

4.0 SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY

4.1 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

Section 39 (2)(b)(i) of the Transport (Railway infrastructure) Act 2001 requires the assessment of likely significant impacts on ‘human beings’ and requires that proposed developments are examined in terms of their impacts on people. Potential impacts to people arising from the proposed Luas Line A1 include noise and dust nuisance, social disruption and severance, improved accessibility and travel time, urban regeneration, employment and indirect job creation and improved or reduced pedestrian and vehicular safety. Most of these issues are addressed in specific chapters within this EIS including Chapter 10.0 ‘Air Quality and Climatic Factors’, Chapter 11.0 ‘Noise and Vibration’ and Chapter 13.0 ‘Transportation’.

This Chapter provides an appreciation of the social and economic context within which the proposed Luas Line A1 is to be developed and provides an assessment of these issues. Key measures to reduce impacts upon the community have been identified.

The assessment involved a desk study of a range of planning and other sources. A profile of the residential communities adjacent to the proposed route alignment is presented under the following headings:

- Land Use / Settlement Patterns
- Population Growth
- Household Formation
- Age Profile
- Employment Profile
- Social Class
- Community Facilities
- Access to Public Transport

Public consultation and field inspections allowed for the corroboration of the information obtained.

Based on the desk studies and consultations, it was possible to determine the likely significant impacts on both the local and wider community by considering the introduction of the proposed Luas Line A1 against the “do-nothing scenario”. While inevitably there is an element of subjectivity in people’s perceptions of the Luas Line A1 project, it is considered that the impacts presented are representative of the majority of those residing within the study area.

4.2 RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT

4.2.1 Study Area

For the purposes of this assessment a study area was identified and is broadly defined as that area bounded to the north by the Naas Road, to the east by the Belgard Road and Cookstown Way, to the south by the N81 Blessington Road and to the south west and west by Mill Road and Garter Lane (see Figure 4.1).

4.2.2 Land Use Planning/ Settlement Patterns

Figure 4.1 illustrates the land use pattern (existing and planned) within the study area based on the zoning objectives maps of the South Dublin County Development Plan 2004-2010, which is the statutory Development Plan for the area.

The area comprises predominantly low rise, low density residential estates interspersed with large areas of public open space. The housing estates of Fettercairn, Springfield, Brookfield and Jobstown were built by Dublin Corporation and County Council in the 1970's and 80's and these are primarily located at the eastern end of the area. These developments were followed in the past 10-15 years by private residential developments in the Fortunestown area. These include developments at Ard Mór, The Belfry, Saggart Abbey and Carrigmore.

Citywest Business Park (including Magna Business Park and National Digital Park), has been developed since the early nineties by Davy Hickey Properties. The area now accommodates over 120 companies employing over 4,000 people focused on innovation and high technologies. Much of the lands zoned for employment and enterprise are undeveloped at present and there is potential for more development in this area.

A District shopping centre is currently under construction at the junction of Citywest Road and Fortunestown Lane and will open in summer 2007.

The remainder of the study area consists of undeveloped lands which are giving way to new residential communities and other suburban type development. The result is that the built up area of West Tallaght is spreading out towards the village of Saggart and the Citywest Hotel Complex which is located immediately to the west of the study area.

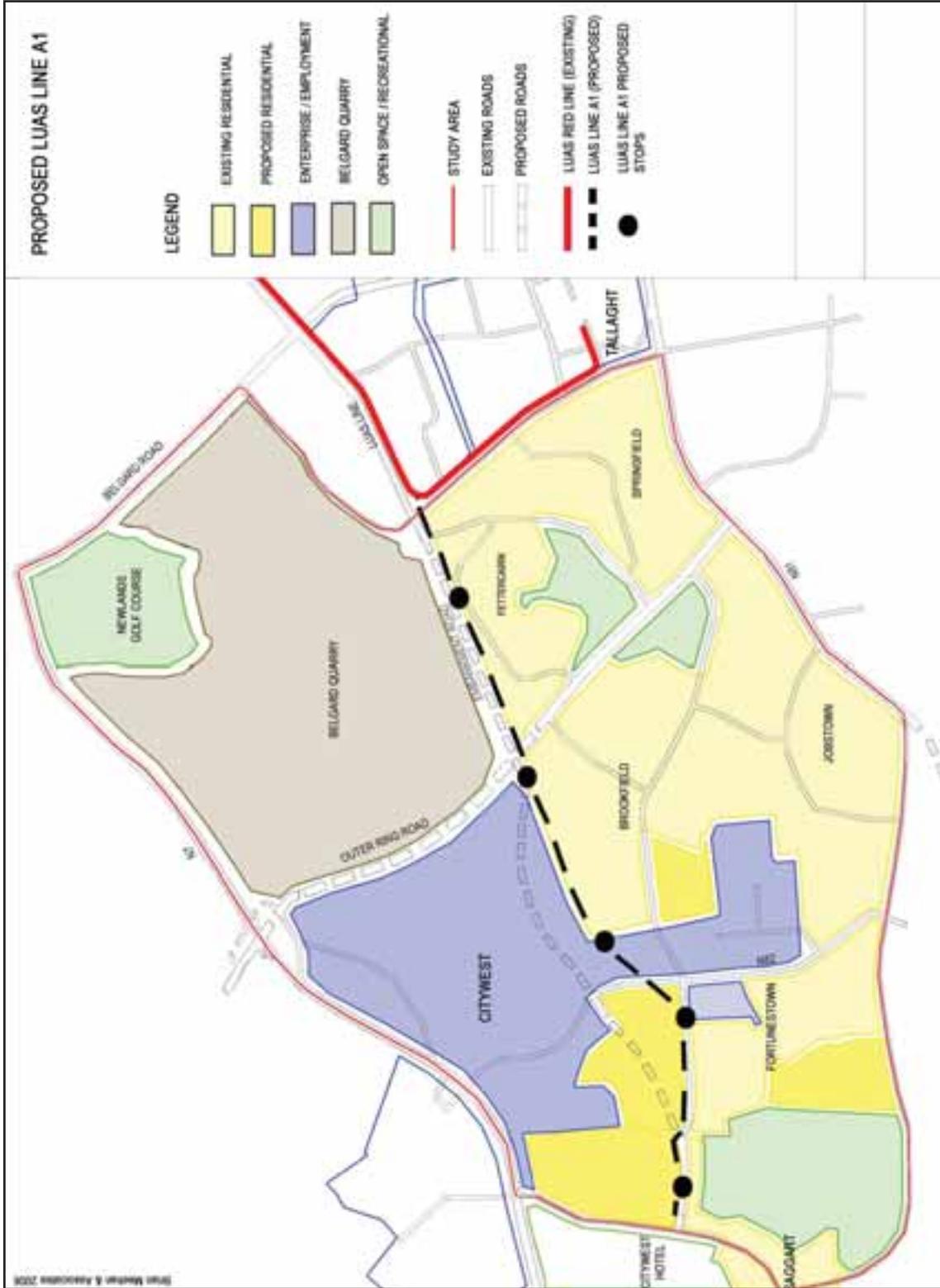
The Roadstone Quarry in Belgard lies within the northern part of the study area. It is one of the largest quarries in Ireland, producing in excess of 2 million tonnes of crushed stone each year. Apart from its entrance on Cookstown Road, the quarry is hidden behind the embankment to the north of the proposed Luas Line A1. It is therefore isolated from the residential communities within the study area.

In summary, therefore, the land use pattern for the area is broadly based on the following:

- environmental improvement and consolidation of existing residential communities of Springfield-Fettercairn and Brookfield-Jobstown.
- development of the employment potential of Citywest Business Campus and Magna Business Park.
- development of new residential communities at sustainable densities in the western part of the study area focused on a new District Centre at Fortunestown.

In the near future, the development in the area will be supported by a variety of roads and infrastructural improvements, in particular, the implementation of the Outer Ring Road Phase 3 and the Embankment Road projects which are described in Chapter 2.0.

Figure 4.1: Existing and Proposed Land Uses



4.2.3 Population/ Settlement

The current study area stretches east to west from Cookstown Way/ Tallaght Town Centre to Saggart Village and between the N7 to the north and the N81 to the south. The area incorporates the Electoral Districts (EDs) of Tallaght-Belgard, Tallaght-Fettercairn, Tallaght-Jobstown and Tallaght-Springfield which, as detailed in Table 4.1 below, recorded a population of 26,083 in 2002. Notwithstanding that the population of the eastern part of the area was in decline (Tallaght-Belgard), the growth in population during the period 1996-2002 was 15% across the four EDs. Preliminary 2006 results show a similar increase (+10.9%) to 28,927 in the period since 2002.

Table 4.1: Population Change for EDs In The Vicinity of the Proposed Luas Line A1

Electoral Divisions	1996	2002	% Change 1996-2002	2006 (Preliminary Results)	% Change
Tallaght-Belgard	2,067	1,970	-4.7	1,849	-6.1
Tallaght-Fettercairn	5,513	6,488	+17.7	6,625	+2.1
Tallaght-Jobstown	7,294	9,838	+34.9	12,586	+27.9
Tallaght-Springfield	7,803	7,787	-0.2	7,867	+1.0
Total	22,677	26,083	+15	28,927	+10.9

Note: *Saggart ED is partly located within the vicinity of the route, however as most of the Saggart ED lands that are located in proximity to the subject site are undeveloped, this ED is not included in the above table. Source: Census of Population, CSO (2002)*

An examination of the planning register of South Dublin County Council indicates that in the region of 3,000 dwellings (or population equivalent of c.9,000) have been constructed or permitted since 2002. The larger developments such as Russell Square, Carrigmore, Fortunestown B, Durkan Homes development on Fortunestown Lane and Citywest District Centre lands comprise several hundred units, however, there is also evidence of increased housing development in the form of small infill development within the more established residential areas and permissions granted are now manifest on the ground throughout the study area.

When compared to the actual population increase recorded between 2002-2006, the extant planning permissions in the study area indicate that there is a further substantial supply of housing in the pipeline which is likely to sustain high levels of population growth, particularly in the west of the study area (Tallaght-Jobstown) in the short term. Even under the “do-nothing scenario”, therefore, population is likely to continue to increase and should exceed 30,000 by 2010.

Looking to lands which have not yet been the subject of planning applications, the South Dublin County Development Plan 2004-2010 sets out a baseline residential density for all development in South Dublin, outside designated Town and District Centres. This baseline requires an average net residential density range of 35 – 50 dwellings per hectare (14 – 20 per acre net), which is based on the sustainable placemaking model (Section 11.7.ii) contained in the Development Plan. Based on an assumed average residential density of 50 dwellings per hectare, existing zoned lands within the study area, could conservatively accommodate an additional c.2,800 dwellings, which based on an average household size of 2.94 persons per household (CSO, 2002), would yield an estimated population of 8,232 persons. On this basis, under the “do-nothing scenario”, it is considered that the study area has a potential capacity for c.38,000 people in the medium-long term.

In a wider context, South Dublin County recorded a population of 238,835 persons in the 2002 Census of Population, which represented an increase of 9.2% over the six year period from 1996-2002. This level of growth was broadly comparable to the growth rate of the overall Greater Dublin Area, the population of which increased by 9.1% over the six year period from 1996-2002. Preliminary figures from the 2006 Census record the population of South Dublin at 246,919, which represents a further increase of 3.4% since 2002. Similar growth rates are predicted for the period up to 2010 based on population projections undertaken as part of the ‘Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2004’. This means that the population of the County is likely to exceed 250,000 by 2010.

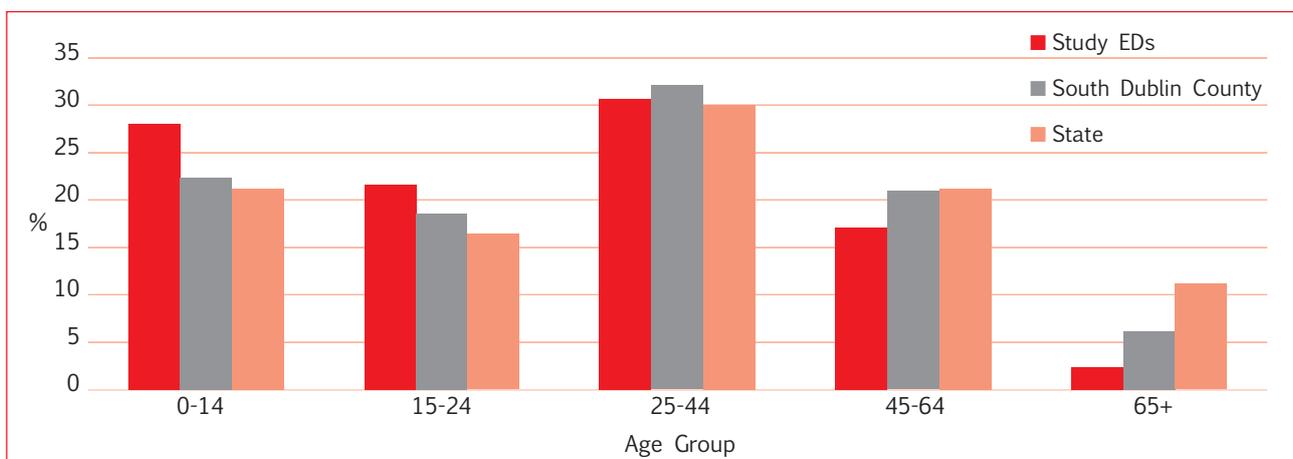
4.2.4 Household Formation

In 2002, there were a total of 7,275 households in the study area. Average household size was 3.5 persons per household. This compares to a total of 5,753 households in the four EDs in 1996, with an average household size of 3.9 persons. The trends in population observed above together with decreasing household size will mean that the rate of growth in household numbers is likely to continue to outstrip population growth in the study area.

4.2.5 Age Profile

Figure 4.2 provides a comparison of the relative proportion of the populations of the study area, South Dublin County and the State in each age group as set out in the 2002 Census of Population, Small Area Statistics. The fundamental conclusion from an examination of age profiles is that the study area has a young population when compared to South Dublin County and the State as a whole. While the population is ageing compared with 1996, the four EDs studied have 50% of the population aged under 24 compared to 41% and 37% for South Dublin County and the State respectively. It is also evident that a far lower proportion of the population in the study EDs are aged over 65 years (2.4%) than in the County (6.3%) and the State (11.1%). In 2002, 69.4% of the population of the four EDs were aged between 15 and 64 years of age compared to 64.2% of the population in 1996 and this proportion is likely to increase as the 0-14 cohort move into early adulthood. These statistics have implications for the local economy in terms of the supply of labour.

Figure 4.2: Comparative Analysis of Age Profiles 2002

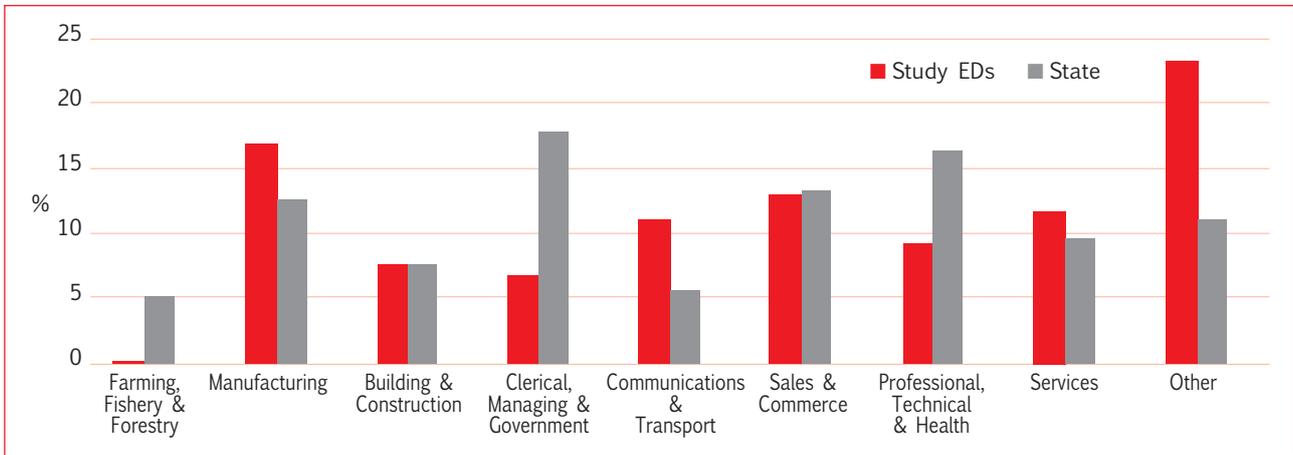


4.2.6 Employment Profile

According to the 2002 Census, 10,707 persons living in the four EDs in 2002 were in employment while 1,459 (12%) persons were unemployed. This compares favourably to 1996 when 6,430 persons were in employment and 2,077 (24%) persons were recorded unemployed. Those recorded as unemployed across South Dublin County as a whole in 2002 accounted for 6.9% of the workforce.

Figure 4.3 below provides a comparative analysis of occupations between the Study EDs and the State and shows higher than average representation in the 'Manufacturing', 'Communications & Transport' and 'Services' sectors. On the other hand, those employed in 'Clerical Managing & Government' and 'Professional, Technical and Health' were poorly represented in the workforce of the study area when compared to the national average.

Figure 4.3: Comparative Analysis of Occupation 2002

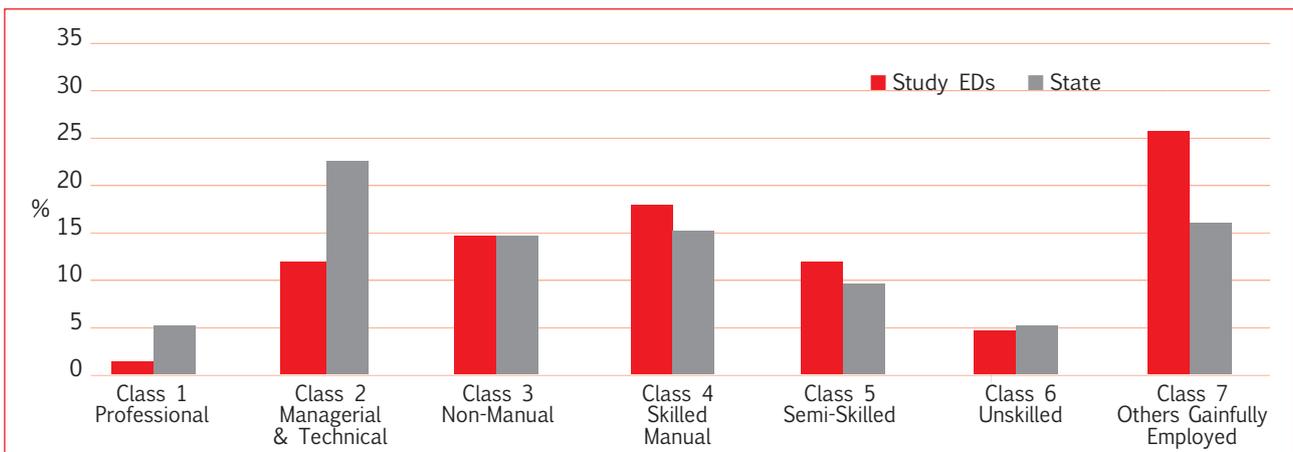


4.2.7 Social Class

Figure 4.4 below provides a comparative analysis of social class between the EDs studied and the State. It is clear that when compared against figures for the State, a far lower proportion of the population in the study EDs belong to the higher social classes 1 and 2, whilst a greater proportion belong to Social Classes 5 or 6, which comprise persons involved in semi-skilled or unskilled occupations, and Class 7 - 'Others gainfully employed'. Only 15% of the population belonged to Social Class 1 or 2, which comprise professional workers and managerial and technical workers which is less than half the proportion of the workforce in the State as a whole.

Overall, the above findings would confirm the findings of the West Tallaght Study (1999) and the West Tallaght RAPID Revitalising Area Plan 2002, which noted that West Tallaght is characterised by high levels of unemployment, low incomes, low educational attainment and high levels of single parent families.

Figure 4.4: Comparative Analysis of Social Class 2002



4.2.8 Community Facilities

A range of commercial and community facilities are provided throughout the study area including local neighbourhood shops, schools, churches, community centres etc. The majority of community facilities in the surrounding area are located within the established residential communities. The Square Shopping Centre in Tallaght is located to the south east of the subject site. The new Citywest Shopping Centre will provide a new focus for the overall area, and in particular will serve as a commercial centre for new residential communities in the Fortunestown area.

The proposed Luas Line A1 runs adjacent to the Fettercairn Community Centre and Fettercairn Youth Horse Project which are located on Fettercairn Road. The Horse Project premises contain a stabling facility, training and recreation rooms and a large all-weather outdoor arena. The route of the proposed Luas Line A1 does not encroach onto lands currently under the control of Fettercairn Youth Horse Project or Fettercairn Community Centre.

4.2.9 Access to Public Transport

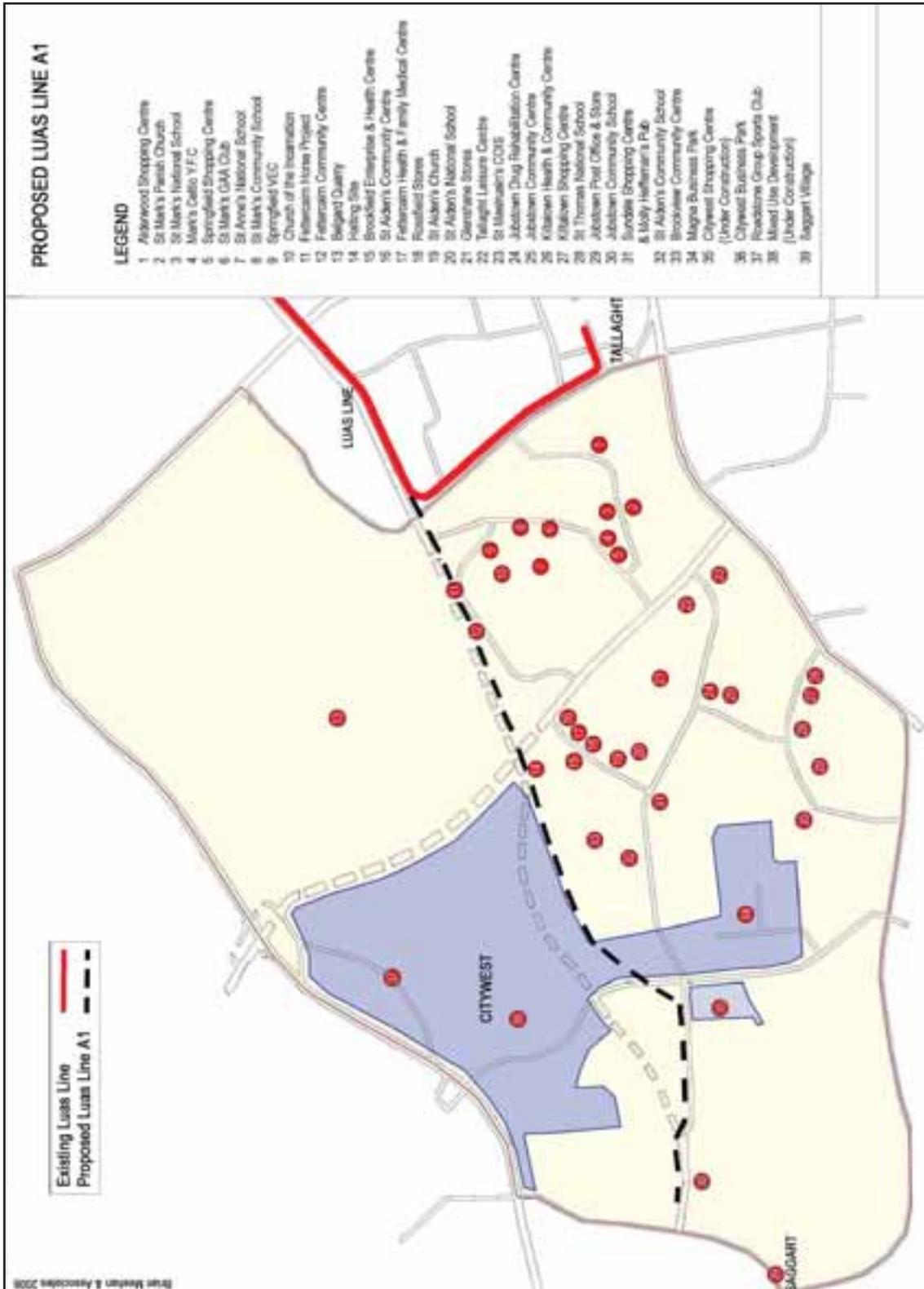
The area surrounding the subject site is served primarily by Dublin Bus. Bus routes are predominantly radial to and from Dublin City Centre. The study area is currently served by a number of Dublin Bus routes including:-

- No. 50 from Eden Quay to Citywest via Blessington Road and Citywest Road.
- No. 65B from Eden Quay to Citywest via Blessington Road and Citywest Road.
- No. 77X from Tallaght to Belfield via Blessington Road and Citywest Road.
- No. 201 from Bohernabreena to Citywest via Fortunestown Way.

The Dublin Bus service is supplemented by private bus operators, including Mortons Coaches (which provides a scheduled service from the City Centre to Citywest Campus) and Dualway (which provides a scheduled service through Citywest Campus between the N7 and N81).

The Luas 'Red' Line between Tallaght and Connolly Station runs along Cookstown Way, to the east of the subject site, from Cookstown to Tallaght Town Centre.

Figure 4.5: Employment, Commercial and Community Facilities



4.3 CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

4.3.1 Construction Impacts

Employment

Construction and commissioning of the Luas A1 Line will last for approximately 30 months. During this period there may be up to 100-150 construction workers on the site at the height of the construction programme. Apart from the direct employment associated with the project, additional employment will be generated through the multiplier effect. In this case, the multiplier effect refers to the indirect impact that new spending has when it is circulated through the local economy. However, in the context of the overall economy of the area, the impact of the project in terms of employment (direct and indirect) will be slight and positive.

Residential Amenity

The construction phase of the proposed Luas Line A1 will cause a certain amount of loss of amenity, disruption and inconvenience to local residents, particularly the residents who are located closest to the route corridor. This disruption and inconvenience will be related to traffic and also to the generation of noise and dust which is generally associated with the construction of such infrastructural projects. Simultaneous construction of the Outer Ring Road and Embankment Road will mean that these impacts will be further exacerbated, however, the construction of these projects at the same time also has advantages in terms of minimising the duration of any impacts. These issues are considered elsewhere in this report, including Chapter 10.0 - Air Quality and Climatic Factors, Chapter 11.0 - Noise and Vibration and Chapter 13.0 - Transportation. Subject to adherence to best practice and implementation of appropriate mitigation measures detailed in Chapters 10.0, 11.0 and 13.0, in particular, the overall temporary impacts associated with the construction phase are considered to be moderate and negative.

4.3.2 Mitigation Measures

A local liaison officer will be appointed by the Contractor to ensure that any issues from the local community are dealt with promptly and efficiently during construction.

A Traffic Management Plan will be formulated and subsequently implemented in advance of construction works being carried out in order to minimise disruption to the general public (see Section 3.13.7). Chapter 13.0 also details mitigation measures in respect of traffic and related issues.

4.4 OPERATIONAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

4.4.1 Operational Impacts

Land Use / Settlement

The proposed Luas Line A1 will have a positive effect in facilitating increased densities, thereby assisting in the achievement of the policies and objectives of the South Dublin County Development Plan 2004-2010, the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area (2004) and promotion of the principles of sustainable land use and transportation planning. The impact on land use and settlement is considered to be significant and positive.

Urban Regeneration

Within existing residential areas, opportunities for increased density will arise in the form of infill development. Immediately adjacent to the route corridor, the introduction of the proposed Luas Line A1 along Section A, for example, will potentially improve these backland areas by providing activity and surveillance in areas which have been prone to vandalism and anti-social behaviour. South Dublin County Council are also investigating possibilities for new frontage development along the proposed Luas Line A1 which will also create an urban edge fronting the new Embankment Road/ Luas line. Opportunities for improved physical and visual integration between the existing residential areas and the newly developed lands to the north also exist along Section B. However, these are not within the scope of the current project and will be addressed by South Dublin County Council as part of the exercising of their forward planning and development control functions. Again, the impact of the proposed Luas Line A1 as a catalyst for urban regeneration is considered to be significant and positive.

Population

The 2010 population of the study area under the “do-nothing scenario” was estimated at c.30,000 persons with an ultimate potential capacity once all existing zoned lands are developed of c.38,000. Under Proposed Variation No. 2 of the South Dublin County Development Plan 2004-2010, additional lands are proposed for development, subject to the provision of the proposed Luas Line A1. Other areas currently not zoned may also be considered for residential development in the future, however, such opportunities are mainly confined to smaller infill development sites scattered throughout the study area. In terms of lands zoned for industry/ employment uses, experience of other similar areas (eg. Sandymount Industrial Estate) would suggest that the inclusion of residential uses on these lands would be likely to arise from the introduction of Luas into the area. On the above basis, it is estimated that the “uplift” in density directly attributable to the proposed Luas Line A1 could increase the ultimate population of the study area from c.38,000 under the “do-nothing scenario” to up to 50,000 people. It is possible that this population could be achieved by 2020. This impact is consistent with the land use strategy and general thrust of planning policy for the area and is considered to be significant and positive.

Economy and Employment

Approximately 6000 persons are currently employed in Citywest Business Park and the National Digital Park. The total area zoned for employment/ enterprise and related uses in the Citywest area in the South Dublin County Development Plan 2004 is c.200ha, approximately three quarters of which is developed at present.

A key objective of the current project is to serve the Citywest Business Park, which is a major employment node in the Tallaght area. In this regard, the proposed Luas Line A1 will represent a significant positive impact for the area in terms of employment potential. Lands which are currently undeveloped will sustain higher densities than existing areas and it is likely that significant areas within the existing campus will be redeveloped and intensified. It is conservatively estimated that with Luas in place the existing zoned lands within the study area could accommodate an additional 5,000 – 10,000 jobs.

Community Severance

The proposed design and built form of the proposed Luas Line A1 is such that impact in terms of community severance is not anticipated to be significant.

Much of the proposed Luas Line A1 (4.2km) is off-street and runs adjacent to, rather than through, established residential areas. Where Luas runs on street, tracks will be set flush with the surface of the road which means that it will be possible for pedestrians or other vehicles to cross the trams pathway. This therefore ameliorates any severance impacts. Footpaths and crossing points will be provided both at stops and along the proposed route.

Where the Luas runs through undeveloped lands (e.g. Citywest) there will be potential to promote integrated design on either side of the alignment and design development to reduce the severance effect and this potential has been factored into the design of the proposed Luas Line A1. Planning applications for future development will inform the precise nature and location of future crossings. Opportunities for strengthening pedestrian connectivity between existing communities and the proposed Luas stops will be explored in consultation with SDCC.

Public Transport Accessibility and Mobility

The proposed Luas Line A1 will greatly improve mobility into and out of the study area for employment and other purposes. The transportation impacts are considered in detail in Chapter 13.0 and from a socio-economic/community perspective, the overall impact is considered to be significant and positive. While pedestrian accessibility from existing communities to the proposed Luas Stops is good along Sections A and C, opportunities for improved pedestrian connections / permeability from the existing housing estates of Ard Mór and Brookview will be explored in consultation with South Dublin County Council. Overall, however, the level of accessibility to public transport will be a significant and positive impact for the local community and those residing outside of the area that are working in the Citywest area.

Property Values

Residential property values in the West Tallaght area are among the lowest in the Dublin Area, particularly in the eastern part of the study area which is dominated by local authority housing estates. Experience of the effects of the Luas Red and Green lines on house prices along these lines would indicate the residential property values and land values generally in the study area should also increase due to a positive “Luas effect”. A property market analysis report from the estate agent Douglas Newman Good (DNG), released in 2005 (The Douglas Newman Good Annual Review 2004 & Outlook 2005), indicated a Luas effect on house prices in the Tallaght area, and stated that ‘an analysis of property price increases along the two Luas lines to Tallaght and Sandyford confirms that those properties within a five minute walk of a Luas station have seen higher increases in value than other comparable properties with no immediate access to the tram system’. More specifically, the report states that in Dublin 24, properties close to a Luas stop increased on average by 54% between January 2002 and January 2005 whilst the average increase was 37% in areas not within easy walking distance of a stop, a differential of 17%. The impact on property values in proximity to the proposed Luas Line A1 is therefore likely to be significant and positive.

Fettercairn Community Centre and Youth Horse Project

Fettercairn Community Centre and Youth Horse project are the community facilities most directly impacted upon by the proposed Luas Line A1 and the Fettercairn Stop which is located close by. An increase is expected in the attraction of this area as a focal point for the community as a result of the proposed Luas Line A1. For both facilities, benefits in terms of increased accessibility and profile may be countered by perceived erosion of privacy and increased urbanisation of their existing environments.

However, these impacts are likely to occur regardless of the Luas project and the overall impact is considered to be neutral and moderate. Boundary treatment between Embankment Road and these community facilities will be important and this will be addressed by South Dublin County Council as part of the Embankment Road project.

The potential impact of the proposed Luas Line A1 on horses at the Fettercairn Youth Horse Project has been investigated as part of this EIA. Brian Meehan & Associates consulted with Anglesey Lodge Equine Hospital (Mr. E.C. Gowing MVB.MRCVS) which is based at the Curragh and which specialises in equine health. Information on the proposed route of Luas Line A1 and its location relative to the Fettercairn Youth Horse Project was considered by these experts who confirmed that no significant adverse impacts on the horses would be likely in this instance. In fact, it was stated that horses accommodate very well to traffic and noise in general, including train and aircraft noise. It was further noted that the horses which occupy the Fettercairn Youth Horse Project are used for pleasure riding purposes and will be broken and riding and probably of a placid nature. By way of example, the Anglesea Lodge Equine Hospital refers to their premises which are located adjacent to the main Dublin-Cork railway line and to Windsor Racecourse, which is situated beside the perimeter fence of Heathrow Airport. On the basis of this appraisal, it was considered that the issue did not require further investigation.

Do Nothing Scenario

If the proposed Luas Line A1 were not developed, the trend of development in the vicinity of the proposed route would continue and land in the vicinity of the proposed Line A1 route would continue to be developed for residential and commercial uses in line with the South Dublin County Development Plan 2004-2010, albeit at lower densities. The positive benefits to the local community outlined above would not materialise. It is also considered that the prospects of attracting investment and employment into the Citywest area would also be significantly diminished in the “do-nothing scenario”.

4.4.2 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required during the operational phase.