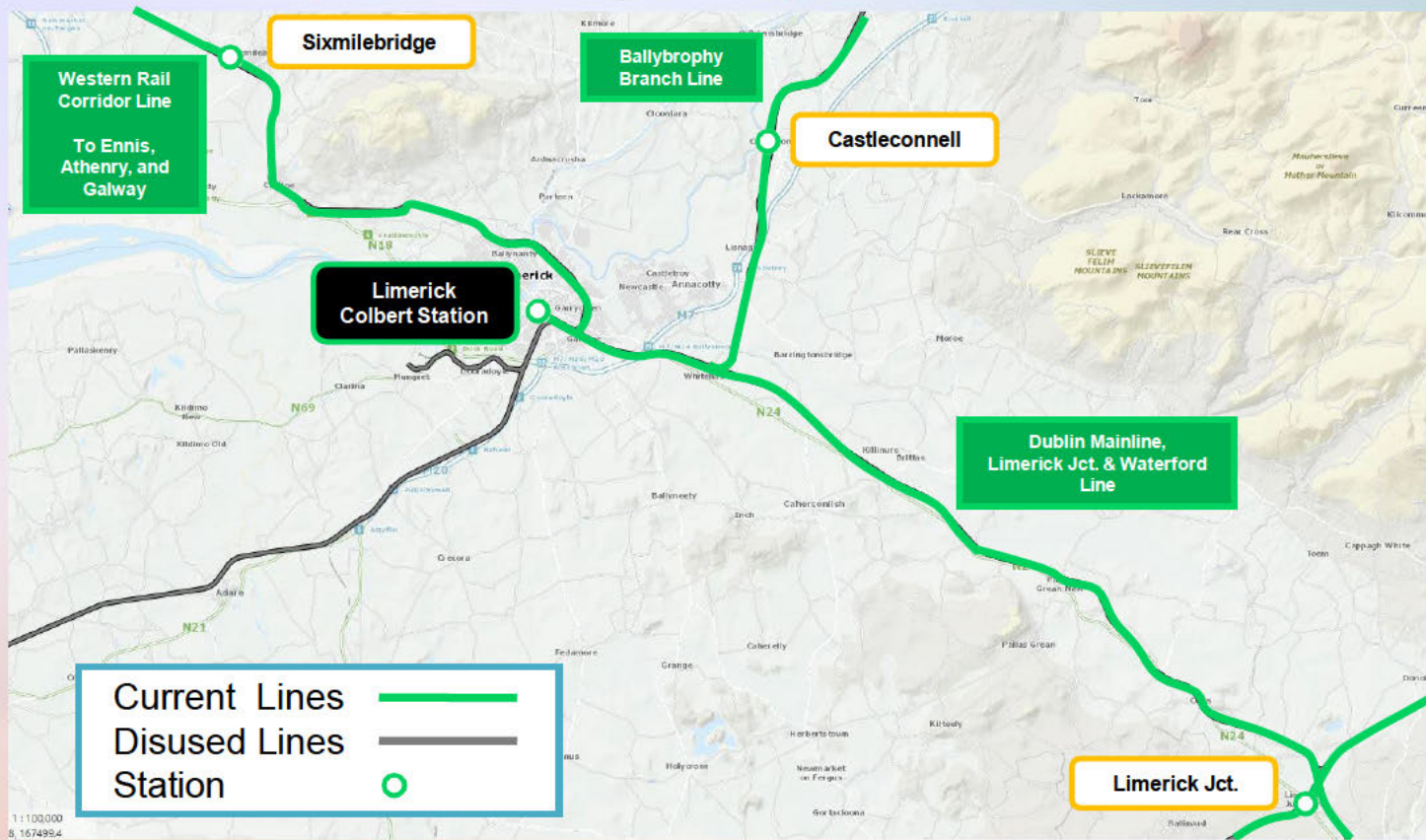


# Limerick Colbert proximity to the City Centre ideal for development of capacity, with wider rail catchment in existing developed areas underutilised

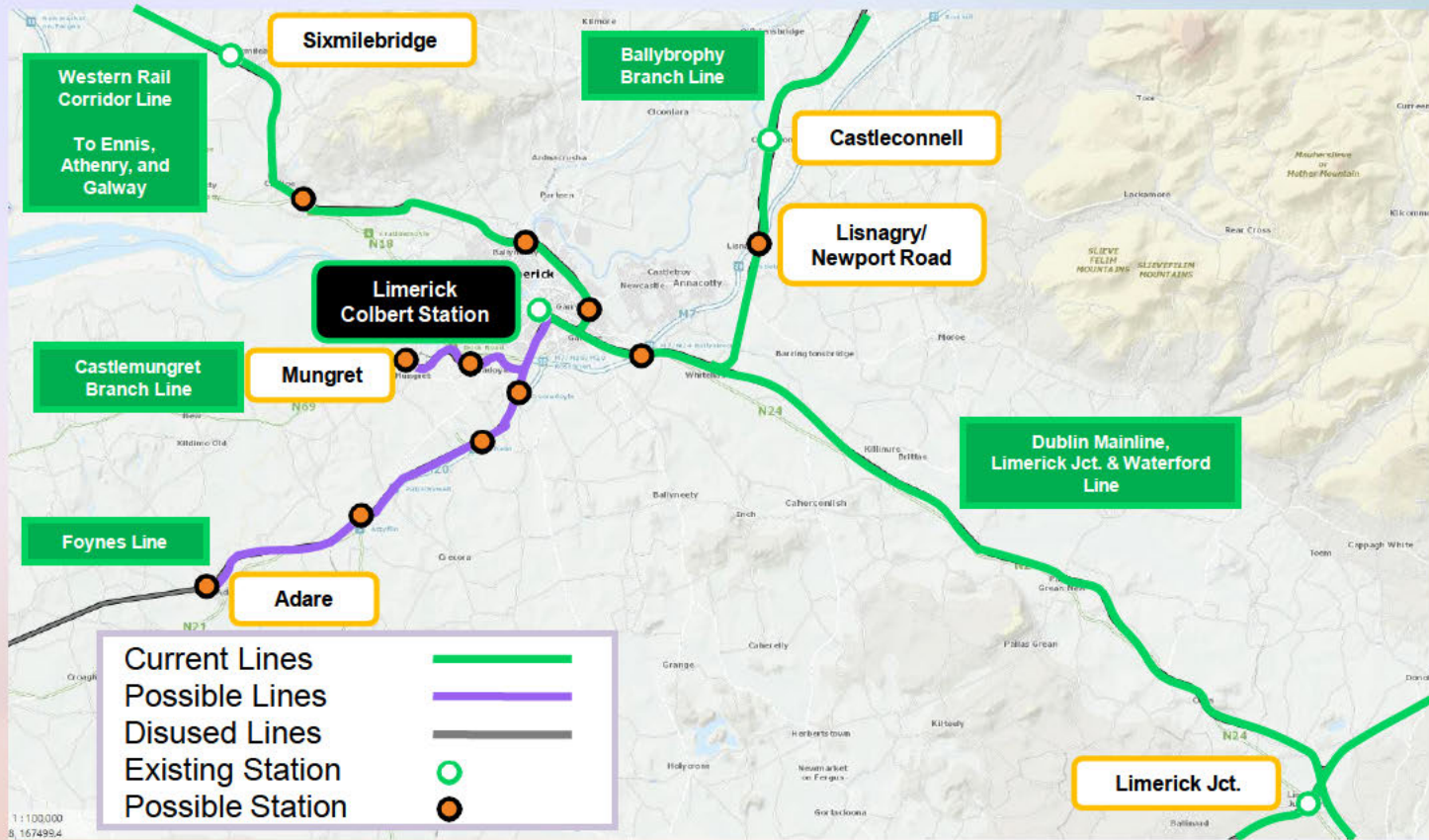


\*as defined by the Limerick 2030 Plan from Limerick City and County Council

# There is the possibility to go from this...

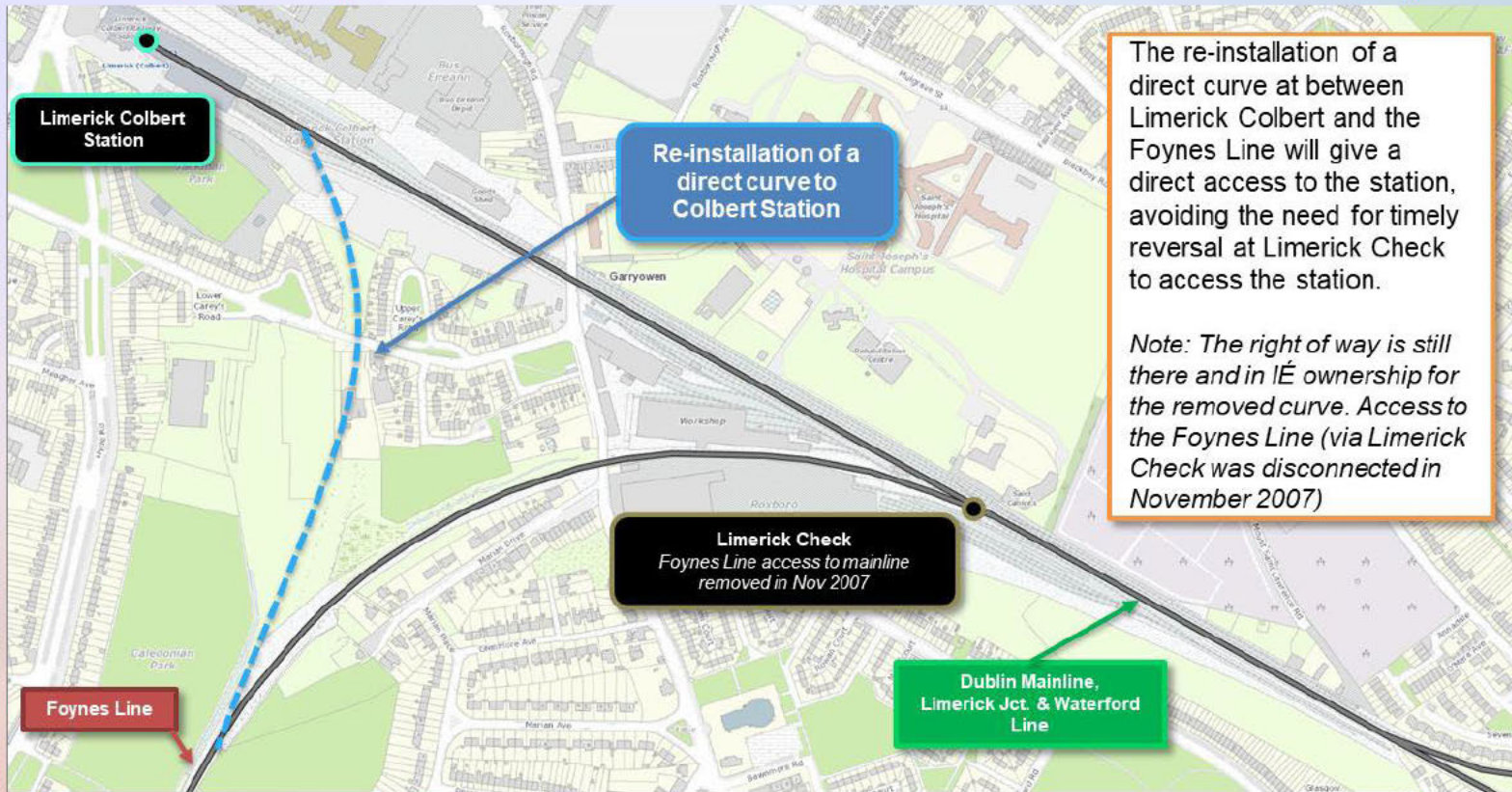


# ...to this





# Key elements of this is the direct curve from the Foyles Line which opens up the catchment area to the south of the City



The re-installation of a direct curve at between Limerick Colbert and the Foyles Line will give a direct access to the station, avoiding the need for timely reversal at Limerick Check to access the station.

*Note: The right of way is still there and in IÉ ownership for the removed curve. Access to the Foyles Line (via Limerick Check) was disconnected in November 2007)*

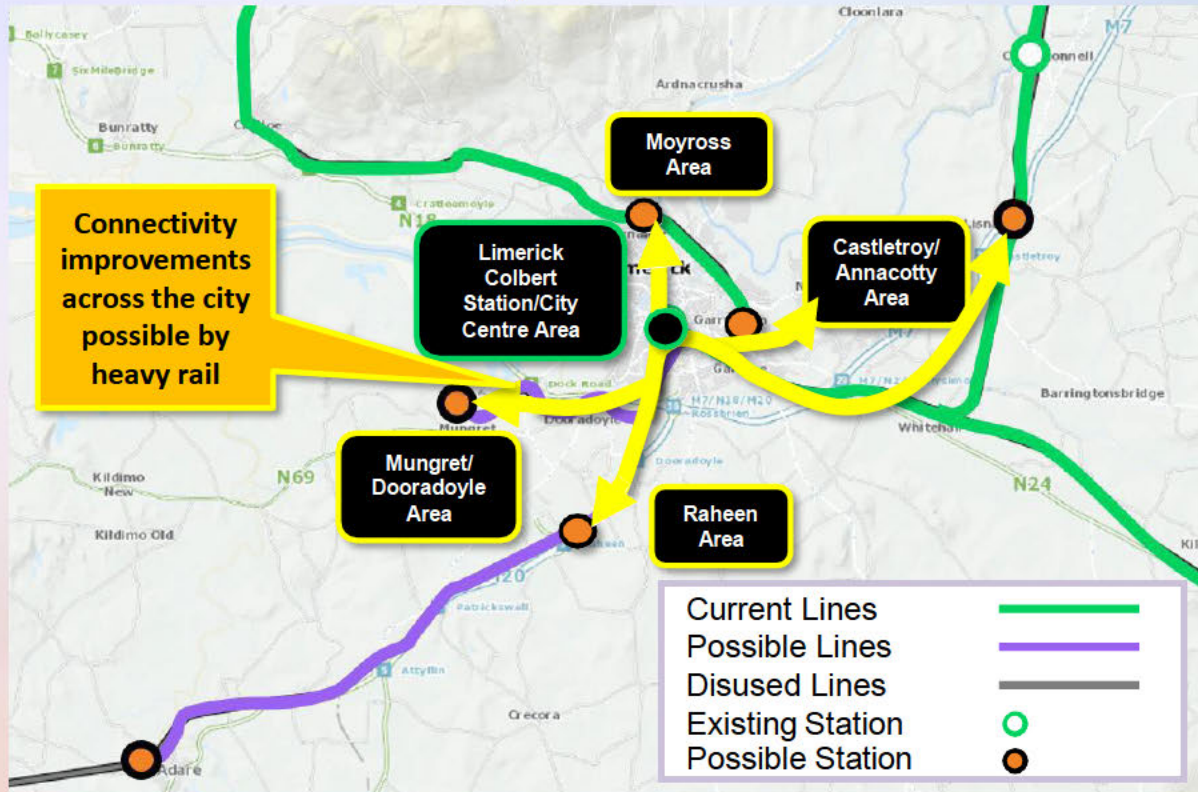
# Possible Rail network for Limerick – serving key areas and amenities



\*Metropolitan Boundary as defined by the Limerick 2030 Plan from Limerick City and County Council

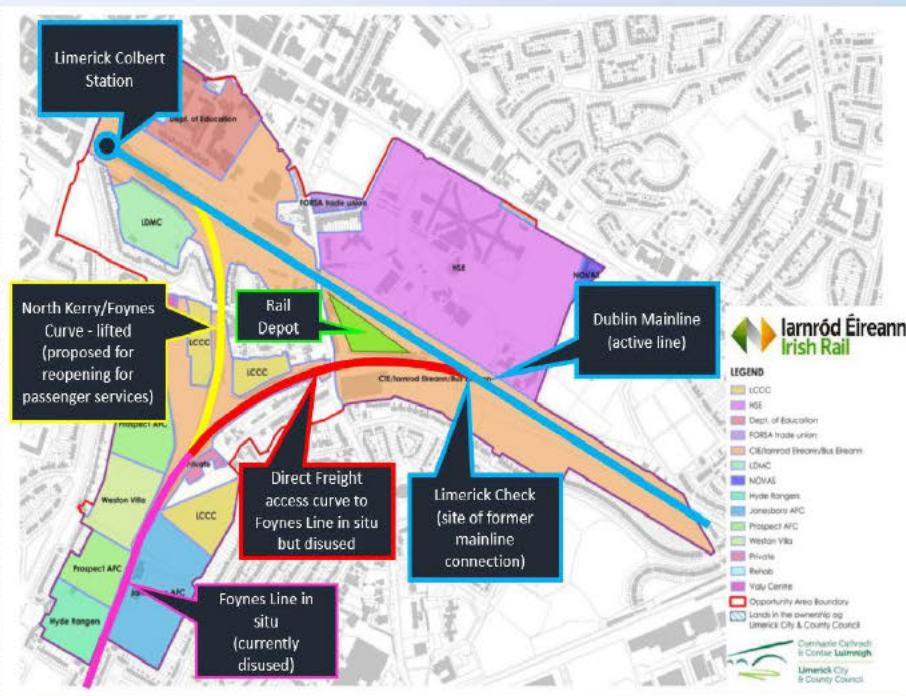
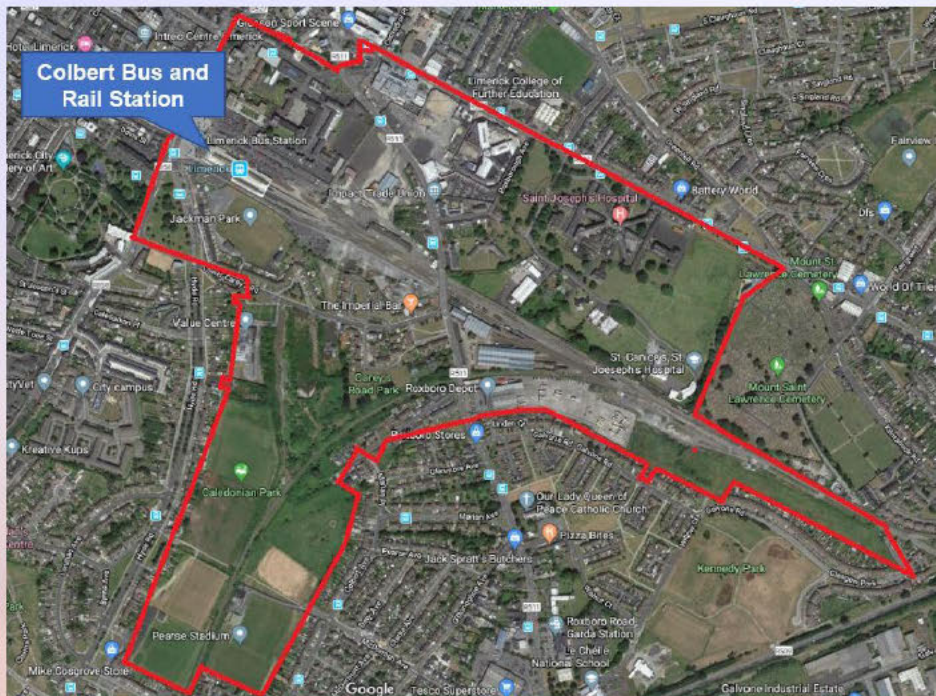


# Connectivity throughout the City and its key areas is improved through these possibilities for rail





# Limerick Colbert Quarter – Land Development Agency development could be a catalyst for transport orientated development (TOD) with rail playing a central role



# Against a backdrop of a necessity and demand for sustainable freight transportation across Ireland, Limerick has possibilities

[Redacted text block]





# Benefits of the Possibilities for Rail in the Limerick City Area



**Maximises the value of the existing railway network in the Limerick-Shannon Area** through targeted investment that will enhance its efficiency and effectiveness in supporting national and regional spatial planning priorities.



**Greater rail catchment in the Limerick-Shannon Area across existing lines:** Increased catchment for rail in populated locations in Limerick on the Ennis/Galway line, creating new rail markets to increase public transport use



**Re-opening of markets to rail:** densely populated area of Dooradoyle, industrial area of Raheen, the new development at Mungret Park, and the towns of Patrickswell and Adare. Towns further south, such as Croom, would be able to interchange to rail at a P&R at Patrickswell.



**Enabling and encouraging compact growth:** supports long-term concentrated development along largely established population centres, while also offering scope for new areas to develop along public transport corridors that can support growth into the future.



**Progresses the case for Limerick Colbert Quarter LDA and LCCC Masterplan development:** by enhancing the project through a sustainable transport-oriented development for the city and region



# Benefits of the Possibilities for Rail in the Limerick City Area



**Greater punctuality for Limerick:** Heavy rail is the only fully segregated transport system in Ireland, avoiding congestion and conflicts associated with road traffic, providing greater punctuality.



**Increased operations between Limerick and Ennis:** the new turnback and/or passing loop at Sixmilebridge or Cratloe will break the section between Ennis and Limerick providing increase operations in the section allowing for increased services to Ennis and Galway.



**Alignment with projected population growth:** hugely beneficial to LCCC. Possibilities could be integrated in-line with any planned new development around the railway boundary.



**Enables modal shift to public transport** as the railway forms part of an enhanced integrated transport system, providing options to citizens and encouraging a move away from private cars.



**Secures long-term future of Foynes Line to Adare:** and could facilitate possible extension to Shannon Foynes Port in the future.

# Benefits of the Possibilities for Rail in the Limerick City Area



**Increased Intercity and Regional connectivity:** achieved through greater service levels



**No need for CPO on property to complete the possibilities for rail**  
**Minimal disruption to surrounding area** - All works can be predominantly achieved within Iarnród Éireann's existing footprint.



**Increased contribution from Limerick-Shannon to the carbon reduction targets set at the European level and in the Climate Action Plan** with the average rail passenger km creating approximately 28g of greenhouse gases (GHGs) vs. 102g for road vehicles, proving a step change in improving air quality levels.



**Leading example of transport orientated development (TOD):** Providing the Colbert Quarter development with a high-level of service for both Intercity and suburban rail services, centred at an integrated transport hub at Colbert Station, promotes Limerick City as a leading example of transport orientated development (TOD).



# Longer-term possibilities to enhance the sustainable transport offering in the Limerick-Shannon Area.

## 1. Shannon Airport to Limerick City Rail Link

- Southern Assembly RSES sets an ambition to create a rail link between Limerick City and Shannon Airport. This is also supported in the Mid-West Regional Planning Guidelines (2010-2022).
- The possible line would diverge from the Limerick to Ennis line at the possibly re-opened Cratloe Station and continue west towards Shannon Airport.
- The line from Cratloe Station could also serve the popular tourist town of Bunratty and Shannon town, before terminating at the airport.
- It would provide a reliable end-to-end sustainable transport service to the airport from Limerick City and the wider regional centres.



## 2. Extension to Rathkeale/Foynes

- Could facilitate a further extension to Shannon Foynes Port for freight services over the medium-long-term.
- In the longer-term, passenger services could possibly be extended to Ballingrane Station (near Rathkeale) to serve the town of Rathkeale and the key town of Newcastle West via a park and ride.
- This extension of passenger services would also connect the rail network to the Great Southern Trail Greenway when the remaining part of the greenway trail to Ballingrane Station is complete, creating a prime tourist interchange point and increasing the environmentally friendly mobility options for Limerick County.

## 3. Electrification of Suburban services



# COVID-19 – the challenge and opportunity

## Challenge

- Uncertainty throughout society on a global, European, and national level.
- Altered some aspects of the way we live our lives and move about.
- Likely to impact on the population and economic targets projected
- In the short to medium term, will include a reduction in the number of people in employment, migration to remote and home working and a switch towards more individual modes of transport.
- IÉ immediate priority to rebuild customer confidence in our services and develop flexibility in longer-term rail development plans to allow us respond quickly to emerging threats and opportunities.



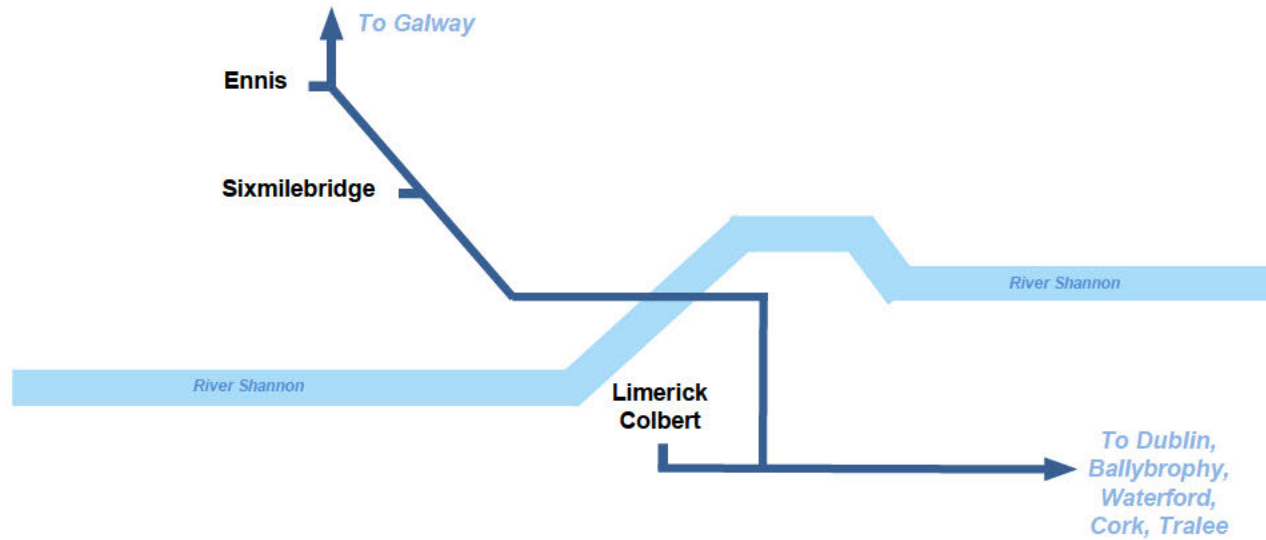
# COVID-19 – the challenge and opportunity

## Opportunity

- From the perspective of developing a sustainable integrated transport system, COVID-19 does present an opportunity to change habits, and the promotion and priority of sustainable transport as key driver for the recovery of growth should be considered as part of the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Transport Strategy (LSMATS) and new Limerick City and County Development Plan for the period 2022-2028.
- The development of a sustainable integrated transport network for the Limerick-Shannon area can be a springboard to economic recovery through the jobs it creates during its implementation, and it sustains post-completion.

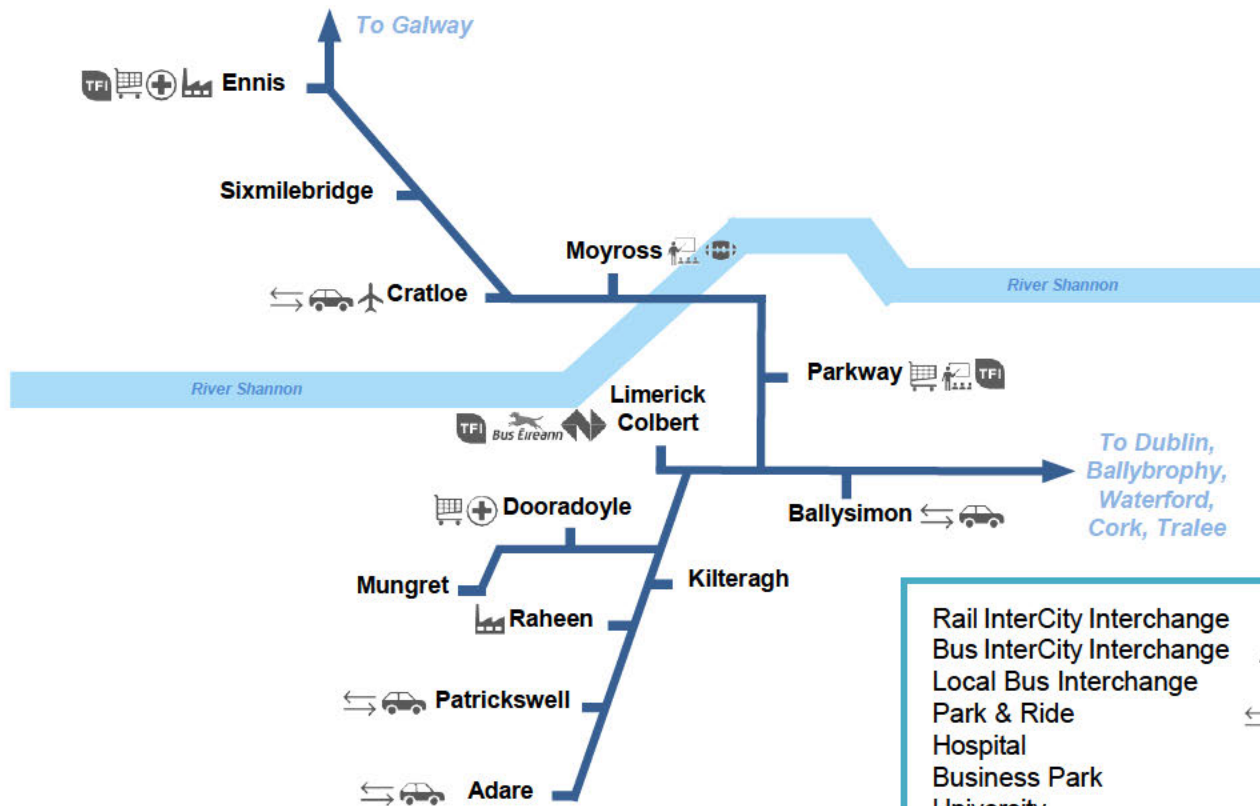


## Existing Limerick Suburban Route Map



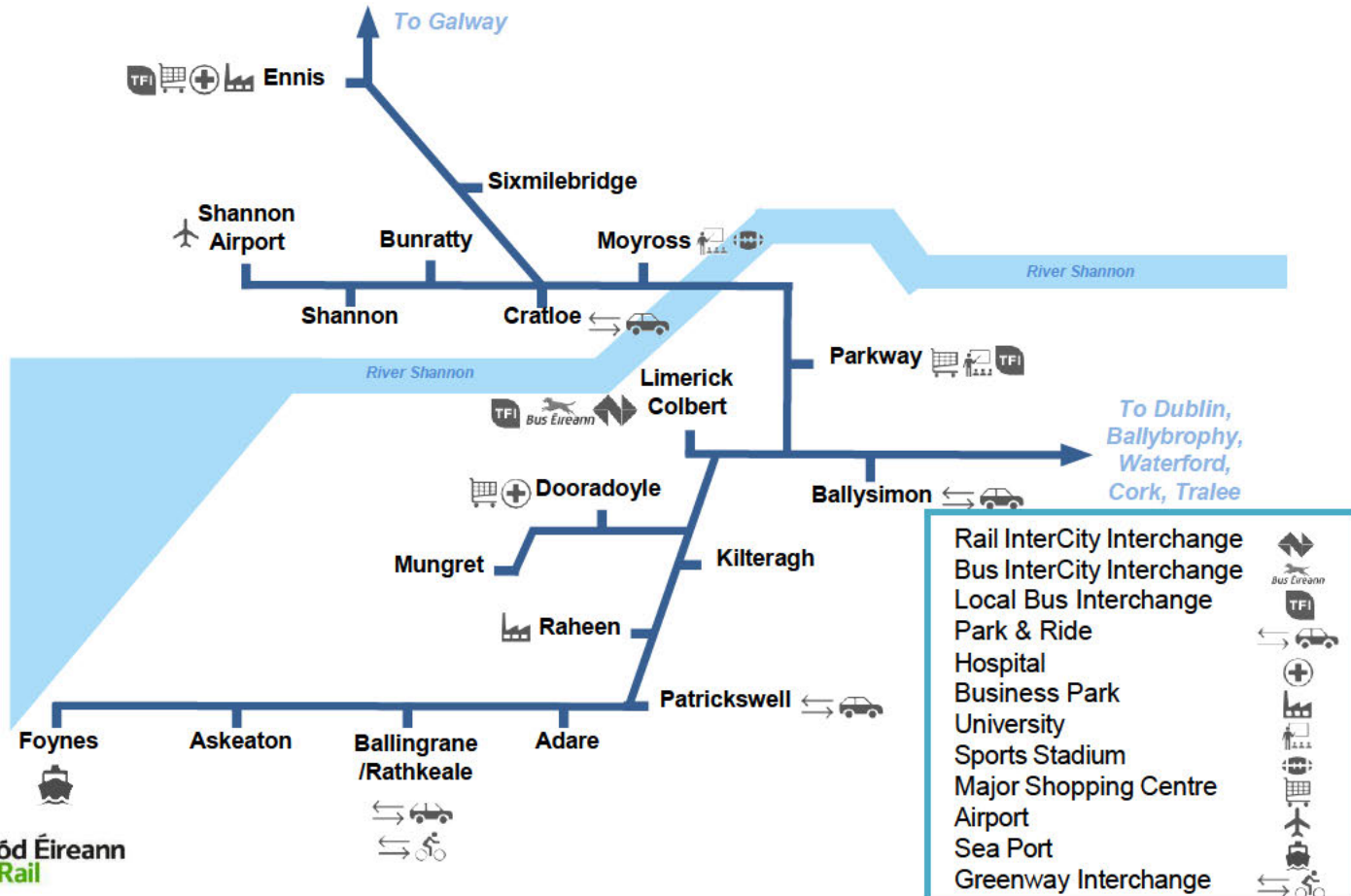


# Potential Limerick Suburban Route Map (Short-Medium term)



Rail InterCity Interchange	
Bus InterCity Interchange	
Local Bus Interchange	
Park & Ride	
Hospital	
Business Park	
University	
Sports Stadium	
Major Shopping Centre	
Airport Shuttle Bus	

# Possible Limerick Suburban Route Map (Long-Term)



# Thank you



## Iarnród Éireann Limerick-Shannon Rail Development Possibilities

This note is to be used for information purposes only by the Land Development Agency. It is to be reassessed following the publication of the revised draft Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS) in April/May 2021, and the Limerick Development Plan in Summer 2021. Iarnród Éireann will work with the Land Development Agency on a revised input to the Colbert Station Quarter Spatial Framework prior to CSQ public consultation later in 2021.

Sustainable mobility will be essential for supporting Colbert Station Quarter and the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area's (LSMA) development. It is important to note:

- The rail development possibilities in below are subject to inclusion or support in adopted strategic planning and policy documentation by recognised authorities at national, regional and local level.
- All of these proposals are subject to funding and a successful Business Case evaluation and peer review under the requirements of the Public Spending Code of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) and the sectoral guidance of the Common Appraisal Framework (CAF) for Transport Sector Capital Projects & Programmes from the Department of Transport (DoT).

The development possibilities below aim to show what the railway *could* do or more broadly what is possible for rail development within an integrated transport network for the region. Iarnród Éireann will now outline its Limerick-Shannon rail development plans.

### 1. New Limerick-Shannon/Ennis North-South Suburban Rail Service

Iarnród Éireann believe that the medium- and long-term future of the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area's (LSMA) transport needs can be met through the concept of a rail based high-quality North-South Commuter service, delivered over time. This will connect all areas of the LSMA and extend the reach of rail through high-quality suburban rail services over our existing and currently disused lines, with Colbert Station Integrated Transport Hub and the Colbert Station Quarter development at its centre. There are a number of options available to improve the suburban rail service offering in the LSMA. These include;

- Re-opening the Foynes Branch line to Adare and/or Mungret
  - Launching a new suburban service to Adare and/or Mungret
  - Possible four new stations
  - Direct curve added to Foynes branch from Colbert Station via old alignment, providing a through connection directly to Galway via Colbert Station
- Possible new station and Park and Ride at Ballysimon and/or Lisnagry
- Potential turnback and/or passing loop at either Sixmilebridge or Cratloe
- Possible three new stations on the Ennis/Galway line as mentioned earlier (Cratloe, Moyross & Parkway)
- Creating a new rail link to Shannon Airport

The location of the possible new stations, and the amenities they serve, can be seen in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Schematic of Shannon Airport/Ennis - Limerick City – Adare/Mungret Possible Rail Line showing amenities at selected stations**



**\*\*Metropolitan Boundary refers to Limerick's Metropolitan Boundary**  
**Note: Shannon Rail Link alignment is not exact and is for demonstration only**

## 2. Shannon Airport to Limerick City Rail Link

Shannon will be a key economic driver within the LSMA. The RSES for the Southern Regional Assembly sets out an ambition to create a rail link between Limerick City and Shannon Airport. This is also supported in the Mid-West Regional Planning Guidelines (2010-2022). The Shannon Area's connectivity is vital for the continued development of, not only the LSMA, but also the broader Mid-West Region. It is the location of one of Ireland's largest multi-sectoral business parks in the Shannon Free Zone, within which is one of the largest concentrations of North American companies in Ireland. The mobility and connectivity of this region is crucial for the Mid-West as Shannon International Airport forms a key gateway from international markets to the LSMA. Colbert Station Quarter can significantly benefit from this connectivity and accessibility to international markets as well as the employment hub at the Shannon Free Zone and the airport itself.

The possible line would diverge from the Limerick to Ennis/Galway line at a potentially re-opened Cratloe Interchange Station and continue west towards Shannon Airport. The line from Cratloe Interchange Station could also serve the popular tourist town of Bunratty and Shannon town/Shannon Free Zone, before terminating at Shannon Airport. The possible new rail link to Shannon Airport could benefit from additional stations on the existing rail line from Limerick to Ennis as proposed in *Section 1*. This new rail link to Shannon Airport would not hinder the existing services to the Key Town of Ennis, which is also important to the development and growth of the LSMA and Clare County. By installing an additional second track between a possible new Cratloe Interchange Station, and the Dublin mainline into Limerick Colbert Station, the service levels to Ennis could be maintained and potentially

increased at the same time as the introduction of the possible Shannon Airport rail link, greatly increasing the appeal of both services.

It is acknowledged that a rail link to Shannon Airport was the subject of a feasibility study in 2007, and that this concluded not to progress with the development of the rail link at the time. However, the current National and European policies create a different environment for a similar appraisal to be undertaken. There is now a growing need for more sustainable transport to support the growing population and economic activity of the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area and the wider Mid-West, coupled with the critical issue of tackling climate change.

### **3. Enhancement of Intercity and Regional services**

Iarnród Éireann aim to improve on the Intercity and regional services which provide accessibility to and from the LSMA. These include;

- Increased frequency on Dublin/Cork services
- Increased Ennis/Galway services
- Increasing Waterford Services

The increased connectivity provided by a new expanded suburban service with a higher frequency Intercity service would transform passenger journeys in the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area. Intercity electrification forms part of a long-term strategy to de-carbonise the heavy rail network and provide the benefits of significant journey time savings, improved reliability, enhanced passenger quality and lower operating costs. Iarnród Éireann also aim to provide double tracking between Limerick & Limerick Junction, providing a step change in capacity of services to Cork, Dublin and Waterford.

### **4. Establish rail freight connection to Shannon-Foynes Port**

Iarnród Éireann believe the case for rail freight is increasing, given the context of climate change and the environmental targets Ireland must achieve, both nationally and internationally. This is also set against a context of increasing road congestion. While the absolute future travel patterns post-COVID-19 are unknown, there will still be a necessity and demand for sustainable freight transportation across Ireland and rail can play an important role. Iarnród Éireann is in the final stages of developing a revised rail freight strategic plan in the context of;

- The Governments Project Ireland 2040, National Development Plan, National Mitigation Plan & Climate Change Action Plan
- The Strategic Masterplans of Ireland's Port Authorities
- Road Congestion
- Pressure on road freight markets e.g. driver shortages
- Policy, demand and sectoral analysis being undertaken to establish demand and opportunities for rail freight

Iarnród Éireann will continue its commitment to develop rail freight between key hubs across the country. There is a possibility for the reintroduction of rail freight in the Limerick Area with the reopening of the Foynes Line to service Shannon-Foynes Port. This could possibly be implemented alongside the reintroduction of passengers services on the line as far as Adare, depending on the demand for the bulk movement of goods from the Shannon-Foynes Port Company in the short-medium term.

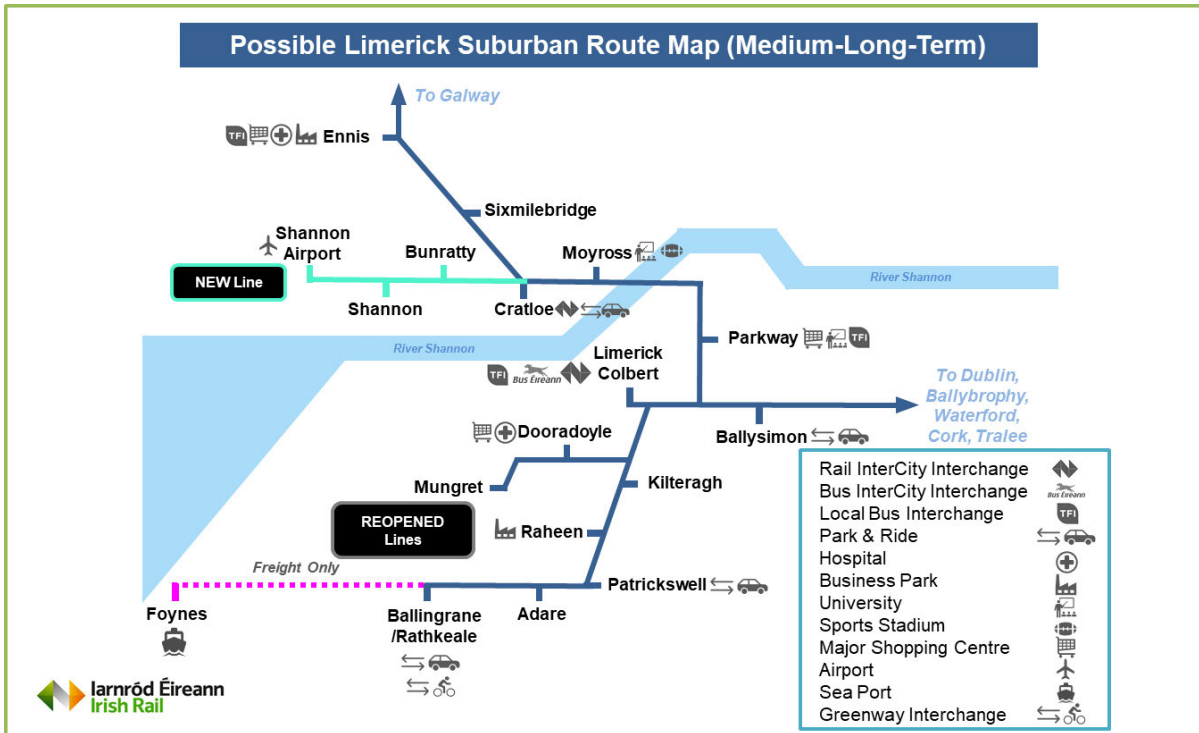
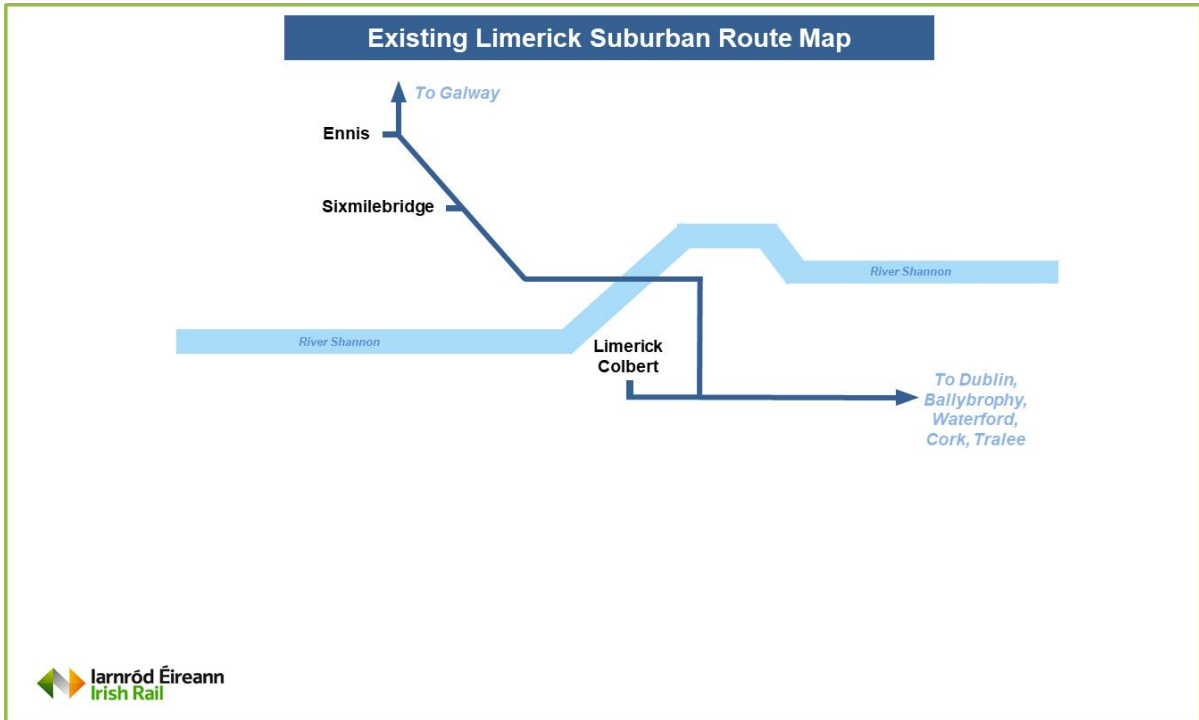


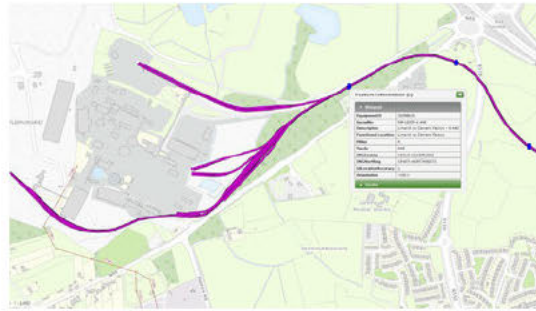
**The benefits of these heavy rail possibilities for the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area are as follows:**

- Job creation to aid COVID-19 economic recovery.
- Increased contribution from Limerick-Shannon to the carbon reduction targets set at the European level and in the Climate Action Plan.
- Creates complete rail hub and spoke model for LSMA with Colbert Station at its heart.
- Supports the case for the Colbert Station Quarter development with a vibrant rail network and integrated transit hub placed at its heart - Leading example of transport orientated development (TOD).
- Maximises the use of the existing railway network and assets in the Limerick Area.
- Minimal disruption to surrounding area during construction.
- Re-opening of markets to sustainable rail transport.
- Greater rail catchment in the Limerick Area across existing lines.
- Supports and encourages compact growth along rail corridors.
- Encourages connectivity, population, and commerce to Limerick City Centre.
- Increased level of frequency between Limerick and Ennis.
- Secures long-term future of Foynes Line to Adare.
- Increased Intercity and Regional connectivity and capacity.
- If reopening the Foynes Line proves viable, there will potentially be no need for Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO) for some property along the route.
- Provides for a sustainable rail freight connection to one of Ireland's Tier 1 ports at Shannon-Foynes.
- Brings sustainable rail/road Park and Ride into all outer locations of the Limerick City, reducing private car usage in Limerick City – notably the M7 (from Dublin), N24 (from Waterford), and N20 (from Cork).
- Connection to the main international airport for the Mid-West Region at Shannon.
- Connection to one of Ireland's largest multi-sectoral business parks at the Shannon Free Zone.

Full outline and impact of the Iarnród Éireann LSMA rail possibilities can be seen in Figure 2, which shows how the existing network *could* be transformed over the longer-term to 2040 and beyond, providing a step change in sustainable mobility for generations to come.

**Figure 2: Comparator LSMA Development Maps**





	Option 1
Land	3.2 acres/1290 m <sup>2</sup>
Access	via N69 road
Additional Infrastructure	Fly-over or bridge needed to connect line at N69
Positives	
Negatives	Area does not seem to be heavily populated (need to see potential demand)
Distance to Amenities	Located 2.5km from potential Doeradoyle Station Located 1.1km from UHL and 1.4km from Crescent Shopping Centre Irish Cement Factory still in operation with circa 103 employees

