



## Proposed Road Closure and Reallocation of Road Space: Princes Street

### Introduction

Cork City Council is implementing a programme of measures to facilitate the awakening of the local economy and to support both residents and the public in safely returning to work and commercial life in the city centre and town centres while we all learn to live with this Pandemic and as Government direction allows in response to the various phases of dealing with COVID-19. The contagious virus is a constant which means that while public health recommendations such as social distancing, respiratory hygiene and hand washing will be more important than ever, action in the city will need to be undertaken by the Council to facilitate these changes. These measures will involve temporary changes to the layout of streets in order to maintain adequate separation space for public health social distancing requirements. In cities across Europe there is emerging evidence of the reallocation of additional road space to walking and cycling in the response to the Covid-19 pandemic is increasingly being pursued as the best available option to safely facilitate the movement of a considerable volume of people to work, education and amenities. While this approach protects health and well-being, all interventions will need to be fully considered across all stakeholder interest groups.

Cork City Council has and continues to bring forward proposals for temporary road closures. One of these closures is outlined below.

### Consultation:

Submissions are invited from the public, stakeholders and interested parties on this proposed temporary road closure. Submissions on the proposal may be made in writing via this online consultation portal <https://consult.corkcity.ie/> before midday on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

## Road Closure and Reallocation of Road Space: Princes Street

At the request of business owners on Princes Street and in order to support restaurant businesses through reallocating street space for the purposes of al fresco dining in light of reduced space available to restaurants due to Covid-19 social distancing guidelines, Cork City Council proposes to introduce a temporary road closure on Princes Street. Princes Street is a relatively low footfall corridor for members of the public accessing Oliver Plunkett Street from South Mall. It has a large number of businesses which are predominantly restaurants on the street.

The street starts at its junction with South Mall and runs perpendicular to South Mall connecting to Oliver Plunkett Street. Currently it is a one-way street for traffic travelling from South Mall onto Oliver Plunkett Street. There is one disabled parking space on the street. Footpath widths on this street vary, but overall are narrow and cannot support the 2m social distancing requirement for pedestrians.

In order to create as much space as possible for an al fresco dining space it is proposed that roadway be cordoned off and reallocated for use for restaurant tables and chairs and the existing footpaths be used for pedestrian access.

To facilitate social distancing a pedestrian one way system is proposed with pedestrians travelling down one side of the street and up the other side of the street in the opposite direction. A crossing point in the centre of Princes Street will then be used to create essentially two large pedestrian roundabouts on the street. Signage will be placed and sufficient queuing space will be marked on the street at either end to facilitate this. See Figure 2.

Street furniture licenses will then be granted to premises on Princes Street for the street furniture. The premises will be required to remove any street furniture and store it in their premises when not open for business. The Fire

Department is being consulted with a view to implementing systems for emergency access to the street as a condition of the street furniture licenses.

Cork City Council proposes to close Princes Street to vehicular traffic 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, from Friday 26<sup>th</sup> of June 2020 until the 31<sup>st</sup> of August 2020.

The proposed road closure barrier will be the standard type used in the City for a static closure. The barrier will be unmanned. The barrier can be easily moved to the side in the event that the emergency services require access to the closed section. Advance warning signs will be provided on the South Mall. The closure will be advertised by the City Council widely through social media, press releases etc.

#### **Considerations to be taken into account before finalising the closure:**

- Access to business's and other properties
- Address concerns about refuse collection
- The one disabled parking space will be unavailable for use while the road closure is in place. It is proposed to temporarily relocate this disabled space to South Mall. (see figure 6).

#### **Benefits of the proposed temporary closure include:**

- Creation of an al fresco dining space that will support the large number of restaurant businesses on the street and act as an attraction for the city centre and therefore support the city centre as a whole.
- Improved pedestrian management to allow for easier social distancing for people walking and cycling during the current Covid-19 pandemic
- Enhancement of a key City pedestrian corridor to meet the needs of users

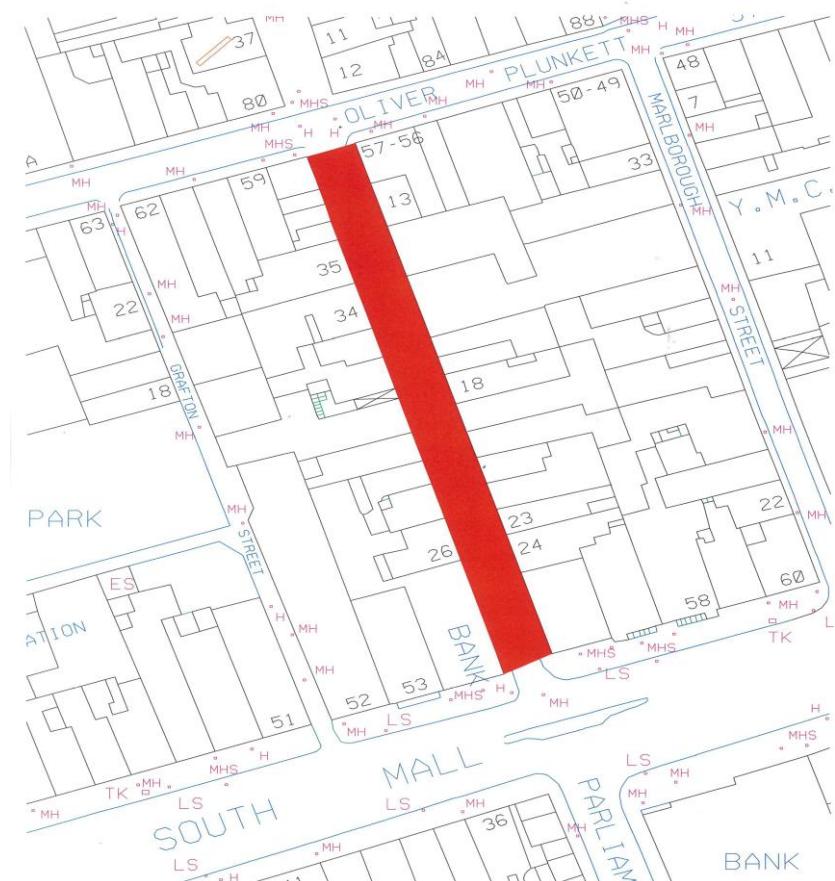


Figure 1: Overview of Princes Street Road Closure

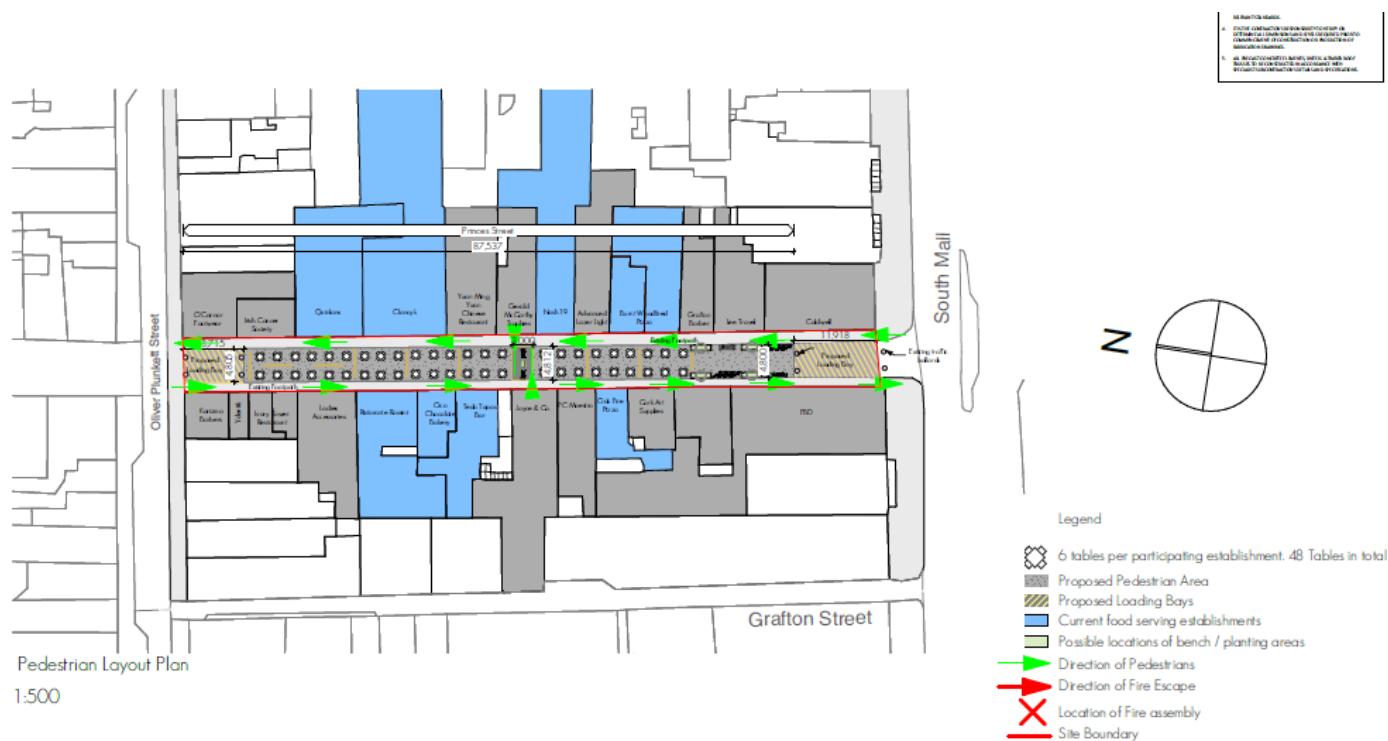


Figure 2: Proposed One way pedestrian system to be put in place

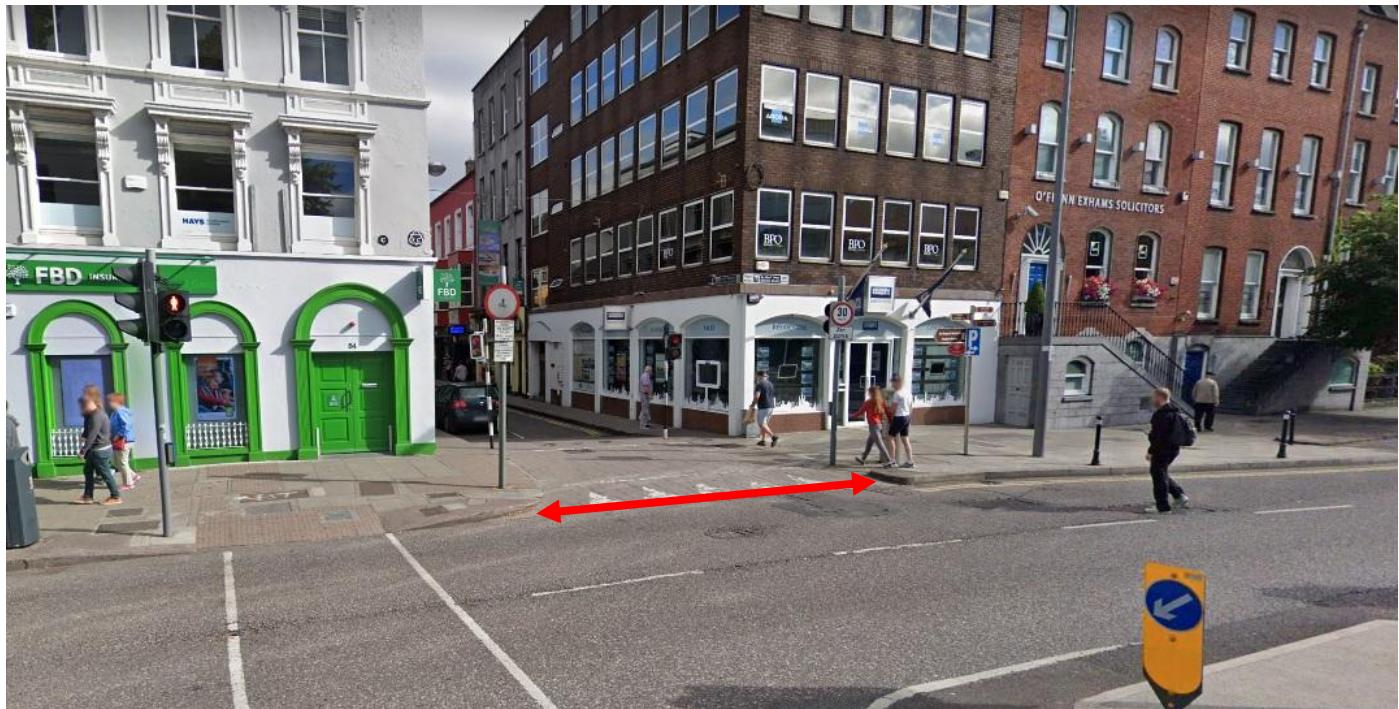


Figure 3: Road Closure Barrier Location at its junction with South Mall



Figure 4: Princess St. Streetview currently

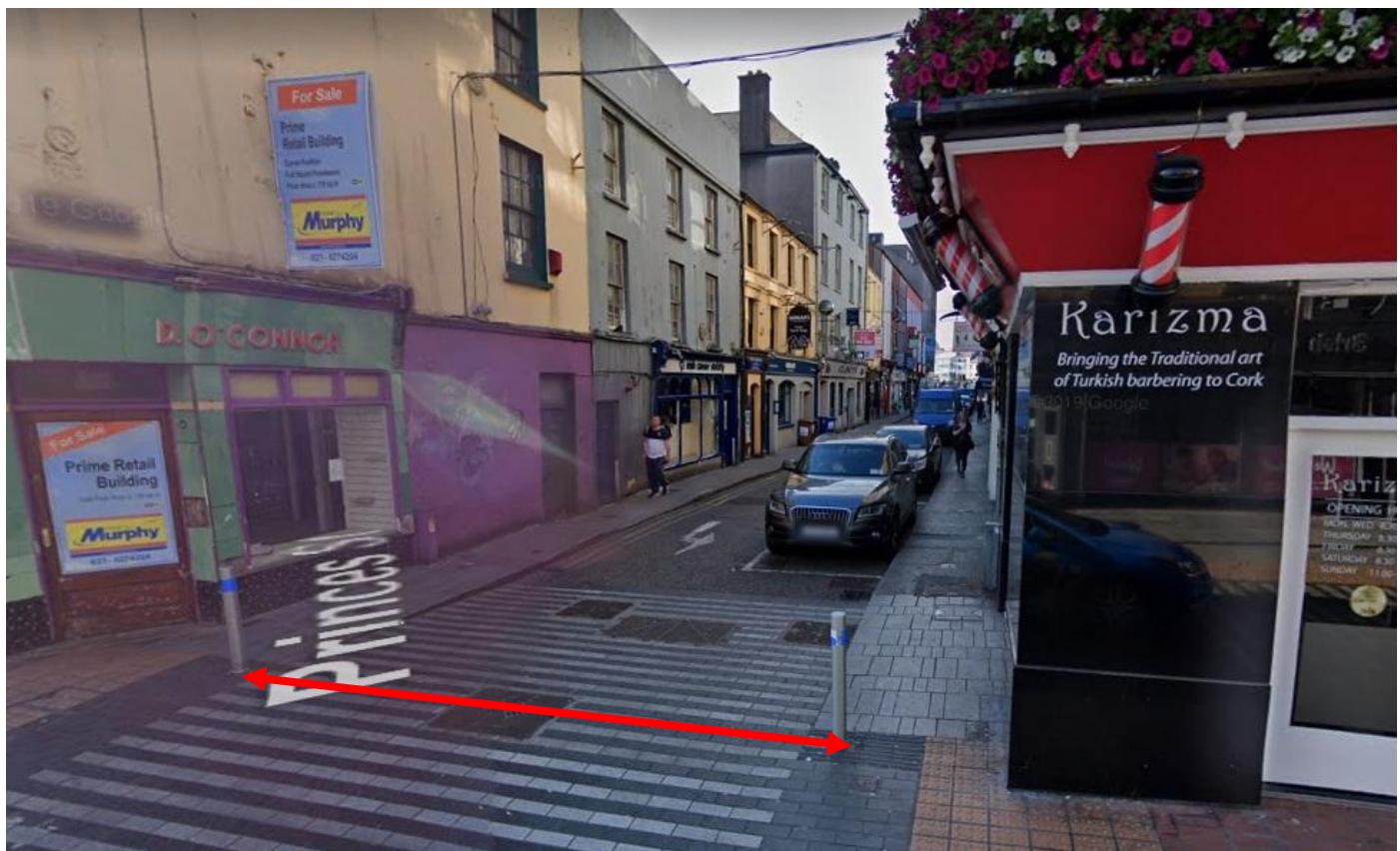


Figure 5: Road Closure termination point with at its junction with Oliver Plunkett Street.



Figure 6: Proposed Relocated Disabled Space to South Mall/ Princess Street Junction Loading Bay.