Agenda Item	**7**
Report No	**CIA/48/26**

The Highland Council

Committee: **City of Inverness Area**

Date: **16 November 2026**

Report Title: **Inverness Interchange - Project Update**

Report By: **Assistant Chief Executive - Place**

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report updates Members on the Inverness Interchange project following completion of further concept design, technical assessment, options appraisal and public and stakeholder consultation during 2025/26. The work followed the Inverness Interchange Feasibility Study Committee Report CIA/05/26 considered by the City of Inverness Area Committee on 2 February 2026.

1.2 The Engagement Report within **Appendix 1** shows the consultation demonstrated very strong support for the key proposals, with between 75% and 91% of consultees in favour of the changes, including relocating the Bus and Coach Station closer to Inverness Railway Station. The consultant team recommends that Options 2 (**Appendix 2**, referred to J in the Feasibility Study) and 3 (**Appendix 3,** referred to L in the Feasibility Study) are progressed in parallel because both respond to that preference, while allowing the greater railway-station dependencies associated with Option 3 to be tested against the potentially more deliverable Option 2.

1.3 Due to the remaining 2026/27 programme and the requirement for Bus Infrastructure Fund expenditure to be incurred by 31 March 2027, the proposed commission for the Bus and Coach Station is now limited to progressing Options 2 and 3 through RIBA Stage 2 only this financial year.

2 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:-

i. **Note** the outcome of the public and stakeholder consultation completed during 2025/26;
ii. **Agree** that Options 2 and 3 are progressed in parallel through RIBA Stage 2; and
iii. **Note** that the Inverness Interchange Project, funded through Transport Scotland's Bus Infrastructure Fund (BIF), and contents of this report relate solely to the Inverness Bus and Coach Station, and the integrated transport team will continue to coordinate with the wider aspirations for the Inverness Station Quarter.

3 Implications

3.1 **Resource** - The current fee estimate for the multidisciplinary RIBA Stage 2 commission is £262,500. Transport Scotland confirmed Bus Infrastructure Fund support for the full cost of this project on the 22 September 2026.

3.2 **Legal** - Progression will require compliance with the Council's procurement requirements and appropriate consideration of land ownership, property and partnership arrangements, planning requirements and other statutory consents. The relationship with Network Rail land and the proposed transfer of land to The Highland Council will require to be addressed as the work progresses.

3.3 **Risk** - Principal risks include the shortened design programme and the requirement to complete eligible expenditure by 31 March 2027; future dependencies on land ownership and partner decisions; site, utilities, drainage and ground conditions; affordability; and the need to maintain transport services and access to surrounding properties during any future works. Progressing two options at RIBA Stage 2 will allow the relative land, operational, cost and delivery risks to be assessed before a preferred option is selected. Any future funding to progress the project beyond 31 March 2027 will require a further competitive funding bid to Transport Scotland.

3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** - The existing layout creates conflicts between passengers, buses, taxis and other vehicles and presents accessibility, wayfinding and personal-security concerns. The RIBA Stage 2 work will consider segregation, inclusive access, passenger safety, fire safety, construction phasing and continuity of transport operations. Any future construction risks will require detailed assessment through the relevant design and statutory processes.

3.5 **Gaelic** - No specific impact has been identified at this stage. Future consultation, design information and public-facing material will be prepared in accordance with the Council's Gaelic Language Plan, where applicable.

4. Impacts

4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.

4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.

4.3 This is a monitoring and/or update report and therefore an impact assessment is not required.

5 Background and Work Completed

5.1 The Inverness Interchange Feasibility Study examined the potential to re-provide the Bus and Coach Station, Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park and an Active Travel Hub within the Station Quarter, improve connections with Inverness Railway Station and the city centre, and create wider public-realm and regeneration opportunities.

5.2 Following the City of Inverness Area Committee decision of 2 February 2026, Austin-Smith:Lord and the wider consultant team progressed the three feasibility options through further concept design, technical review, site and record-information work, options appraisal and public and stakeholder consultation.

5.3 The consultant report concludes that all three options remain technically viable within the study area. The multi-criteria assessment ranked Option 3 first, followed by Option 1 and Option 2. Public feedback supported all three options but ranked Option 3 first, followed by Option 2 and Option 1.

5.4 The consultant team recommends that Options 2 and 3 are taken forward. Option 3 most strongly reflects public preference but would require the most significant reconfiguration of the Railway Station, creating greater project and delivery risk. Option 2 also moves the Bus and Coach Station closer to the Railway Station but is less dependent on extensive changes to railway buildings. Developing both options in parallel will allow a preferred solution to be refined through further engagement, using evidence on cost, risk, land, operations and deliverability.

6 Public and Stakeholder Consultation

6.1 The consultation ran from 27 February to 10 April 2026. It included an online and paper survey, an exhibition and staffed drop-in event at Inverness Library, media and social-media promotion, and meetings and site visits with local businesses, transport stakeholders, accessibility representatives and Members.

6.2 A total of 523 completed survey responses were received, comprising 493 online responses and 30 paper responses. The public drop-in event held on 11 March 2026 was attended by 117 people. Respondents included people who live or work in Inverness city centre and regular users of the bus station, railway station and car park, across a broad age range.

6.3 The findings show widespread dissatisfaction with the existing Bus Station, Multi-Storey Car Park and surrounding area. Recurring concerns included the appearance and first impression of Inverness; passenger comfort and weather protection; personal security; accessibility for disabled and vulnerable users; and confusing or indirect connections between bus, rail, parking and the city centre.

6.4 There was strong support for a new Bus and Coach Station, replacement car park, Active Travel Hub, improved bus and rail integration, a traffic-free civic space at Farraline Park and wider mixed-use regeneration of the Station Quarter. Support was strongest where proposals improved integration, accessibility, public realm and the image of the city.

6.5 Where an option preference could be identified, Option 3 was selected by 232 respondents (80%), Option 2 by 33 respondents (12%) and Option 1 by 24 respondents (8%). The consultation therefore shows a strong preference for Option 3 and a clear desire to locate the Bus and Coach Station closer to the Railway Station. Views on the precise location and form of replacement car parking were less conclusive.

6.6 Support was conditional on high-quality and durable design; inclusive, step-free and weather-protected connections; adequate access, drop-off and parking provision for the wider Highland catchment; careful phasing; value for money; and long-term management and maintenance. These findings will inform the RIBA Stage 2 brief and assessment of the two options.

6.7 The Engagement Report will be published on the Highland Council's engagement platform, Go Vocal.

7 Proposed RIBA Stage 2 Work

7.1 Following confirmation of Bus Infrastructure Fund support on 22 September 2026, it is proposed to appoint a multidisciplinary design team to progress Options 2 and 3 through RIBA Stage 2 (Concept Design).

7.2 RIBA Stage 2 builds on the earlier feasibility and consultation work to develop concept designs and initial engineering proposals. The team will assess both options against user needs, site conditions, sustainability objectives, operational requirements and relevant regulations. This will include consideration of land ownership, connections with the Railway Station, cost, risk and how the proposals could be delivered. A basic diagram outlining the RIBA stages is provided within **Appendix 4**.

7.3 The commission brings together the design, engineering, transport, planning, safety and cost expertise needed to develop and compare the options. Working with the Council, users and other stakeholders, the team will refine the proposals to reach a preferred option.

7.4 The indicative programme runs from November 2026 to March 2027, with all funded expenditure required to be incurred by 31 March 2027. Consultation and engagement are included in the commission. The approach will be confirmed when the team is appointed, prioritising the stakeholder and user engagement needed to inform the designs.

7.5 The findings and recommended preferred option will be brought back to Committee, together with the proposed next steps. The current commission does not include work beyond RIBA Stage 2.

8 Wider Inverness Station Quarter

8.1 This project is set within the wider context of what has been identified as 'Station Quarter' in the City Vision. It encompasses all the land to the north and west of the railway and up to Rose Street to the north, with Farraline Park central to it. The majority of the land is within public ownership.

8.2 Inverness Interchange will positively alter the travellers experience into this key entry point of Inverness, whether arriving by bus or train, as well as presenting opportunities for safer and more direct options for onward travel within the City. It will therefore act as a key catalyst for the wider regeneration of this part of the City.

8.3 There are a number of linked and potential development opportunities, some of which will have elements of interdependency, that will need careful consideration to ensure that development happens in a logical and planned manner. Network Rail/Scotland's Railway has its own Station Masterplan that is important to the delivery of the Interchange as well as the wider objectives of the area, as will the potential redevelopment of Rose Street Car Park when it is approaching its end of life, along with the existing commercial opportunities.

8.4 The redevelopment of the area will therefore require coordination of the respective asset owners and other Council services. The first step in developing a more detailed masterplan is the establishment of a 'Steering Group' that will enable identification of potential opportunities and how these might be delivered. This includes options on land transfer and assembly, funding and phasing. The expectation is that working in this way will deliver not only the masterplan but a plan on how the wider project would be delivered.

9 Next Steps

9.1 Subject to committee approval and completion of the required procurement and governance approvals, the consultant team will be instructed to mobilise the RIBA Stage 2 commission.

9.2 Options 2 and 3 will be developed in parallel and assessed using the project objectives, public and stakeholder feedback, operational requirements and evidence on cost, risk and deliverability.

9.3 The RIBA Stage 2 outcome and recommended preferred option will be reported through the appropriate project and Committee governance arrangements before any decision is taken to progress to a later design stage.

Designation:	Assistant Chief Executive - Place
Date:	23 October 2026
Author:	Lynn Ross, Project Manager – Bus Infrastructure Fund, Integrated Transport Team David Mudie, Strategic Lead – Planning and Building Standards and Chief Planning Officer
Background Papers:	Inverness Interchange Feasibility Study Report – Feb 26
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Engagement Report – V1 Appendix 2 – Option 2 Plan Appendix 3 – Options 3 Plan Appendix 4 – RIBA Stages Diagram

Inverness Interchange Bus Station & Car Park Feasibility Study

HITRANS
June 2026
Public Engagement Report v1

Austin·Smith:Lord



Public Consultation Survey Findings : Executive Summary

Background and Purpose

HITRANS, with The Highland Council and Network Rail/ Scotland's Railway, commissioned the Inverness Interchange Feasibility Study to examine reprovision of the Bus and Coach Station, Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park and an Active Travel Hub in the 'Station Quarter' adjacent to Inverness Railway Station.

Public consultation explored views on the findings of the Feasibility Study, feedback on the existing facilities and options to reconfigure the Interchange and gauge the appetite for change. The response of public and key stakeholders was captured in a Public Consultation Survey which was available online and in person at Inverness Library during a 6 week period. 523 responses were received.





Public Consultation Survey Findings : Executive Summary

Overview

A review of the Engagement responses in the Public Consultation Survey confirms;

- A good level of engagement from a wide range of participants with local and lived experience of the existing area and facilities,
- An overwhelming level of dissatisfaction with the existing Bus Station and Multi-Storey Car Park with concerns raised about the poor first impression, personal safety and security and a challenging experience for passengers, especially those with disabilities.
- A strong level of support for a new Bus and Coach Station, replacement Multi-Storey Car Park and new Active Travel Hub. There is also strong support for a new civic square at Farraline Park and the proposed mixed-use redevelopment of the Station Quarter.
- Support is conditional with an emphasis on the need to manage cost, phasing and minimise disruption.
- A strong preference for layouts that relocate the Bus and Coach Station closer to the Railway Station and an expectation that any new development must provide a fully accessible, high quality and convenient passenger experience and enhance the look and feel of Inverness city centre.

Participation

The consultation ran from 27 February to 10 April 2026 and received 523 responses to a Public Consultation Survey. Most respondents live or work in Inverness City Centre, with many regular users of the bus station, railway station and car park across a broad age range and good gender balance, indicating that feedback reflects everyday users as well as visitors.

The Survey was available online and hard copy at Inverness Library. The Public Consultation Survey was widely publicised online, via media outlets, social media and poster campaigns. An in person drop-in event was held at Inverness Library on 11 March 2026 and was attended by 117 attendees. Briefing meetings and site visits were arranged with a wide range of key local stakeholders to promote wide participation. This included sessions with the Inverness Access Panel, Inverness BID and Inverness Chamber of Commerce amongst others.



Public Consultation Survey Findings : Executive Summary

Views on the Existing Situation

Public feedback is clear and consistent. The Inverness Bus Station, Rose Street Multi- Storey Car Park and surrounding area are widely regarded as outdated, unattractive, poorly connected and increasingly unfit for purpose as the main transport gateway to the capital of the Highlands.

Across all survey questions respondents overwhelmingly indicate that the bus station or car park fail to meet their needs or provide a positive first impression of the city. The strongest dissatisfaction relates to the appearance, arrival experience and civic image, with many describing the area as an embarrassing or unwelcoming gateway for residents, visitors and tourists. The poor setting of the listed Inverness Library is repeatedly highlighted as a major concern.

Connectivity between bus, rail, car and pedestrian routes is widely perceived as confusing, unsafe and inaccessible, particularly for older people, disabled users, parents with children and those travelling with luggage. Concerns about safety, comfort, weather protection and personal security (especially outwith peak hours) are recurring themes.

Support for Change and indicative proposals

Despite concerns about cost and disruption, support for redevelopment is strong. A clear majority agree that:

- a new Bus and Coach Station is needed;
- the Multi-Storey Car Park should be replaced;
- an Active Travel Hub should be included;
- a traffic-free civic square at Farraline Park would improve Inverness city centre; and
- the Station Quarter offers mixed-use redevelopment opportunity.

Support is strongest where proposals improve integration, accessibility, public realm and city image.

Key Conditions and Expectations

The consultation ran from 27 February to 10 April 2026 and received 523 responses to a Public Consultation Survey. Most respondents live or work in Inverness City Centre, with many regular users of the bus station, railway station and car park across a broad age range and good gender balance, indicating that feedback reflects everyday users as well as visitors.

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Location and Layout

There is very strong consensus that any new Bus and Coach Station should be located closer to the Railway Station, reinforcing the desire for a genuinely integrated interchange. There is support for all Option presented with strongest preference for Option 3, followed by Option 2 and 1 in that order.

Views on the precise location of replacement car parking are more mixed, with higher levels of neutrality indicating the need for further design development and reassurance.

Overall Conclusion

There is a clear mandate for change. Overall many respondents declare an eagerness to make progress to delivery.

While the detail varies, respondents agree the status quo is unacceptable. There is clear consensus to locate the Bus ad Coach Station closer to the Railway Station to deliver greater interchange integration. The Station Quarter has strong backing from respondents to become a welcoming, safe and accessible gateway befitting Inverness. Support is conditional on the basis that costs, disruption and phasing are well managed.

Public Consultation Survey Findings : Executive Summary

Project Background

Inverness is a growing City at the heart of a City Region and as the Gateway to the Highlands. It is undergoing a strategic masterplanning process to reimagine and guide the transformation of its City Centre, and its public transport infrastructure.

As part of this initiative **HITRANS** (the Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership), in partnership with **The Highland Council and Network Rail / Scotland's Railway**, commissioned an **Inverness Interchange Feasibility Study** to explore the scope for a new public transport interchange serving Inverness Railway Station and the City Centre.

The Feasibility Study (dated January 2026) explores the need and scope for the reprovision of a **Bus and Coach Station, Multi-Storey Car Park and Active Travel Hub** adjacent to Inverness Railway Station. The Active Travel Hub would provide facilities to encourage and enable more walking, wheeling and cycling to, in and around the City Centre.

This work complements and is part of the Inverness Station Masterplan, being promoted by Network Rail / Scotland's Railway, and is in line with Recommendation 43 in Transport Scotland's Strategic **Transport Projects Review 2** (STPR2).

The Feasibility Study

The Feasibility Study (dated January 2026) was progressed by Austin-Smith:Lord (masterplanners, architects, landscape architects), SCP (transport planners) and Cameron & Ross (engineers).

The Feasibility Study finds that;

1. The existing Bus Station and Multi-Storey Car Park need to be replaced.
2. There is sufficient space to accommodate a replacement Bus and Coach Station, MSCP and Active Travel Mobility Hub as part of a wider mixed-use regeneration of the 'Station Quarter' on land assembled by, and within the ownership of, The Highland Council and Network Rail / Scotland's Railway.

The Inverness Interchange Feasibility Study recommended a series of next steps to progress the technical design, options appraisal and public and stakeholder engagement require to inform the case for change.

The Feasibility Study findings were presented to The Highland Council City of Inverness Area Committee on 2 February 2026. Approval was sought and granted to proceed to undertake public consultation and stakeholder engagement based on the findings of the Feasibility Study. Subject to the findings of the consultation process it was anticipated that the evidence from the public consultation and stakeholder engagement would help support the case for funding to progress the design work.



Engagement Strategy

At this stage it was envisaged to have an Engagement Strategy in 3 phases as the project and proposals develop;

Phase 1 – Project Objectives and Options Review

Purpose : to outline the project context, brief and objectives. Consult on the general design principles and emerging options (as outlined in the Feasibility Study – January 2026) to inform design development.

Based on findings from the Phase 1 Consultation preferred option(s) would be identified (taking account consultation feedback and technical analysis). The preferred option(s) would be developed through to RIBA Stage 3

Phase 2 – Proposed Preferred Option

Purpose : to outline the proposed design prior to final technical design. Consult on the design concept, look and feel, phasing of the project and public space design.

Based on the findings from Phase 2 Consultation final design development would be undertaken in anticipation of a Planning Application.

Phase 3 – Pre-Application Consultation

Purpose : as required by planning policy for 'major applications' a final consultation would be undertaken during a statutory 12 week pre-application period to outline the final draft proposals prior to submission of a planning application. Any design adjustments in response to the pre-application consultation would be cited in the design and access statement accompanying the application.

This Report outlines the findings of the Consultation and Engagement undertaken in March / April 2026 as per Phase 1 of the process outlined above.

Purpose of the Phase 01 : March / April 2026 Engagement

This initial phase of engagement activity sought to;

- Raise awareness of the Inverness Interchange Feasibility Study and summarise its headline findings
- Present a series of indicative options that establish a series of key design principles namely;
    1. Seeking to re-locate a new 14-16 stance Bus and Coach Station adjacent to the Railway Station
    2. Re-provide a circa 850 multi-storey car park (MSCP) to the north of the study area
    3. To establish a pedestrian first zone around the 'Station Quarter' including a traffic-free new civic square at Farraline Park
    4. Promote a mixed-use city centre regeneration masterplan for the 'Station Quarter'
- Seek feedback and an indication of support (or otherwise) on the key design principles
- With reference to the indicative options invite consultees to indicate any preference and suggest any further improvements to the proposals to inform the preparation of a preferred option.



Engagement Strategy

Phase 1 Approach / Activities

Public Survey

The means of capturing feedback / evidence during Phase 1 Engagement was via a Public Survey which ran from 27 February 2026 at 9am until 10 April 2026 at 8pm.

This Survey was available online via The Highland Council's Objective platform, and via hard copies available at Inverness Library. To assist consultees a digital copy of the Information Panels on display in the Library were available for online review, alongside the Survey.

There were 523 completed survey responses, 493 online and 30 hard copies handed into the Library.

The outcome of the Public Consultation Survey is outlined in the Report prepared by the Highland Council (see below).



Encouraging Participation in the Process

To raise awareness of the Engagement process and encourage participation there was an Engagement Strategy and Communication Plan put in place. Activities to encourage wider participation included;

- **Public Exhibition in Inverness Library :** with information boards, copies of relevant Feasibility Report and hard copy surveys for completion available throughout the Survey period.
- **Public Drop-In Event :** staffed / facilitated event held in Inverness Library from 12 noon until 6.30pm on Wednesday 11 March. 117 participants attended the event.
- **Social Media :** THC promoted the Survey and associated public events online
- **Media :** local and national coverage of the Survey / Engagement via the BBC, Press and Journal and Inverness Courier
- **Flyers and Posters :** large format posters in highly visible locations in Inverness Railway Station, Bus Station and Library and wider flyer / poster distribution in city centre.
- **Stakeholder Meetings and Site Tours :** to encourage wide participation from a range of key stakeholders and groups the following meetings / presentation occurred;

1. Inverness BID (in person briefing) : 25 February 2026
2. Inverness Chamber of Commerce (in person briefing) : 25 February 2026
3. Scotrail (in person briefing) : 25 February 2026
4. Inverness Design Review Panel (online meeting) : 25 February 2026
5. Inverness Access Panel (in person meeting) : 25 February 2026
6. Inverness Councillors site visit : 11 March 2026
7. Inverness Chamber of Commerce member's lunch event : 24 March 2026
8. Inverness Access Panel site visit : 24 March 2026
9. Inverness BID Board Meeting (in person) : 30 March 2026
10. Inverness High School (in person) 2 April 2026

- **Press Coverage included;**

1. Inverness Courier : 27 January 2026 : https://www.inverness-courier.co.uk/news/pictured-the-before-and-after-of-the-planned-inverness-bus-425618/
2. Press & Journal : 28 January 2026 : https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/inverness/6943544/inverness-station-quarter-plans/
3. Press & Journal : 29 January 2026 : https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/inverness/6944856/inverness-station-quarter-revamp-people-react/
4. Press & Journal : 2 February 2026 : https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/6946394/inverness-station-quarter-consultation-event/
5. BBC News : 27 Feb 2026 https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c9wnvvv4e2wo
6. Inverness Courier : 27 February 2026 : https://www.inverness-courier.co.uk/news/consultation-launched-on-inverness-station-quarter-overhau-428441/
7. Press & Journal : 6 March 2026 : https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/inverness/6971373/inverness-station-quarter-interview-with-councillors-consultation/
8. Press & Journal : 11 March 2026 : https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/inverness/6975037/inverness-station-quarter-inverness-library-vox-pops/
9. Press & Journal : 13 March 2026 : https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/inverness/6975636/inverness-station-quarter-graham-ross-architect-interview/
10. Inverness Courier : 8 April 2026 : https://www.inverness-courier.co.uk/news/last-chance-to-comment-on-inverness-station-quarter-revamp-431988/



Encouraging Participation in the Process

Public Drop-In Event

To encourage participation and enable he local resident and business community to meet the client and consultant team to discuss the project a public drop-in event was held at Inverness Library on the 11 March 2026 from 12 noon to 6:30pm. The event was attended by a total of 117 people throughout the day.

All participants were invited to record their feedback via the Public Consultation Survey. However the points below reflect verbal feedback received in the course of the event.

Key Themes Identified:

Overall support and understanding:

Attendees at the public drop-in were almost unanimously supportive of the public transport Interchange proposals. There was general support for creating a public open and green space at Farraline Park and for improving the overall environment of the area.

Connectivity, circulation, and transport integration:

There was recurring concern at the poor quality of existing routes between Farraline Park (incl. MSCP and Bus Station) and the Railway Station. There was widespread support to improve these connections.

There was strong interest in better integration with local bus services and future accommodation of other city bus routes. Questions seeking clarification about road connections and circulation were common; with many welcoming confirmation that the MSCP would be directly accessible from the A82.

There was a desire expressed by some for segregated pick-up and drop-off for the bus station to avoid mixing with general traffic. Car access for businesses and residents in the Station Quarter, both for parking and drop-off, was highlighted as important.

Some attendees asked about railway services, focusing not on the station itself but on

improvements to the Aberdeen–Inverness line, longer and more frequent Highland Mainline trains, and low service levels on the Far North Line.

Underpass improvements under Longman Road and removal of bollards at the underpass were raised as priorities by some. Camper van parking was raised as an emerging issue in Inverness.

Site conditions, Facilities and Urban Environment:

There was widespread dissatisfaction at the pooor quality of the look, feel and layout of the existing bus station, MSCP and links to the Railway Station and city centre.

Ensuring that any new greenspace at Farraline Park not attract antisocial behaviour was a concern raised by some. The night-time economy in the area was mentioned as a factor influencing design and safety.

Public toilet provision was raised as an important amenity atht is lacking and should be provided. Accessibility, especially for people with sensory or mobility impairments and other vulnerable users came up frequently.

Ideas and opportunities:

Some suggestions were made by members of the public beyond the suggestions shown in the Information Panels. The idea of a new concert venue was suggested within one of the mixed-use blocks, potentially replacing the Ironworks.

Delivery, Phasing, and Expectations:

Attendants were keen to understand timelines for delivery, with a clear preference for progress as soon as possible. Phasing of the proposed works was raised as an important

consideration. Some negative comments were made about previous Academy Street proposals, though these did not appear to affect support for the Interchange.

Preference

Strong preference for Option 3 was expressed by many members of the public during the consultation, with a general desire to see the Bus and Coach Station located closer to the Railway Station for convenience and integrate services.

Scope of Redevelopment

It was noted by a participant at the Public Drop-In Event on 11 March 2026 that a commercial property on Margaret Street was incorrectly shown in the original Public Exhibition Information Boards as being within the scope of the proposals. This error was acknowledged and remedied and the online version of the Information Boards were adjusted to include the corrected 3d views. The Information Boards included at the end of this Report have the corrected plans and 3d views indicating that the existing Bus Station building and the Spectrum Centre are the only sites on Margaret Street included for proposed potential redevelopment.



Public Consultation March 2026

Online Survey Summary

The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

Inverness Interchange:

Bus Station and Car Park Feasibility Study

Co-iomlaid Inbhir Nis:

Sgrùdadh So-dhèantachd Stèisean Bhusaichean is Pàirc Chàraichean



Report on Consultation Responses

May 2026

www.highland.gov.uk



Executive summary

Background and purpose

HITRANS, with The Highland Council and Network Rail/Scotland's Railway, commissioned the Inverness Interchange Feasibility Study to examine reprovision of the Bus and Coach Station, Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park and an Active Travel Hub in the Station Quarter. Public consultation explored views on existing facilities and appetite for change.

Participation

The consultation ran from 27 February to 10 April 2026 and received 493 responses, plus 30 paper responses (total 523). Most respondents live or work in Inverness City Centre, with many regular users of the bus station, railway station and car park across a broad age range, indicating that feedback reflects everyday users as well as visitors.

Views on the existing situation

Public feedback is clear and consistent. The Inverness Bus Station, Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park and surrounding area are widely regarded as outdated, unattractive, poorly connected and increasingly unfit for purpose as the main transport gateway to the capital of the Highlands.

Across all survey questions, negative sentiment significantly outweighs positive sentiment. Respondents overwhelmingly disagree that the bus station or car park meet their needs or provide a positive first impression of the city. The strongest dissatisfaction relates to appearance, arrival experience and civic image, with many describing the area as an embarrassing or unwelcoming gateway for residents, visitors and tourists. The poor setting of the listed Inverness Library is repeatedly highlighted as a major concern.

Connectivity between bus, rail, car and pedestrian routes is widely perceived as confusing, unsafe and inaccessible, particularly for older people, disabled users, parents with children and those travelling with luggage. Safety, comfort, weather protection and personal security (especially outwith peak hours) are recurring themes.

Inverness Interchange: Bus Station and Car Park Feasibility Study
Co-iomlaid Inbhir Nis: Sgrùdadh So-dhèantachd Stèisean Bhusaichean is Pàirc Chàraichean

Support for change and indicative proposals

Despite concerns about cost and disruption, support for redevelopment is strong. A clear majority agree that:

- a new Bus and Coach Station is needed;
- the car park should be replaced;
- an Active Travel Hub should be included;
- a traffic-free civic square at Farraline Park would improve the centre; and
- the Station Quarter offers mixed-use redevelopment opportunity.

Support is strongest where proposals improve integration, accessibility, public realm and city image.

Key conditions and expectations

Public support is conditional. Respondents emphasise that success depends on:

- High-quality, durable design appropriate to a regional capital.
- Inclusive, step-free and weather-protected connections between all modes.
- Retention of adequate car access, drop-off and parking provision reflecting Inverness's large rural catchment.
- A clear transport-led focus, with other uses supporting rather than competing with interchange functions.
- Careful phasing and long-term stewardship to avoid loss of facilities or repeated poor outcomes.

Location and layout

There is very strong consensus that any new bus and coach station should be located closer to the railway station, reinforcing the desire for a genuinely integrated interchange. Views on the precise location of replacement car parking are more mixed, with higher levels of neutrality indicating the need for further design development and reassurance. Where preferences were identifiable, Option **3** is clearly favoured.

Overall conclusion

There is a clear mandate for change. While detail varies, respondents agree the status quo is unacceptable. With careful delivery, the Station Quarter has strong backing to become a welcoming, safe and accessible gateway befitting Inverness.

Contents

Executive summary **1**
Background and purpose 1
Participation 1
Views on the existing situation 1
Support for change and indicative proposals 2
Key conditions and expectations 2
Location and layout 2
Overall conclusion 2
Contents **3**
Introduction **4**
Responses **4**
Respondents **5**
Location 5
Age and gender 7
Frequency of use of facilities 8
Sentiment towards existing situation **9**
Inverness Bus Station results 9
Rose Street Multi Storey Car Park results 12
Additional comments regarding current situation 14
Sentiment towards indicative proposals 18
Results 18
Additional comments regarding indicative proposals 22
Indicative layout **25**
Results 25
Additional comments disagreeing with the position of elements 27
Design preference **30**
Conclusion **31**

Inverness Interchange: Bus Station and Car Park Feasibility Study
Co-iomlaid Inbhir Nis: Sgrùdadh So-dhèantachd Stèisean Bhusaichean is Pàirc Chàraichean

Introduction

HITRANS (the Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership), in partnership with The Highland Council and Network Rail / Scotland's Railway, commissioned an Inverness Interchange Feasibility Study.

The Study explored the need and options for the reprovision of a new Bus and Coach Station, Multi-Storey Car Park and Active Travel Hub adjacent to Inverness Railway Station and serving the City Centre. The Active Travel Hub would provide facilities to encourage and enable more walking, wheeling and cycling to, in and around the City Centre.

As part of an initial phase of engagement, the public were invited to provide comment in response to the proposals and findings of the Inverness Interchange Feasibility Study.

Responses

The online survey ran from 27-February-2026 09:00 to 10-April-2026 20:00 and received **493** responses in total: 10 from agents or representative and 483 from individuals. An additional **30** paper responses from individuals were later received, bringing the total to **523** responses.

The highest number of visitors to the survey was recorded shortly before the end of the consultation period with 3794 unique visitors.

The top 5 referring domains were as follows:

1. $direct (direct access): **3,036** referrals.
2. m.facebook.com (Facebook's mobile web domain): **2,150** referrals.
3. lm.facebook.com (Facebook's link-management domain): **1,692** referrals.
4. www.highland.gov.uk (The Highland Council): **1,069** referrals.
5. www.bbc.co.uk (BBC): **995** referals.

Respondents

Location

Reponses to the question on location were mixed: some responses were coded but the results were greatly expanded on the inclusion of the "Other (describe)" field. This prompted recodifying the information in an attempt to consolidate the responses.

Primary classification was carried out by the respondent's primary relationship to Inverness City Centre and not by their opinion or method of transport. The following 12 core categories were developed based on this:

1. **City Centre Resident**: Lives in Inverness City Centre or within walking distance.
2. **Inverness Resident (Non-City Centre)**: Lives in Inverness but not in the city centre (suburbs/outskirts).
3. **Nearby Town/ Suburban Visitor**: Lives just outside Inverness (e.g. Black Isle, Culloden, Smithton, Balloch, Nairn, Dingwall, Muir of Ord).
4. **Wider Highland/ Regional Visitor**: Lives elsewhere in the Highlands or Islands (e.g. Ullapool, Skye, Thurso, Wester Ross, Moray, Ross-shire).
5. **Regular Commuter to Inverness**: Travels into Inverness regularly for work/study but does not live there.
6. **City Centre Worker**: Works in Inverness City Centre (but may or may not live there).
7. **City Centre Business Owner/ Operator**: Runs a business, tourism operation, or professional service linked to City Centre activity.
8. **Regular Visitor (Non-Resident)**: Does not live locally but visits frequently for shopping, leisure, services, or visiting family/friends.
9. **Transport Hub User/ Through-Traveller**: Uses Inverness primarily as a bus/rail/coach interchange or onward travel hub.
10. **Occasional Visitor/ Tourist**: Infrequent or seasonal visitors, tourists, former residents visiting occasionally.
11. **Former Resident**: Previously lived in Inverness but now lives elsewhere.
12. **Unclear/Non-Specific**: Responses that provide no meaningful locational or usage information (e.g. ".", "Na").

To avoid double-counting in applying a single category to responses with multiple attributes the following hierarchy was applied to ensure the strongest functional relationship is captured:

Inverness Interchange: Bus Station and Car Park Feasibility Study
Co-iomlaid Inbhir Nis: Sgrùdadh So-dhèantachd Stèisean Bhusaichean is Pàirc Chàraichean

1. City Centre Resident.
2. City Centre Worker.
3. Business Owner/Operator.
4. Inverness Resident (Non-Centre).
5. Regular Commuter.
6. Nearby Town/Suburban Visitor.
7. Wider Highland/Regional Visitor.
8. Transport Hub User.
9. Regular Visitor.
10. Occasional Visitor/Tourist.
11. Former Resident.
12. Unclear.

The breakdown of the respondents' location is shown in Table 1: location of respondents.

Table 1: Location of respondents

Location	Number of responses	%
Unclear/Non-Specific	153	29.25%
City Centre Resident	147	28.11%
City Centre Worker	103	19.69%
Wider Highland/Regional Visitor	27	5.16%
Regular Commuter to Inverness	24	4.59%
Transport Hub User/Through-Traveller	15	2.87%
Regular Visitor (Non-Resident)	15	2.87%
Inverness Resident (Non-City Centre)	15	2.87%
Nearby Town/Suburban Visitor	11	2.10%
Business Owner/Operator	9	1.72%
Former Resident	4	0.76%
Grand Total	**523**	**100.00%**

The application of the Unclear/Non-Specific classification could be refined to increase the quantity of usable data but it is clear from the information that the vast majority of respondents either work or live in Inverness City Centre.

A partial postcode was requested as part of the consultation although many respondents supplied their complete postcode instead. This information is available in the consultation output and could be joined to GIS data to provide a map of respondent location.

Age and gender

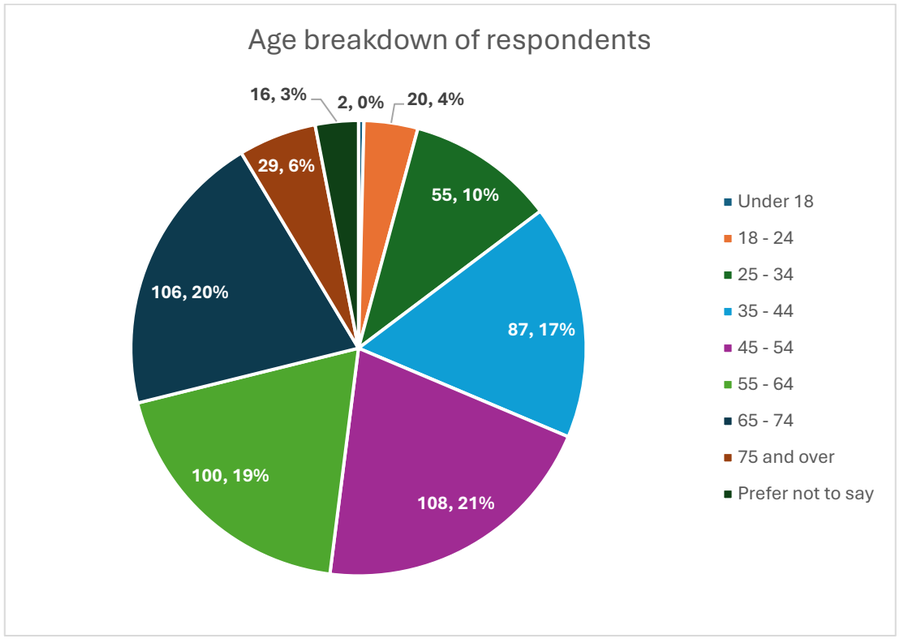
Age ranges were codified in the survey and can be seen in Table 2: Age of respondents.

Table 2: Age of respondents

Age	Number of responses	%
Under 18	2	0.38%
18 - 24	20	3.82%
25 - 34	55	10.52%
35 - 44	87	16.63%
45 - 54	108	20.65%
55 - 64	100	19.12%
65 - 74	106	20.27%
75 and over	29	5.54%
Prefer not to say	16	3.06%
Grand Total	**523**	**100.00%**

The ages of respondents are also expressed in Figure 1: Age breakdown of respondents.

Figure 1: Age breakdown of respondents



Gender was simply expressed as male, female or prefer not to say with the results shown in Table 3: Gender of respondents.

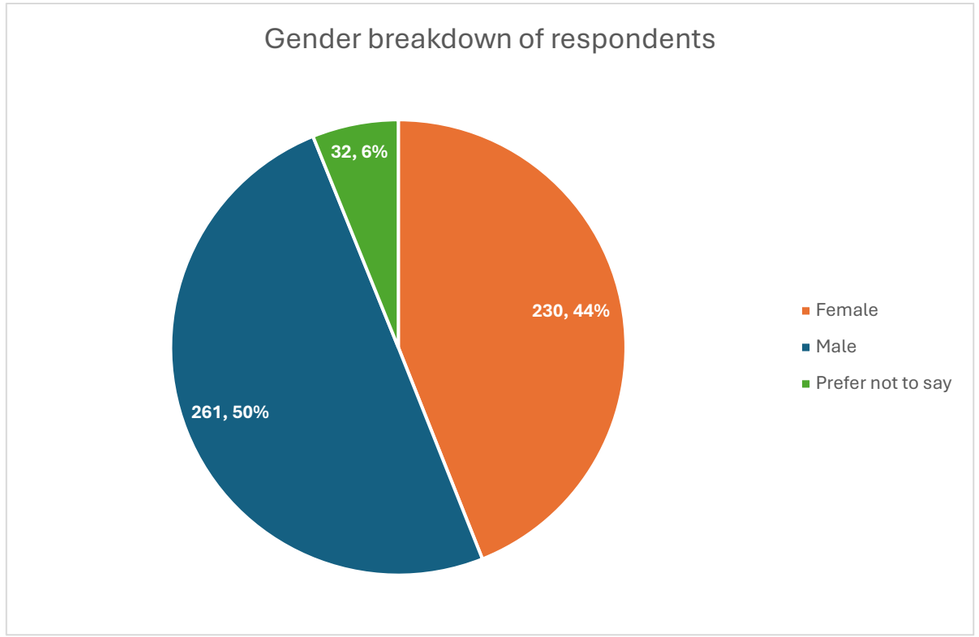
Inverness Interchange: Bus Station and Car Park Feasibility Study
Co-iomlaid Inbhir Nis: Sgrùdadh So-dhèantachd Stèisean Bhusaichean is Pàirc Chàraichean

Table 3: Gender of respondents

Gender	Number	%
Female	230	43.98%
Male	261	49.90%
Prefer not to say	32	6.12%
Grand Total	**523**	**100.00%**

The gender of respondents is also expressed in Figure 2: Gender breakdown of respondents.

Figure 2: Gender breakdown of respondents



Frequency of use of facilities

Respondents were also asked to indicate how frequently they used the facilities that are the focus of the Inverness Interchange Feasibility Study and how frequently they cycle in Inverness City Centre.

This information is summarised in Table 4: Frequency of use of Feasibility Study facilities.

Table 4: Frequency of use of Feasibility Study facilities

Frequency of use	Inverness Bus Station		Inverness Railway Station		Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park		Cycle in City Centre	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Frequently[1]	128	26.34%	127	26.24%	121	25.58%	115	24.84%
Occasionally[2]	283	58.23%	282	58.26%	277	58.56%	274	59.18%
Never	75	15.43%	75	15.50%	75	15.86%	74	15.98%
Grand Total	**486**	**100%**	**484**	**100%**	**473**	**100%**	**463**	**100%**

Sentiment towards existing situation

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with the following statements about the existing situation regarding the Feasibility Study area and its facilities:

Inverness Bus Station:

- Inverness Bus Station currently meets my needs and expectations.
- Inverness Bus Station is well connected with Inverness Railway Station.
- Inverness Bus Station currently provides an attractive arrival into Inverness City Centre.

Rose Street Multi Storey-Car Park:

- Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park currently meets my needs and expectations.
- Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park is well connected with Inverness Railway Station and Bus Station.
- Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park currently provides an attractive arrival into Inverness City Centre.

Inverness Bus Station results.

The sentiments towards Inverness Bus Station, its performance, connectivity and appearance are summarised in the following figures:

- Figure 3: Inverness Bus Station currently meets my needs and expectations.
- Figure 4: Inverness Bus Station is well connected with Inverness Railway Station.
- Figure 5: Inverness Bus Station currently provides an attractive arrival into Inverness City Centre.

[1] At least once a week.
[2] At least once a year.

Inverness Interchange: Bus Station and Car Park Feasibility Study
Co-iomlaid Inbhir Nis: Sgrùdadh So-dhèantachd Stèisean Bhusaichean is Pàirc Chàraichean

Figure 3: Inverness Bus Station currently meets my needs and expectations

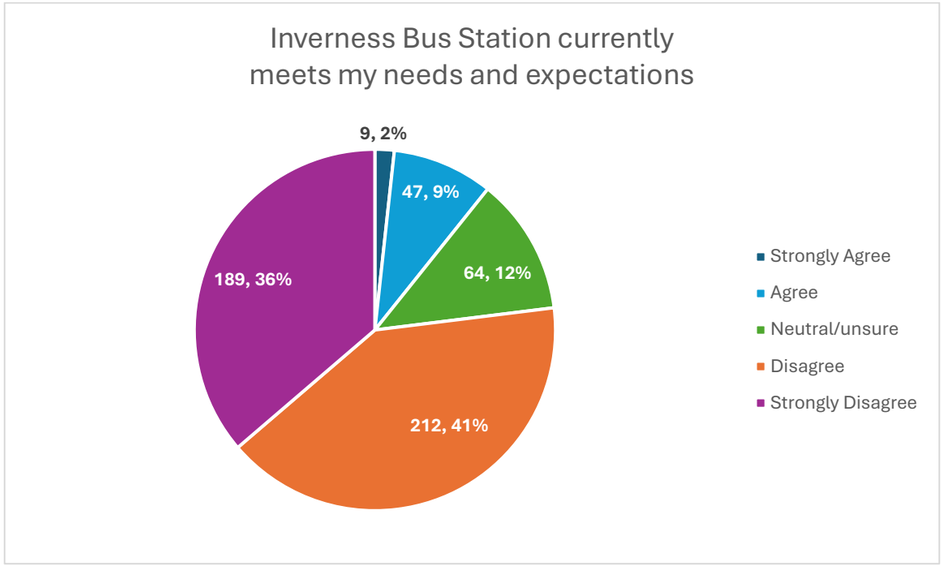


Figure 4: Inverness Bus Station is well connected with Inverness Railway Station

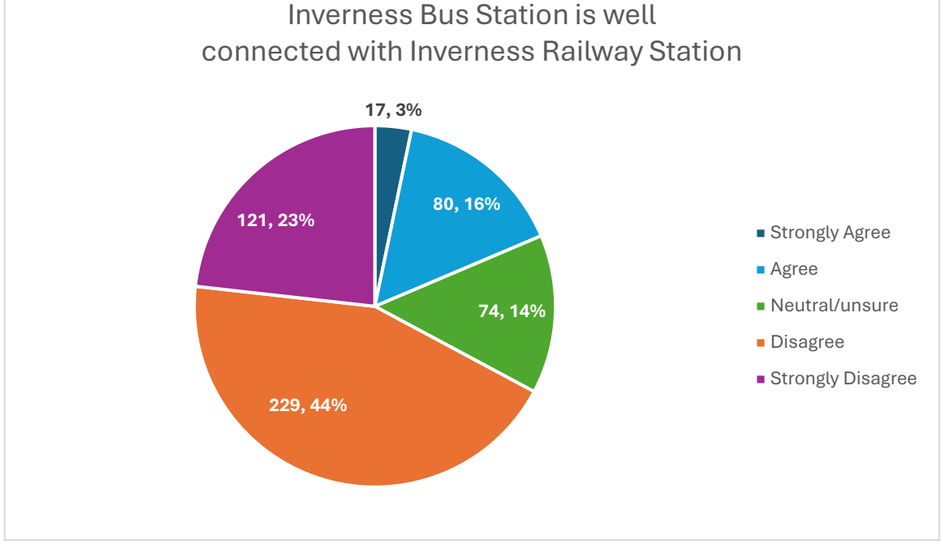
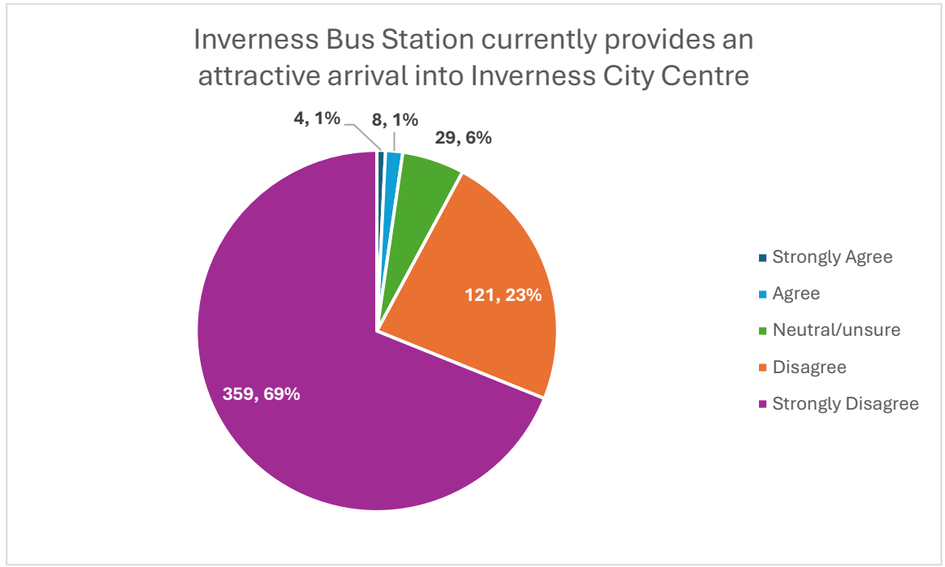


Figure 5: Inverness Bus Station currently provides an attractive arrival into Inverness City Centre



From these charts is can be seen that feedback on Inverness Bus Station is predominantly negative: a clear majority of the respondents either disagree or strongly disagree with each statement indicating widespread dissatisfaction with the performance, connectivity and appearance.

In brief:

- Most users feel the bus station does **not** meet their needs or expectations.
- While opinions are slightly less negative than for overall satisfaction, most respondents still feel the bus station is **not well connected** to the railway station.
- Respondents are highly critical of the bus station as an arrival point to the city, with attractiveness seen as a significant weakness.

The strongest concern relates to appearance and first impressions, followed closely by overall adequacy and interchange connectivity. Across all measures, only a very small minority express positive views, suggesting a clear mandate for improvement or redevelopment.

Inverness Interchange: Bus Station and Car Park Feasibility Study
Co-iomlaid Inbhir Nis: Sgrùdadh So-dhèantachd Stèisean Bhusaichean is Pàirc Chàraichean

Rose Street Multi Storey Car Park results

The sentiments towards the Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park, its performance, connectivity and appearance are summarised in the following figures:

- Figure 6: Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park currently meets my needs and expectations.
- Figure 7: Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park is well connected with Inverness Railway Station and Bus Station.
- Figure 8: Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park currently provides an attractive arrival into Inverness City Centre.

Figure 6: Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park currently meets my needs and expectations

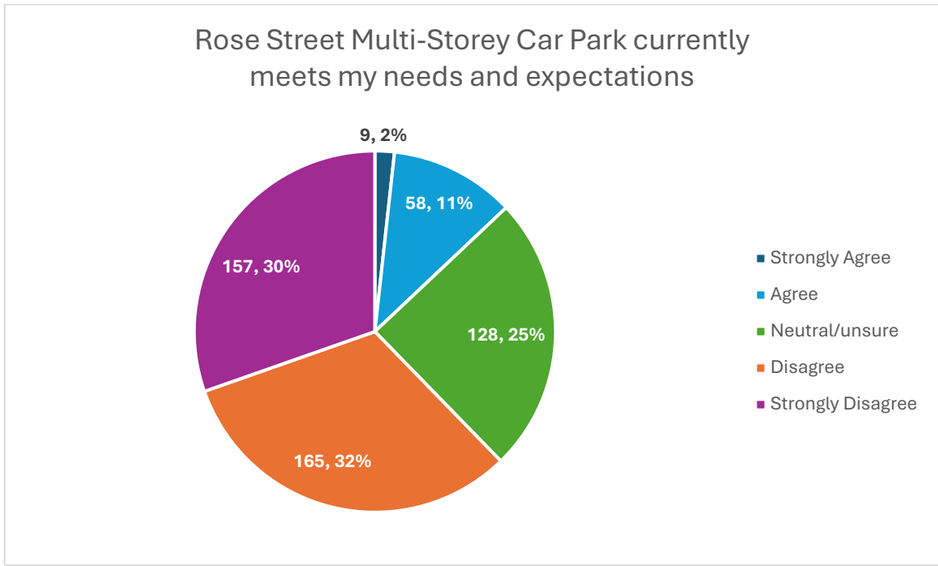


Figure 7: Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park is well connected with Inverness Railway Station and Bus Station

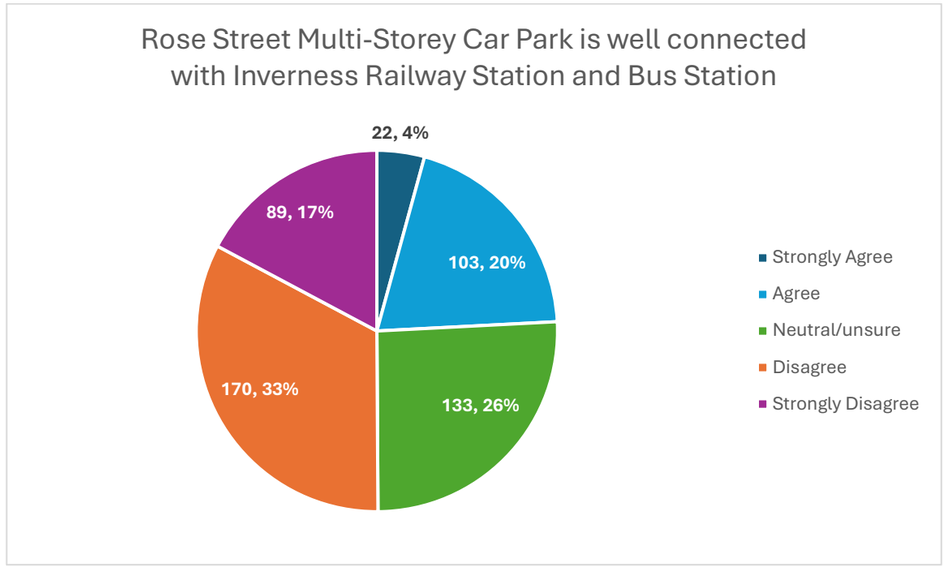
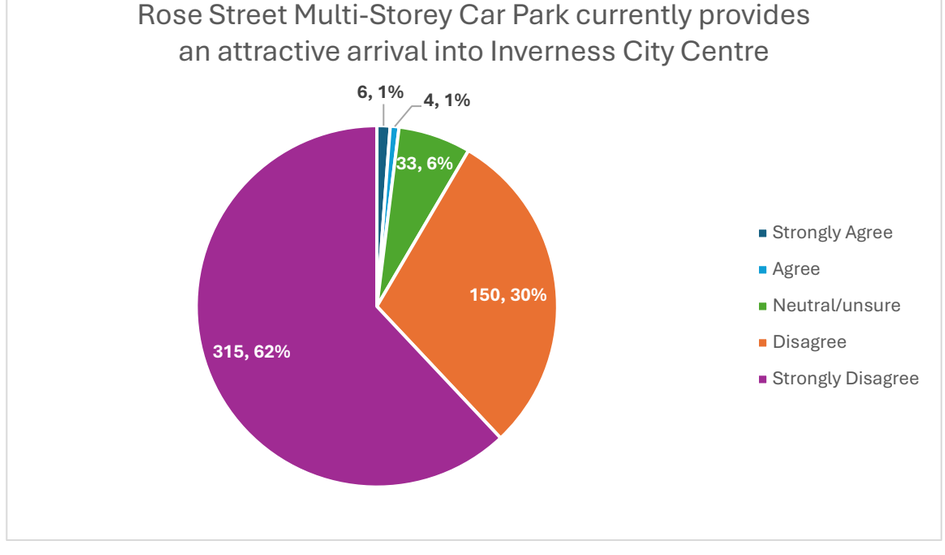


Figure 8: Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park currently provides an attractive arrival into Inverness City Centre



From these charts is can be seen that views on the Rose Street Car Park are generally negative however, opinions are more mixed on connectivity than on overall performance or attractiveness. As with the bus station, the appearance and arrival experience attract the strongest criticism.

Inverness Interchange: Bus Station and Car Park Feasibility Study
Co-iomlaid Inbhir Nis: Sgrùdadh So-dhèantachd Stèisean Bhusaichean is Pàirc Chàraichean

In brief:

- Opinions are less negative than for the bus station but a clear majority feel the car park does not adequately meet their needs.
- Connectivity is perceived more favourably than other aspects, but half of respondents still do not consider the car park well connected to public transport hubs.
- The car park is overwhelmingly seen as an unattractive arrival point into the city centre.

Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park performs slightly better than Inverness Bus Station in terms of connectivity but still falls short overall. The most critical issue is, again, poor first impressions and urban quality, suggesting that environmental, design, and placemaking improvements may be as important as functional upgrades.

Additional comments regarding current situation

In addition to recording their views on the prepared statements, respondents were also asked for any additional comments on the existing state of the Feasibility Study area.

These comments strongly reinforce the results shown in the charts. The dominant narrative is that the Bus Station, Rose Street Car Park and surrounding area are outdated, unattractive, poorly connected and increasingly unfit for a modern regional capital. A minority feel the facilities are “functional enough” or worry about cost and disruption, but there is broad agreement that the status quo is unacceptable, especially as the city’s primary gateway. Some responses indicate that parts of the existing provision are seen as **adequate in principle**, but this is tempered by poor condition, usability issues and an overall unsatisfactory experience.

Key common themes and concerns

- <u>First impressions and the city’s image:</u>
  - The area is repeatedly described as an “eyesore”, “embarrassing”, “grim”, “1970s concrete” and “a dreadful gateway to the Highlands”.
  - There is widespread concern that this is the first thing many visitors see, particularly tourists, NC500 travellers and people arriving by bus or train.
  - The contrast with the library building is repeatedly highlighted: the library is seen as a civic jewel that is hidden, diminished or surrounded by ugliness.
  - Many respondents compare Inverness unfavourably with Aberdeen, Glasgow, Perth and European cities, where transport interchanges are covered, integrated, safer and more welcoming.
  - The environment is frequently characterised as a congested, concrete-dominated and polluted setting, particularly around the bus station.

- Facilities are not fit for purpose:
    - Bus Station -
        - Too small for current and future demand.
        - Overcrowded stances and dangerous layouts.
        - Lack of full weather protection (rain, wind, cold).
        - Poor indoor waiting space and limited seating.
        - Toilets closed or unavailable outside business hours.
        - Layout that forces pedestrians to cross bus movements.
        - Inadequate information, signage and displays.
        - Feels unsafe, especially at night and for women, young people and older users.
        - Congestion and poor layout make it unpleasant and difficult to navigate, particularly for those unfamiliar with the city.
    - Rose Street Car Park -
        - Bays too small for modern vehicles (SUVs, vans, 4x4s).
        - Awkward pillars making spaces unusable.
        - Potholes, poor surfaces, leaks, concrete spalling.
        - Lifts frequently out of order.
        - Safety and structural concerns.
        - EV charging provision insufficient.
        - Many spaces closed, reducing capacity.
        - Overpriced for short stays, drop-off and long stays.
        - Poor experience for parents, disabled users and elderly drivers.
        - Reduced effective capacity due to frequent closure of bays, meaning users often need to park on upper levels.
- Poor connectivity despite proximity:
    - No clear, sheltered, direct pedestrian route between bus and train stations.
    - Walking routes pass through car parks, traffic, or poorly surfaced spaces.
    - Poor or confusing signage for visitors.
    - Unsafe crossings, high kerbs and poor segregation of pedestrians and vehicles.
    - Difficult or impossible for wheelchair users, people with buggies, suitcases or mobility impairments.
    - Lack of dedicated, marshalled drop-off and pick-up areas.
    - Taxis blocking roads due to lack of proper waiting areas.
    - While facilities are physically close, they are not effectively integrated, with:

Inverness Interchange: Bus Station and Car Park Feasibility Study
Co-iomlaid Inbhir Nis: Sgrùdadh So-dhèantachd Stèisean Bhusaichean is Pàirc Chàraichean

        - Walking routes described as unpleasant, exposed and difficult, particularly in winter.
        - A lack of covered, well-lit links, especially between the railway station and car park.
        - Poor coordination between bus and train timetables, limiting ease of interchange.
    - Difficulties with pick-up and drop-off are frequently highlighted as a major inconvenience.
- Accessibility and inclusion:
    - Difficulties for elderly people, disabled users, parents with children, visually impaired users and those with chronic illnesses.
    - High kerbs, uneven surfaces, long walking distances, exposure to weather.
    - Lack of step-free routes between modes.
    - Insufficient accessible parking, drop-off, and longer-stay options.
    - Anxiety and safety concerns, particularly after dark.
    - Limited consideration of Highland residents travelling long distances with specific accessibility needs.
    - The area is widely regarded as not pedestrian-friendly, particularly for infrequent users or visitors unfamiliar with the layout.
- Safety, comfort, and perception of security:
    - Many respondents describe feeling unsafe, particularly at night or early morning.
    - Poor lighting, enclosed concrete spaces, antisocial behaviour, and lack of staff presence are recurring issues.
    - Several mention verbal harassment, vandalism, unruly behaviour and fear when waiting alone.
    - Pedestrian–vehicle conflict is repeatedly described as dangerous.
    - Comfort is also a key concern with exposure to weather; cold, windy conditions and enclosed, poorly lit routes contributing to an overall unpleasant user experience.
- Lack of green space and civic quality:
    - Creating a civic square or park, particularly in front of the library.
    - More trees, planting and greenery.
    - Spaces to sit, linger, meet and shelter.
    - Design that reflects Highland identity, culture, language (including Gaelic) and pride.
    - Moving away from sterile, vehicle-dominated infrastructure.

  - Many explicitly say they want places to spend time, not just pass through and that the area feels “soulless” and “hostile”
- Desire for a truly integrated transport hub:
  - A combined bus and rail interchange.
  - Fully covered, weather-protected routes.
  - Integrated ticketing, timetables and information.
  - Dedicated coach and tour operator facilities.
  - Better provision for taxis, park and ride, bicycles and active travel.
  - Adequate capacity for future bus growth.
  - Reduction of congestion on Academy Street.
  - Emphasis on integration extends beyond physical layout to include timetable coordination, improved interchange experience in poor weather, and clear and intuitive wayfinding throughout the area.
- Economic and strategic concerns:
  - Cost concerns and fairness across the Highlands.
  - Carbon footprint of demolition and new build.
  - Fear of loss of parking capacity during construction.
  - Risk of repeating poor planning decisions.
  - Desire to tie transport improvements to retail, cafés, services and activity, not just infrastructure.
  - Calls for learning from successful examples like Union Square (Aberdeen), Broxden (Perth), and European hubs.
  - Some responses indicate that “neutral” survey responses may reflect basic adequacy rather than positive satisfaction, which is important for interpreting overall results.

Minority view

A smaller group argue the facilities are “functional enough” and money should instead go to public transport services, roads, or rural areas. However, even many of these acknowledge the area is unattractive, outdated or in poor condition.

Areas of broad consensus

- The area is a poor and embarrassing gateway to Inverness.
- The Bus Station and Rose Street Car Park are dated and unattractive.
- Connectivity between modes is confusing, unsafe and inaccessible.
- The environment prioritises vehicles over people.
- The library deserves a much better setting.
- Future investment should focus on integration, accessibility, safety and civic quality.

Inverness Interchange: Bus Station and Car Park Feasibility Study
Co-iomlaid Inbhir Nis: Sgrùdadh So-dhèantachd Stèisean Bhusaichean is Pàirc Chàraichean

Conclusion

Taken together, these comments show a powerful mandate for change. While views differ on how far redevelopment should go, the dominant concern is not only aesthetics, but safety, dignity, accessibility and civic pride. Respondents are asking for Inverness to function like a regional capital and transport hub for the Highlands, offering:

- a welcoming first impression;
- dignified public spaces;
- safe and accessible movement for all; and
- infrastructure that reflects the city’s importance, not its past.

Sentiment towards indicative proposals

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with the following statements about the indicative proposals:

- A new Bus and Coach Station is required and should be located within the ‘Station Quarter’ Study Area.
- A new Multi-Storey Car Park replacing the existing structure should be provided within the ‘Station Quarter’ Study Area.
- An Active Travel Hub providing access to e-bikes/cycle storage and encouraging more walking/wheeling/cycling should be provided within the ‘Station Quarter’ Study Area.
- A new traffic-free civic square at Farraline Park should be created and would improve the City Centre.
- The Station Quarter provides an opportunity for a mixed-use redevelopment (e.g. housing/leisure/retail/commercial) that would improve the City Centre.

Results

The sentiments towards the indicative proposals are summarised in the following figures:

- Figure 9: A new Bus and Coach Station is required and should be located within the ‘Station Quarter’ Study Area.
- Figure 10: A new Multi-Storey Car Park replacing the existing structure should be provided within the ‘Station Quarter’ Study Area.
- Figure 11: An Active Travel Hub should be provided within the ‘Station Quarter’ Study Area.

- Figure 12: A new traffic-free civic square at Farraline Park should be created and would improve the City Centre.
- Figure 13: The Station Quarter provides an opportunity for a mixed-use that would improve the City Centre.

Figure 9: A new Bus and Coach Station is required and should be located within the 'Station Quarter' Study Area

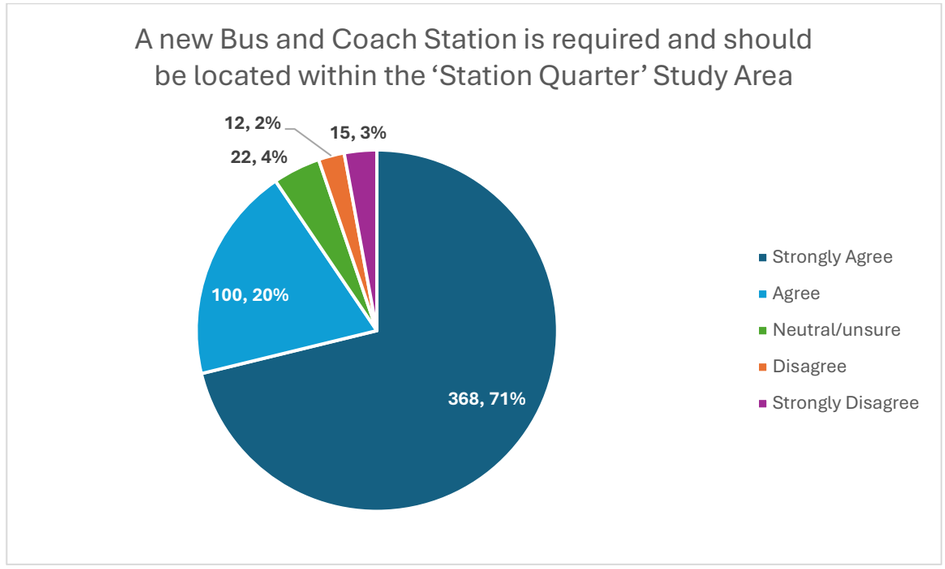
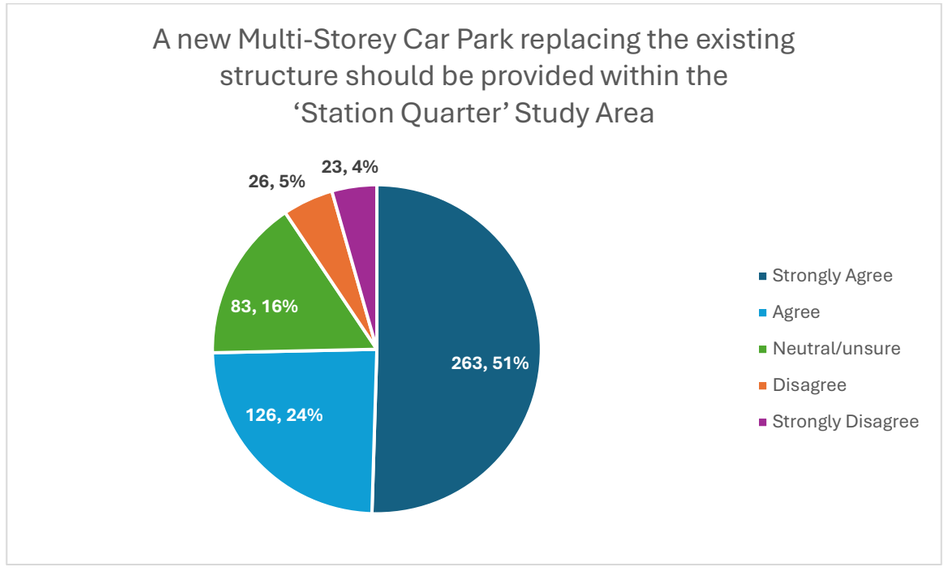


Figure 10: A new Multi-Storey Car Park replacing the existing structure should be provided within the 'Station Quarter' Study Area



Inverness Interchange: Bus Station and Car Park Feasibility Study
Co-iomlaid Inbhir Nis: Sgrùdadh So-dhèantachd Stèisean Bhusaichean is Pàirc Chàraichean

Figure 11: An Active Travel Hub should be provided within the 'Station Quarter' Study Area

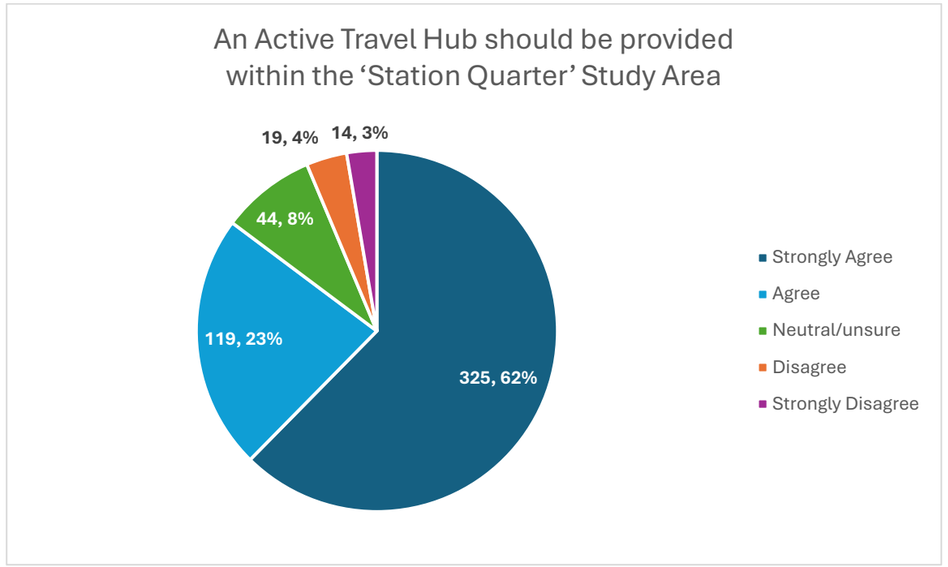


Figure 12: A new traffic-free civic square at Farraline Park should be created and would improve the City Centre

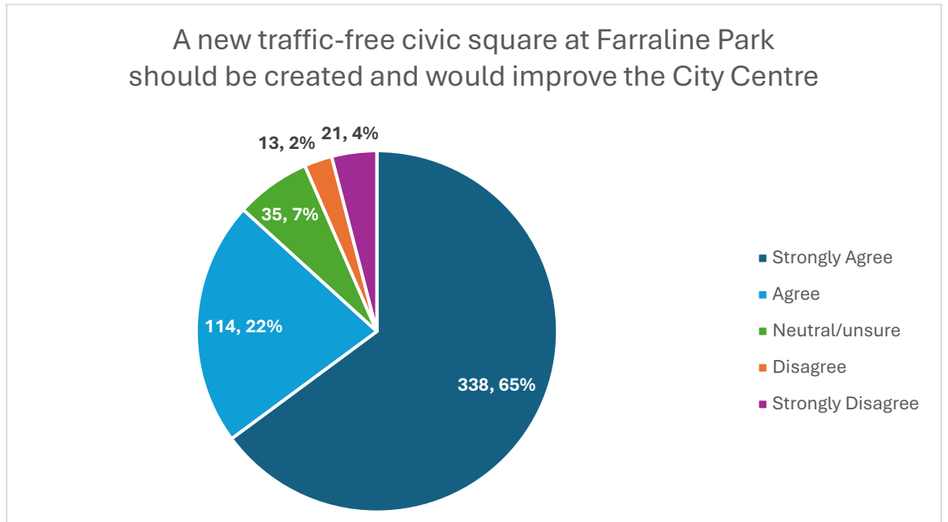
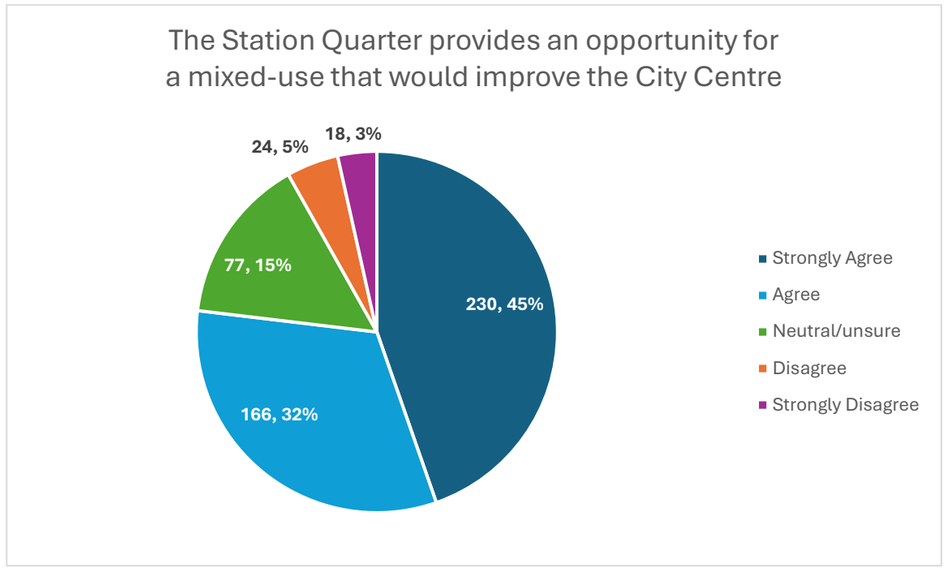


Figure 13: The Station Quarter provides an opportunity for a mixed-use that would improve the City Centre



From these charts it can be seen that there is strong and consistent public support for redevelopment within the Station Quarter. Across all five proposals, a clear majority of respondents agree or strongly agree, with particularly strong backing for a new bus and coach station, an active travel hub, and a new civic square. Opposition is limited in all cases.

In brief:

- There is overwhelming agreement that a new bus and coach station is needed and that the Station Quarter is the right location.
- Most respondents support replacing the existing car park with a new, modern facility, though there is slightly more neutrality than on the bus station question.
- There is broad agreement that provision for cycling, e-bikes and active travel should form a core part of the Station Quarter redevelopment.
- Respondents strongly support the creation of a traffic-free civic square, viewing it as a major opportunity to improve the City Centre.
- Most respondents recognise the Station Quarter as a key opportunity for mixed-use development, though this proposal attracts slightly more neutral responses than the transport-focused options.

Across all five proposals there is a strong and consistent mandate for change. Respondents clearly support:

- A new, modern bus and coach station.

Inverness Interchange: Bus Station and Car Park Feasibility Study
Co-iomlaid Inbhir Nis: Sgrùdadh So-dhèantachd Stèisean Bhusaichean is Pàirc Chàraichean

- Replacement of the existing multi-storey car park.
- Investment in active and sustainable travel.
- Creation of a high-quality civic square.
- A broader mixed-use redevelopment of the Station Quarter.

Public confidence is highest for transport integration, active travel and public space which reinforces the view that redevelopment should prioritise people, connectivity and City Centre quality.

Additional comments regarding indicative proposals

In addition to recording their views on the prepared statements, respondents were also asked for any additional comments on the indicative proposals.

These additional comments show strong overall support for the direction of travel set out in the indicative proposals, particularly the creation of a joined-up transport hub, a civic green space at Farraline Park and improved conditions for pedestrians and active travel. However, support is conditional: respondents repeatedly stress that success depends on good design, inclusive access, adequate car provision and long-term maintenance, rather than simply moving buildings around or delivering a “vanity project”.

Common themes and concerns

- <u>Strong support for a joined-up transport hub:</u>
  - Bus, rail, coach, taxi, cycling and walking should be co-located and seamlessly connected.
  - Interchange should be obvious, safe, sheltered and legible for visitors and locals.
  - Integration is particularly important for people arriving from across the Highlands, not just Inverness.
  - Many respondents emphasise that the primary purpose of the Station Quarter must remain transport, with commercial and leisure uses playing a supporting role.
  - Integration and ease of transfer matter more than flair.
  - There is also an expectation that the hub functions as a single, cohesive system, rather than separate or segmented elements, with clear provision for waiting, resting and basic traveller needs such as seating and refreshments.
- <u>The civic square and green space are seen as transformational:</u>
  - Restore the library as a focal civic building.
  - Create space for events, markets, performances, and informal use.

  - Provide a place to wait, rest, and spend time, especially between travel legs.
  - Improve wellbeing and the overall atmosphere of the city centre.
  - Many respondents see this as Inverness's opportunity to finally gain a true central green space, comparable to other Scottish and European cities.
  - The square must be active, well-maintained and overlooked or there are concerns it could feel unsafe or underused.
  - The space should be genuinely green, incorporating trees, planting and seating, and avoiding a hard-surfaced, "concrete plaza" outcome.
- <u>Active travel is strongly supported – but must be practical and secure:</u>
  - There is widespread backing for an Active Travel Hub, but comments show a desire for clarity and ambition.
  - Secure, covered cycle storage very close to bus and rail platforms.
  - Provision for non-standard cycles (cargo bikes, trikes, adapted cycles).
  - Facilities such as hire, repair and e-bike charging.
  - Improvements to the wider cycling and walking network, not just within the site.
  - Good lighting, surveillance and design to prevent theft and vandalism.
  - A common concern is active travel will only be widely used if it feels safe, convenient and continuous beyond the quarter itself.
  - There are also concerns about potential conflict between cyclists/e-bikes and pedestrians, reinforcing the need for careful design that prioritises pedestrian comfort and safety.
- <u>Car access remains essential, especially for a regional hub:</u>
  - Inverness serves a large, rural catchment where car use is unavoidable.
  - Adequate drop-off/pick-up space for private cars is essential (not taxis only).
  - Short-stay or free/low-cost drop-off is vital for elderly users, families and people with mobility issues.
  - Long-stay parking or park-and-ride options are needed to support rail and coach use.
  - Existing parking capacity should not be lost before replacements are in place.
  - Views differ on whether a multi-storey car park must be in the Station Quarter itself, but there is strong agreement that accessibility must not be reduced.
- <u>Mixed-use development: support, but with caution:</u>
  - Respondents are broadly positive about leisure, community, culture and small-scale retail uses, including cafés and food kiosks,community and

cultural facilities (often referencing a replacement for the Spectrum Centre) and spaces that keep the area active outside peak travel times.
  - However, housing is the most contested element: many oppose housing altogether in this location while others support housing only if it is social/affordable and not short-term lets.
  - Concerns include noise, amenity conflicts and blocking light or views to the civic space.
  - Several note Inverness already has many empty retail units and hotels.
  - Amenities and community uses are more important here than residential development.
  - There is also a preference for uses that support everyday activity and the travel experience (rest, waiting, community use) rather than additional retail or commercial development.
- <u>Design quality, phasing and long-term thinking matter:</u>
  - High-quality architecture that complements the listed library.
  - Avoiding "cheap" or short-term solutions.
  - Weather protection as a design driver (wind, rain, cold).
  - Clear, safe pedestrian routes between all elements.
  - Phasing development so existing facilities (especially parking) are not lost prematurely.
  - Considering long-term change: population growth, more buses, rail expansion, EVs, cycling.
  - Many stress this should be a once-in-a-generation piece of city-building, not a reshuffle of outdated assets.
  - There is also a clear expectation that proposals should move forward decisively and deliver tangible improvements.
- <u>Cost, fairness and trust concerns:</u>
  - Public spending priorities (roads, potholes, rural areas).
  - Embedded carbon in demolition.
  - Fear of over-ambitious or poorly justified projects.
  - Distrust of delivery, maintenance and governance.
  - Even among supporters, there is a call for clear justification, realistic costs, and demonstrable benefits for residents as well as visitors.

Additional observations

There is notable alignment between these comments and earlier feedback: people want accessibility, warmth, greenery, clarity and dignity, not just new buildings.

The library is unanimously viewed as a civic anchor whose setting should drive the design of the whole quarter.

Respondents repeatedly stress that doing nothing is not acceptable, but neither is getting it wrong.

Conclusion

The additional comments reinforce a strong mandate in principle for the five indicative proposals. Public support is highest where proposals:

- improve integration between transport modes;
- create a genuine civic green space;
- prioritise people over vehicles while still recognising rural car dependency; and
- focus on community, accessibility and everyday use.

The prevailing message is:

“Get the transport right first, make the place human and green, don’t exclude people who rely on cars, and build something Inverness can be proud of for decades.”

Indicative layout

As part of the engagement, respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with the following statements regarding the positioning of facilities within the indicative layouts in the Feasibility Study:

- Do you agree that any new Bus and Coach Station should be located closer to the Railway Station as shown in the indicative options?
- Do you agree that any new Multi-Storey Car Park should be located in the North of the Study Area behind the listed Library building as shown in the indicative options?

Results

The sentiments towards the location of the bus and coach station and the car park are summarised in the following figures:

- Figure 14: Do you agree that any new Bus and Coach Station should be located closer to the Railway Station?
- Figure 15: Do you agree that any new Multi-Storey Car Park should be located in the north of the Study Area behind the listed Library building?

Inverness Interchange: Bus Station and Car Park Feasibility Study
Co-iomlaid Inbhir Nis: Sgrùdadh So-dhèantachd Stèisean Bhusaichean is Pàirc Chàraichean

Figure 14: Do you agree that any new Bus and Coach Station should be located closer to the Railway Station?

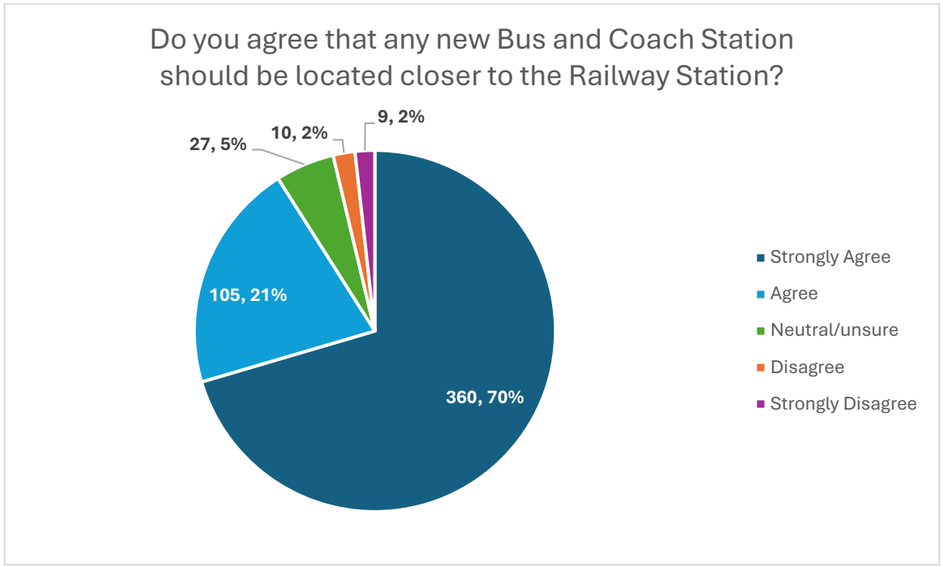
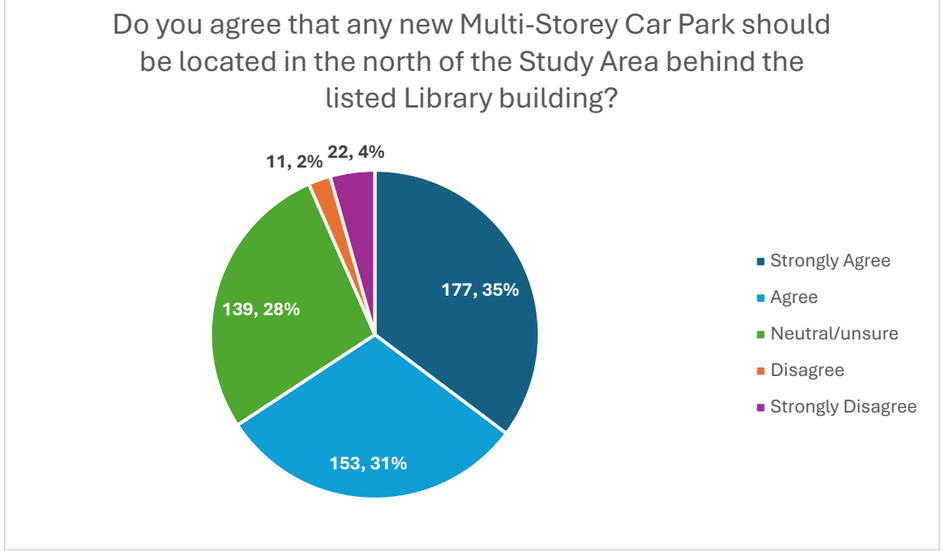


Figure 15: Do you agree that any new Multi-Storey Car Park should be located in the north of the Study Area behind the listed Library building?



From these charts it can be seen that there is very strong support for closer integration of transport facilities, particularly for locating a new bus and coach station nearer to the railway station. Views on the location of a replacement multi-storey car park are more mixed, with a substantial proportion neutral or uncertain.

In brief:

- There is an exceptionally strong consensus that any new bus and coach station should be located closer to the railway station.
- A majority support the proposed car park location, levels of neutrality are relatively high, suggesting ongoing uncertainty.

The results show a clear public mandate for closer bus-rail integration, with near-unanimous support for relocating the bus and coach station nearer the railway station clearly reinforcing the desire for a fully integrated transport interchange. In contrast, while there is general support for replacing the multi-storey car park, opinions are more cautious about its precise location, indicating this aspect may require further explanation, design development or reassurance as proposals progress.

Additional comments disagreeing with the position of elements

If respondents disagreed with the position of the bus station or car park in the indicative designs they were asked for reasons that led to their negative reaction.

Those who disagreed with the proposed bus station location formed a small minority, but their comments reveal clear and recurring objections. These are less about opposition to public transport itself and more about location preference, public spending, wider strategic priorities and perceived adequacy of the current arrangement.

Common themes and reasons for disagreement to bus station location

- Belief that relocation is unnecessary:
  - The bus station and railway station are already close enough.
  - Walking distance is seen as modest (often cited as a few hundred yards).
  - Improved signage or wayfinding, rather than relocation, would be sufficient.
  - The problem is not distance but clarity: better signage would solve it.
- Preference for alternative locations:
  - North of the city, closer to the A9.
  - Near existing rail maintenance land or Millburn Road.
  - Outside the city centre entirely, as part of a park-and-ride or edge-of-city interchange.
  - Near large sites such as UHI or major road corridors.
  - Long-distance coaches and car-based access should not be concentrated in the city centre.
- Strong opposition to further spending in Inverness:

  - Respondents argue funding should be directed to rural areas, roads, hospitals or other infrastructure.
  - Inverness-focused investment is seen by some as excessive or unfair.
  - Some believe Highlands-wide benefits would be limited.
  - Stop spending money on Inverness and address more urgent needs elsewhere.
- Concern about public expenditure and value for money:
  - Opposition to what is seen as unnecessary or duplicative spending.
  - Calls to “fix what already exists” rather than relocate or rebuild.
  - Belief that the current bus station is functional and adequate.
  - Cost overruns.
  - Long construction disruption.
  - Loss of existing facilities during rebuilding.
- Preference for minimal change or status quo:
  - Leave the city centre and existing infrastructure as it is.
  - Avoid disruption from major redevelopment.
  - Focus on basic maintenance rather than transformation.
  - The bus station works.
  - The car park should be repaired, not replaced.
  - Change is unnecessary or even harmful.
- Distrust of governance and decision-making:
  - Allegations of corruption or inappropriate decision-making.
  - Belief that redevelopment benefits private interests rather than residents.
  - Opposition framed around lack of confidence rather than location specifics.
  - While not widespread, these views are strongly held by those expressing them.

Conclusion to bus station location

Those who disagreed with the proposed bus station location tend to fall into four main groups:

1. Those who feel no relocation is required.
2. Those who prefer an alternative site, often outside the city centre.
3. Those opposed on grounds of cost, fairness and spending priorities.
4. Those resistant to change or distrustful of the process.

Importantly, opposition is not primarily about poor integration or accessibility, which dominate support for relocation, but about whether relocation is justified at all, and

where major transport infrastructure should sit in a regional capital with a large rural catchment.

Common themes and reasons for disagreement to car park location

- Belief that a city-centre multi-storey is unnecessary:
  - Existing parking is under-used or sufficient.
  - Demand for city-centre parking is declining nationally.
  - Retaining, refurbishing or modestly expanding the existing car park would be preferable.
  - Some respondents argue that no replacement is required at all, particularly if car use is reduced over time.
- Preference for park-and-ride or edge-of-city solutions:
  - Relocating parking outside the city centre.
  - Developing park-and-ride facilities at key junctions (A9/A96).
  - Using buses or shuttles to reduce congestion and pollution.
  - This group generally supports:
    - Disabled parking and set-down in the centre.
    - Coach and service vehicle access.
    - Removing routine private car parking from civic spaces.
- Concern about public spending and fairness:
  - Relocating or rebuilding a car park is a poor use of public funds.
  - Money should be prioritised for roads, public transport, health infrastructure or wider Highland communities.
  - Inverness is perceived as receiving disproportionate investment.
  - These views mirror similar objections raised to the bus station but are more pronounced for car-parking provision.
- Desire to retain or improve the current location:
  - The current location is acceptable.
  - The structure should be repaired, refurbished, expanded or rebuilt on site.
  - Moving it further away would reduce convenience for shoppers and visitors.
  - This group generally opposes relocation rather than replacement.
- Objection to car parks within a civic square:
  - A multi-storey car park should not sit adjacent to or within that space.
  - Car parking undermines the purpose of a pedestrian-focused civic area.
  - The car park should be visually and physically separated from public realm improvements.
- Alternative design solutions preferred:
  - Underground parking, common in European cities.

  - Integrating parking into a combined rail/bus station structure.
  - Locating parking behind or beneath other uses rather than as a dominant structure.
  - These respondents are concerned primarily with visual impact and future-proofing.
- Opposition to private car use in the city centre:
  - A smaller but vocal group argues that:
    - Cars should be actively removed from the city centre.
    - Multi-storey car parks reinforce car dominance.
    - Investment should focus on walking, cycling and public transport instead.
  - This position often aligns with calls to demolish the existing car park entirely.

Conclusion to car park location

Disagreement with the proposed car-park location stems from fundamental differences in how respondents view the future role of private vehicles in Inverness, rather than disagreement about improving the city centre itself. Objections cluster around four main positions:

1. No new city-centre car park is needed.
2. Parking should be moved to park-and-ride or city-edge locations.
3. Repair or rebuild the car park where it is.
4. Do not compromise civic space with car infrastructure.

Unlike the bus station, where opposition focuses on necessity and spending, car-park objections reflect wider cultural, environmental and strategic debates about car dependency, public realm and the direction of travel for Inverness as a regional capital.

Design preference

Finally, respondents were asked to express their preferred site layout from the options presented:

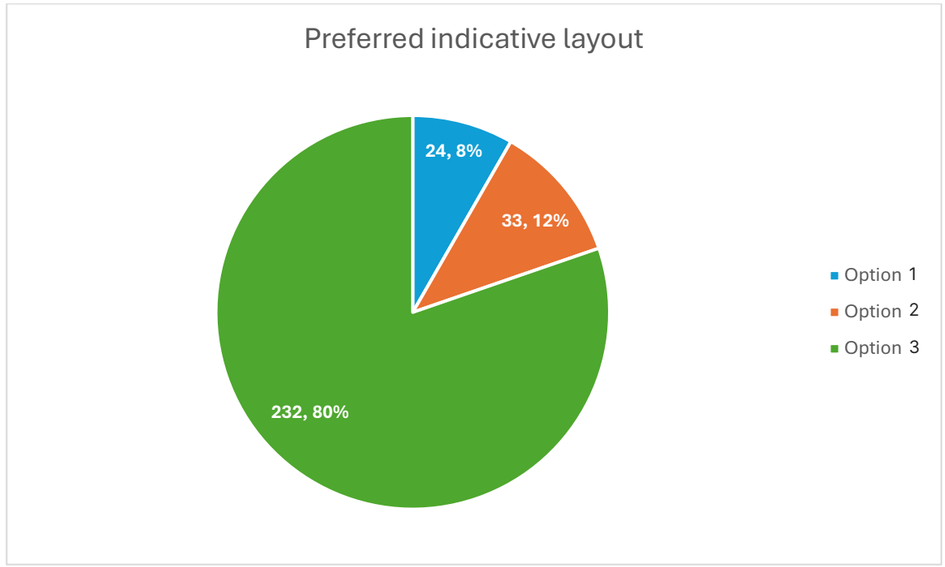
- Option **1**
- Option **2**
- Option **3**

This question was not codified and often resulted in long free text responses. Where the response was explicit or was readily discernible from the bulk of the text, the preference was recorded. Where the preference could be established with high confidence it was

likewise noted. Where the preference was not apparent or could not be determined with any degree of certainty it has been omitted from the results for the time being.

These responses are summarised in Figure 16: Preferred indicative layout.

Figure 16: Preferred indicative layout



This shows a clear preference for Option 3

Conclusion

The Inverness Interchange consultation provides a clear and compelling evidence base for change. Across quantitative survey results and extensive qualitative commentary, respondents consistently describe the existing Bus Station, Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park and surrounding area as outdated, unattractive, poorly connected and no longer fit for purpose as the principal transport gateway to the capital of the Highlands.

While views vary on the scale, location and configuration of future development, there is broad consensus that doing nothing is not an acceptable option. The strongest and most consistent concerns relate not only to the physical condition of the facilities, but to safety, accessibility, dignity, inclusivity and civic pride. In particular, respondents repeatedly highlight the poor first impressions created for residents, visitors and tourists and the mismatch between Inverness's regional importance and the quality of its transport interchange and public realm.

Inverness Interchange: Bus Station and Car Park Feasibility Study
Co-iomlaid Inbhir Nis: Sgrùdadh So-dhèantachd Stèisean Bhusaichean is Pàirc Chàraichean

The consultation demonstrates strong public support in principle for the redevelopment of the Station Quarter. A clear majority agree that a new bus and coach station is required, that the existing multi-storey car park should be replaced and that improved provision for active travel and public space should form a core part of any future scheme. There is especially strong support for closer integration between bus and rail facilities and for the creation of a traffic-free civic space that restores the setting of the listed library and improves the quality of the city centre environment.

However, **this support is explicitly conditional**. Respondents emphasise that success will depend on high-quality design, inclusive and step-free access, clear and sheltered connections between modes, adequate provision for car access reflecting Inverness's large rural catchment, and careful phasing that avoids loss of essential facilities during construction. There is also a strong expectation that redevelopment should be transport-led, people-focused and future-proofed, rather than driven by short-term or purely commercial considerations.

Where disagreement or caution exists, it relates primarily to perceptions of cost, fairness of public investment across the Highlands, the future role of private car use and confidence in long-term delivery and maintenance. These concerns underline the importance of continued engagement, transparent decision-making and clear justification as the project progresses.

Overall, the consultation reveals a powerful mandate for transformational but well-considered change. Respondents are not asking simply for new buildings, but for an integrated, accessible and welcoming transport hub and civic space that reflects Inverness's status as a regional capital and serves the diverse needs of Highland communities for decades to come. If delivered with care, ambition and inclusivity, the Station Quarter is widely seen as capable of becoming a gateway that Inverness can be proud of, rather than one it apologises for.



The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

INVERNESS INTERCHANGE FEASIBILITY STUDY
BUS STATION & MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK

HELLO!

**Get More Information,
Take the Survey,
Provide Feedback,
Until April 10th**

**Scan the QR code or visit:
https://consult.highland.gov.uk/kpse/**

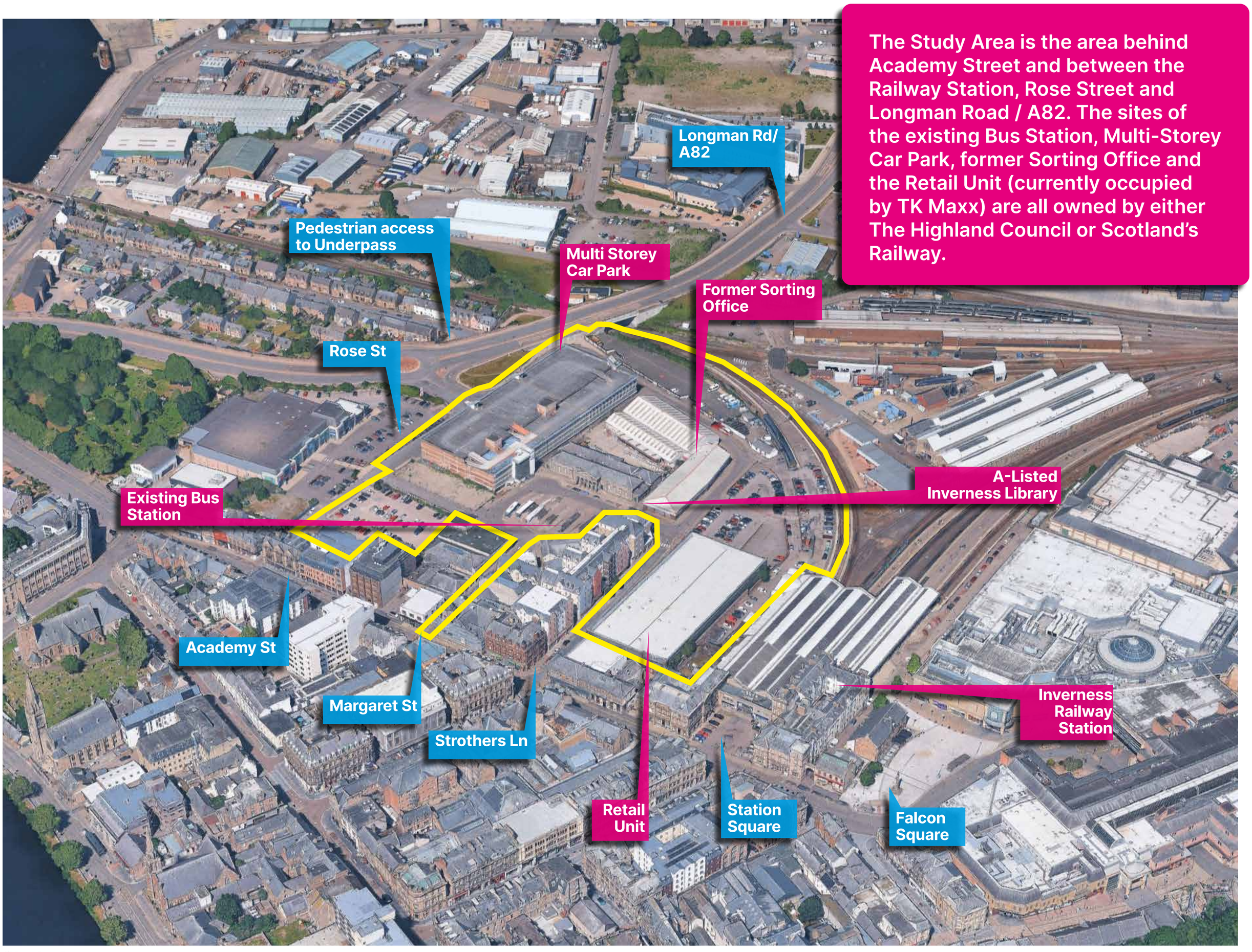
Project Background

HITRANS (the Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership), in partnership with The Highland Council and Network Rail / Scotland's Railway, has commissioned an Inverness Interchange Feasibility Study.

The Study explores the need and proposed options for a new Bus and Coach Station, Multi-Storey Car Park and Active Travel Hub adjacent to Inverness Railway Station. The Active Travel Hub would provide facilities to support more walking, wheeling and cycling to, in and around the City Centre.

The Feasibility Study has been progressed by **Austin-Smith:Lord** (masterplanners, architects, landscape architects), **SCP** (transport planners) and **Cameron & Ross** (engineers). The Study has been prepared in liaison with **HITRANS**, **The Highland Council** and **Scotland's Railway** as well as initial engagement with **ScotRail** and **Stagecoach** (who operate the existing Bus Station).

This work complements and is part of the Inverness Station Masterplan, being promoted by Scotland's Railway, and is in line with Recommendation 43 in **Transport Scotland**'s **Strategic Transport Projects Review 2** (STPR2).



The Study Area is the area behind Academy Street and between the Railway Station, Rose Street and Longman Road / A82. The sites of the existing Bus Station, Multi-Storey Car Park, former Sorting Office and the Retail Unit (currently occupied by TK Maxx) are all owned by either The Highland Council or Scotland's Railway.

Study Area

Austin·Smith:Lord SCP Cameron+Ross The Highland Council Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd SCOTLAND'S RAILWAY HITRANS

INVERNESS INTERCHANGE FEASIBILITY STUDY
BUS STATION & MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK

Purpose of this Public Engagement & Next Steps

Purpose of this Engagement

This initial phase of engagement activity seeks to;

- Raise awareness of the Inverness Interchange Feasibility Study and summarise its headline findings
- Invite feedback on initial proposals to;
  - **relocate / re-provide a new 14-16 stance Bus and Coach Station adjacent to the Railway Station with services connecting to A82 Longman Road and Academy Street,**
  - **relocate / re-provide a circa 850-space Multi-Storey Car Park behind the listed Library building with access from A82 Longman Road via Rose Street,**
  - **create a new civic space / square at Farraline Park**
  - **redevelop the wider 'Station Quarter' as a new mixed-use destination in the City Centre**
- Outline three potential options for a new Bus Station (showing different indicative layouts in locations nearer the Railway Station)

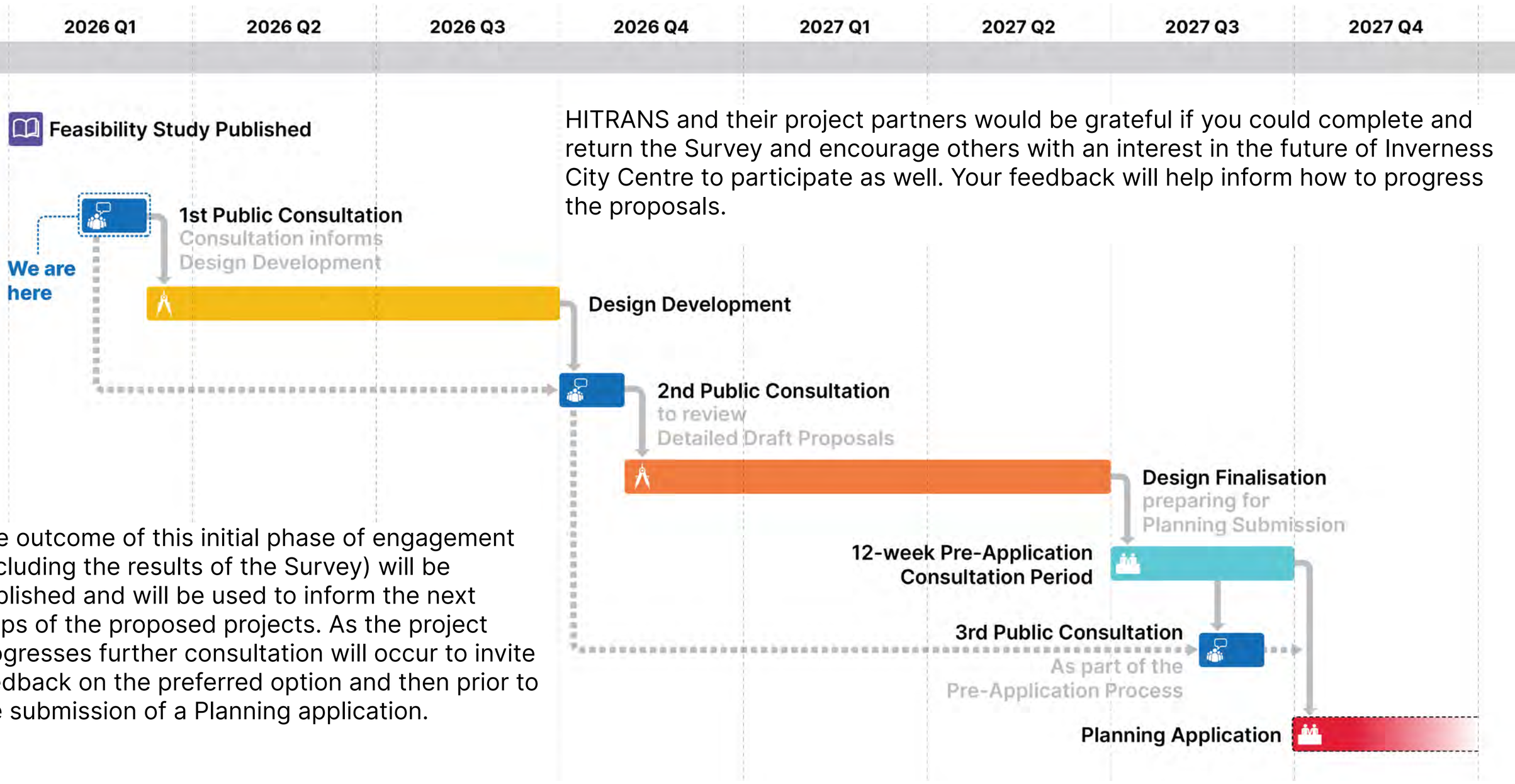
The findings of this initial phase of engagement activity will be collated and published and will inform how the project progresses.

Please complete the Survey

As part of an initial phase of public consultation you are invited to complete a Survey to provide comments on the proposals.

The Survey is available online https://consult.highland.gov.uk/kpse and in hard copy format (at Inverness Library) and runs until 10 April 2026.

Next Steps - Indicative Timeline



HITRANS and their project partners would be grateful if you could complete and return the Survey and encourage others with an interest in the future of Inverness City Centre to participate as well. Your feedback will help inform how to progress the proposals.

The outcome of this initial phase of engagement (including the results of the Survey) will be published and will be used to inform the next steps of the proposed projects. As the project progresses further consultation will occur to invite feedback on the preferred option and then prior to the submission of a Planning application.

Austin·Smith:Lord SCP Cameron+Ross The Highland Council Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd SCOTLAND'S RAILWAY HITRANS

INVERNESS INTERCHANGE FEASIBILITY STUDY
BUS STATION & MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK

The Feasibility Study : Recommendations

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this Feasibility Study is to support informed decision-making in the development of a strategic, integrated transport interchange in Inverness City Centre.

The Feasibility Study recommends that;

1. **the existing Bus Station and Multi-Storey Car Park need to be replaced.**
2. **there is sufficient space to accommodate a new Bus and Coach Station, MSCP and Active Travel Mobility Hub**
3. **that this new Interchange can be a key part of a wider mixed-use regeneration redevelopment of the 'Station Quarter' on land assembled by, and within the ownership of, The Highland Council and Scotland's Railway.**



Existing Bus Station on Farraline Park



Farraline Park, the Library & Multi-Storey Car Park

In addition the Feasibility Study recommends that;

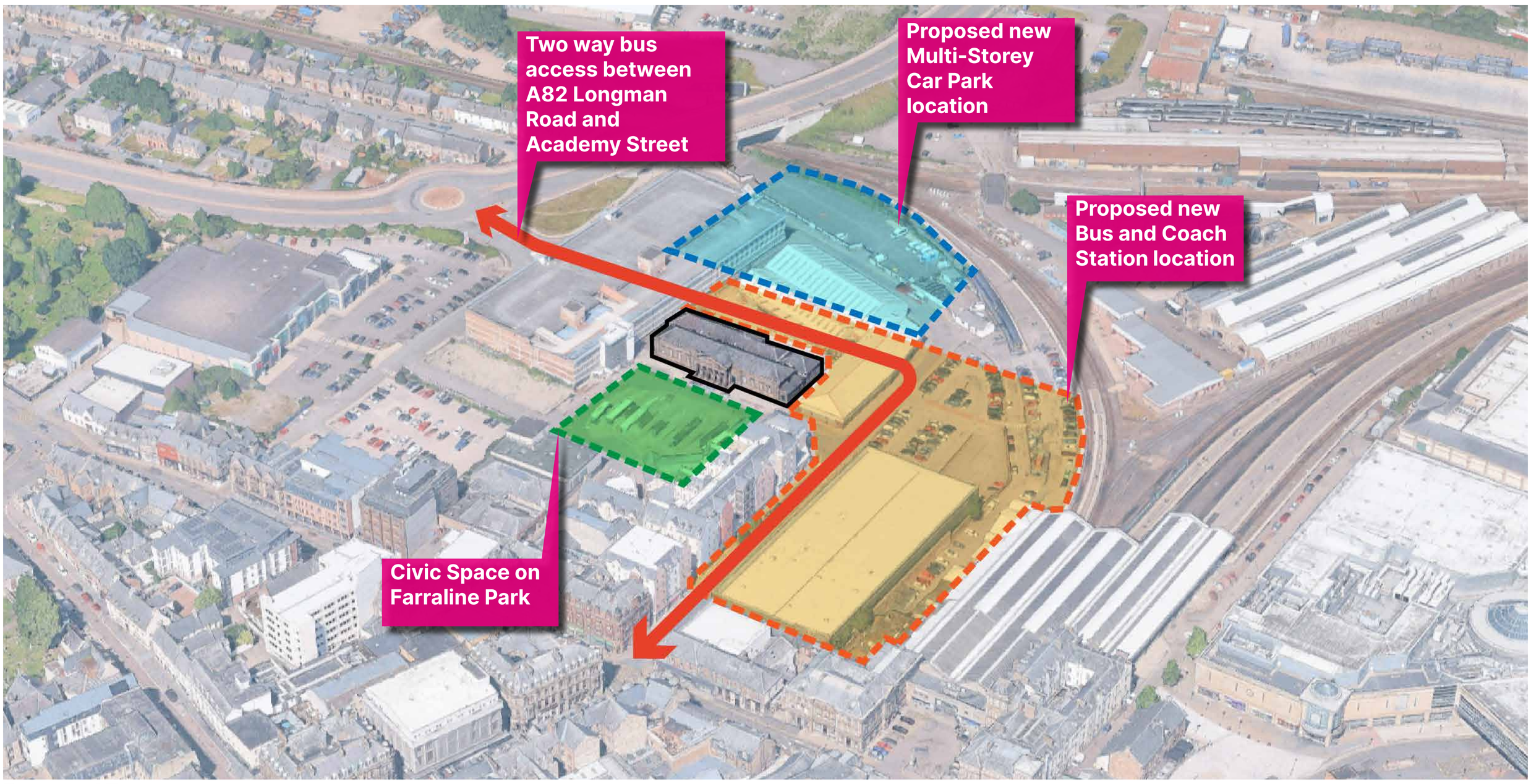
- the Bus and Coach Station be located to the north and/or east of the listed Library building to enable convenient passenger interchange between Bus, Coach and Railway services and well placed for pedestrian access as a Gateway to the City Centre,
- the Bus and Coach Station should retain two way bus access to / from A82 Longman Road and Academy Street (via Strothers Lane) to enable local and longer distances inter-urban routes. No through-access for other vehicles,
- the Multi-Storey Car Park should be located to the north / rear of the listed Library building with car access off the A82 Longman Road whilst providing good pedestrian access and connections to the Railway Station, Bus Station and the City Centre.

The Feasibility Study involved;

- analysis of the existing Bus Station and Multi-Storey Car Park (with reference to available information provided by the Project Partners),
- assessment of the recommended size of the Bus Station and Multi-Storey Car Park to meet projected future demand
- preparation of a longlist of a dozen options considering locating the Bus Station and Multi-Storey Car Park in locations south, west, north and east of the listed Library building that must be retained
- design workshops with Project Partners to assess and identify options that best meet the objectives (which are presented here).

Options Assessments considered a range of objectives including :

- **promoting sustainable travel options (safe, convenient, quality public transport; active travel facilities supporting walking, wheeling and cycling; EV charging)**
- **improving user experience, safety and accessibility for all including those with sensory and/or mobility impairments**
- **supporting City Centre regeneration goals**

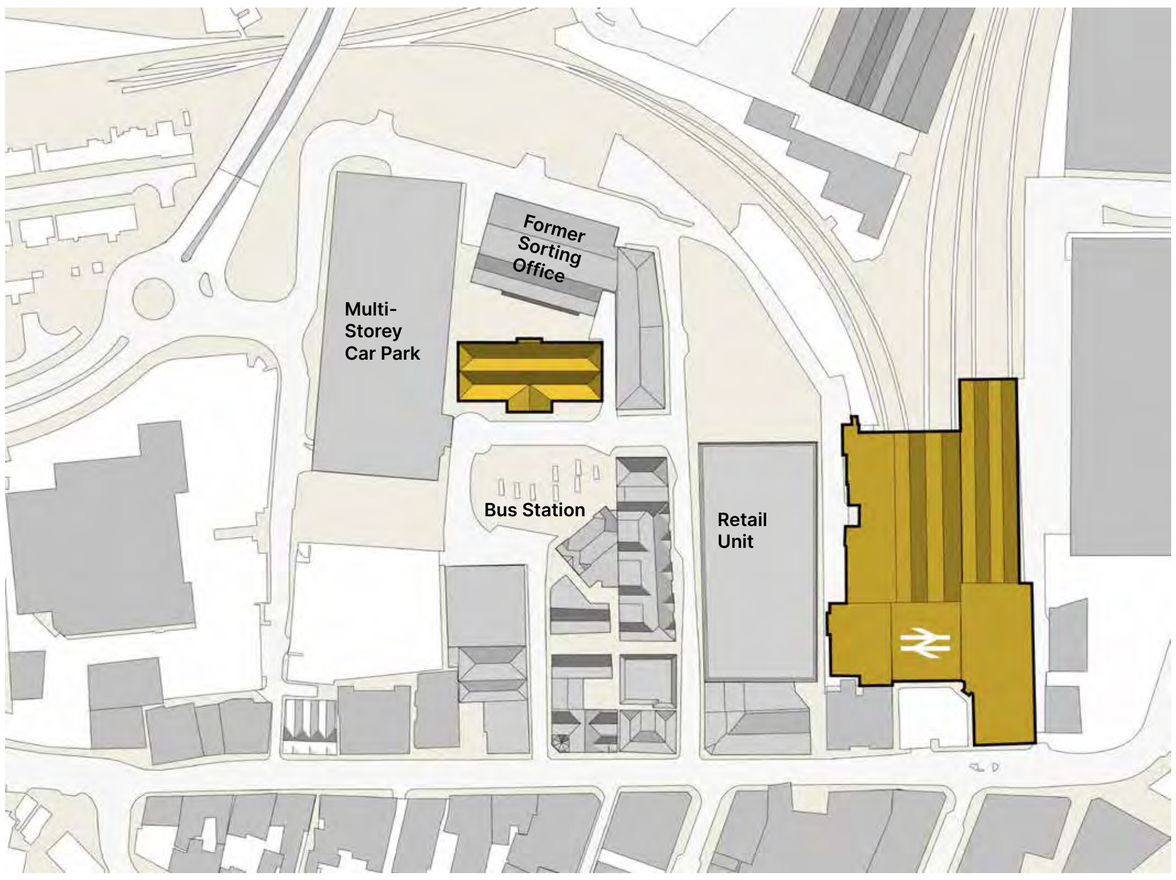


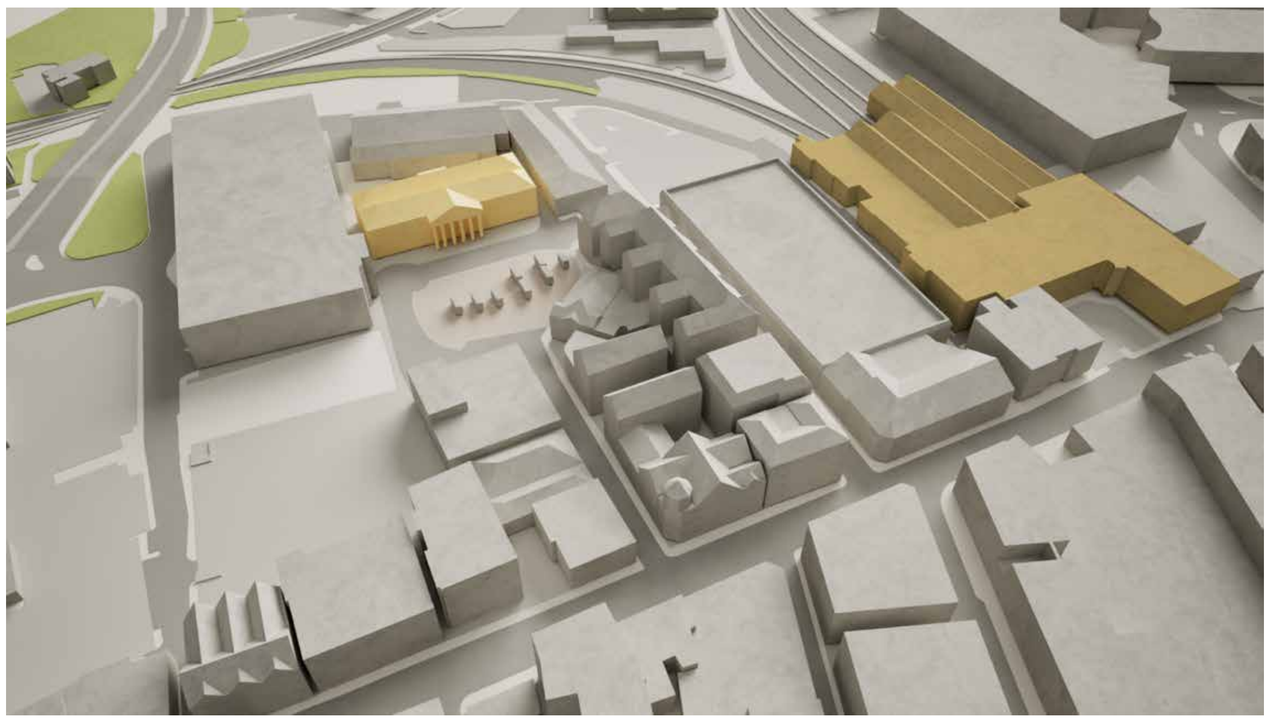
Proposed Zones

Austin·Smith:Lord SCP Cameron+Ross The Highland Council Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd SCOTLAND'S RAILWAY HITRANS

INVERNESS INTERCHANGE FEASIBILITY STUDY
BUS STATION & MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK

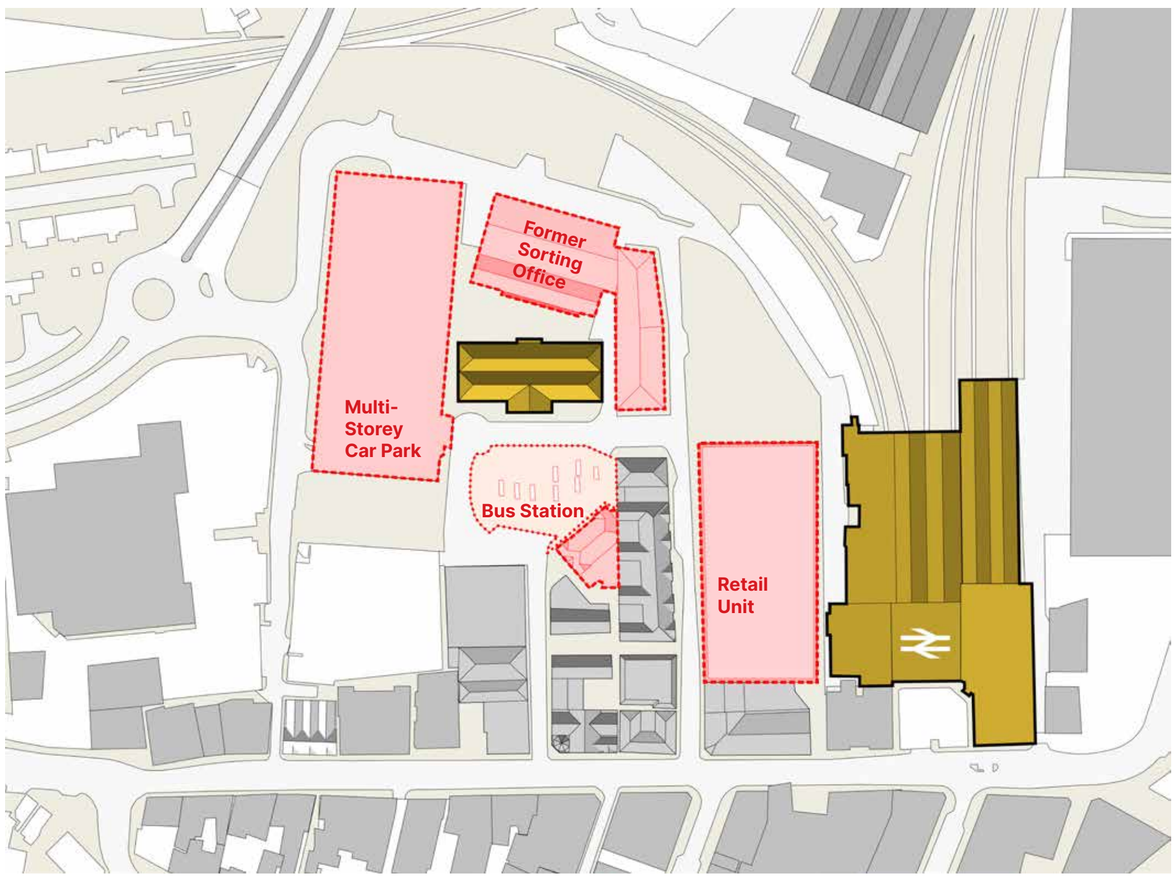
Proposal Summary

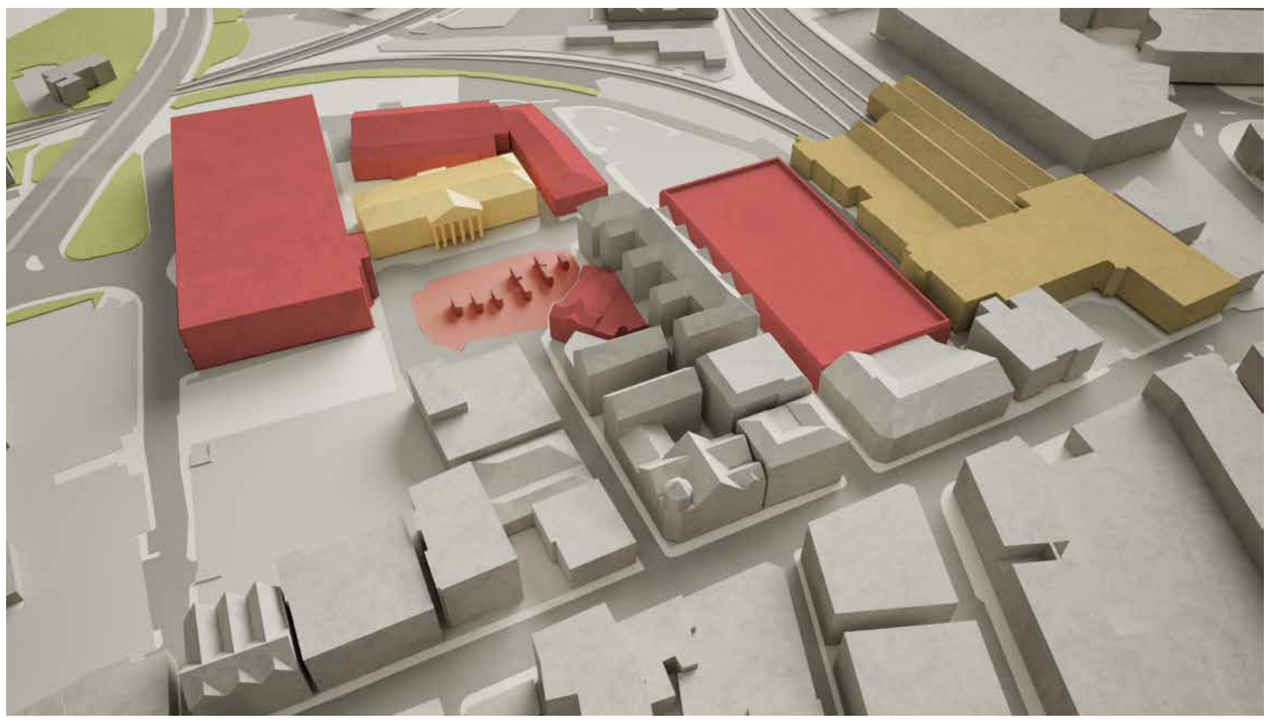




There are several historically important buildings in the area including;

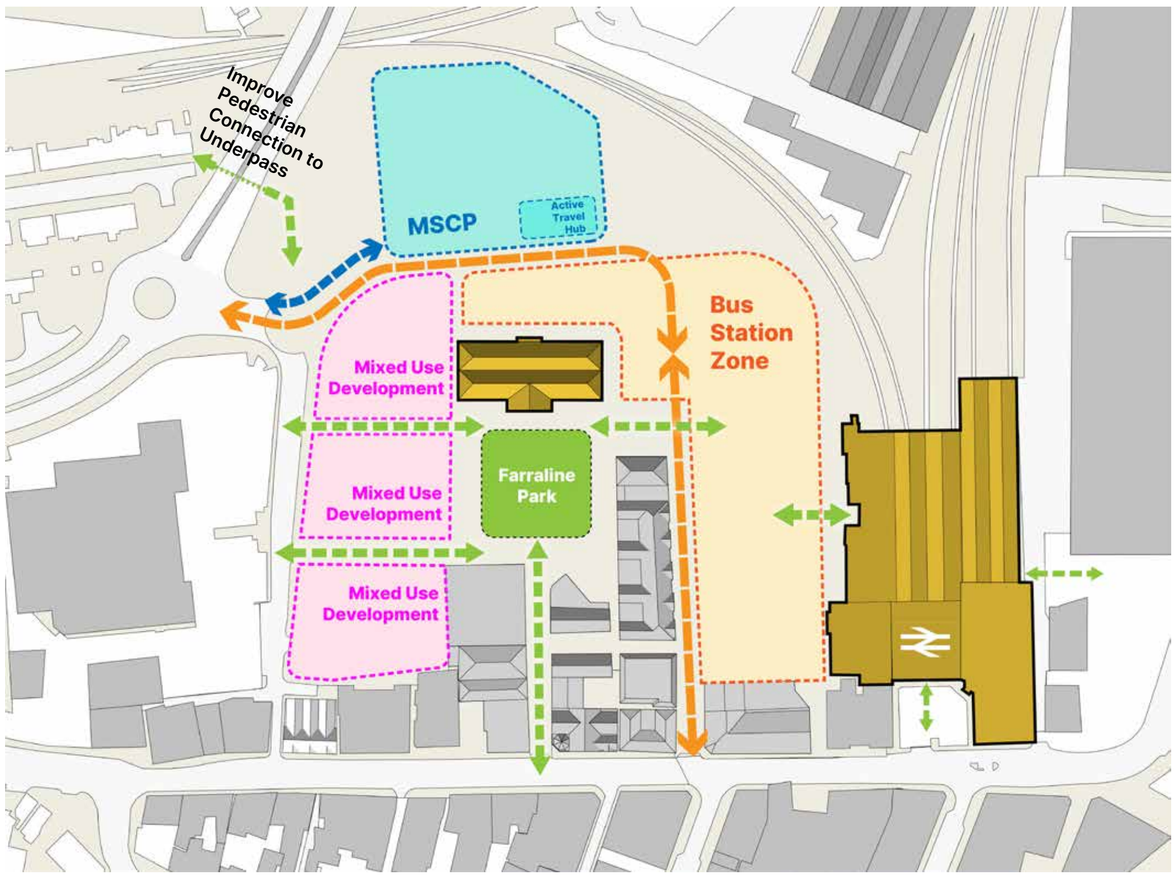
- the A-Listed Library Building
- the Station Building complex comprising two listed buildings, the A-Listed Highland Rail House and the B-Listed Royal Highland Hotel.

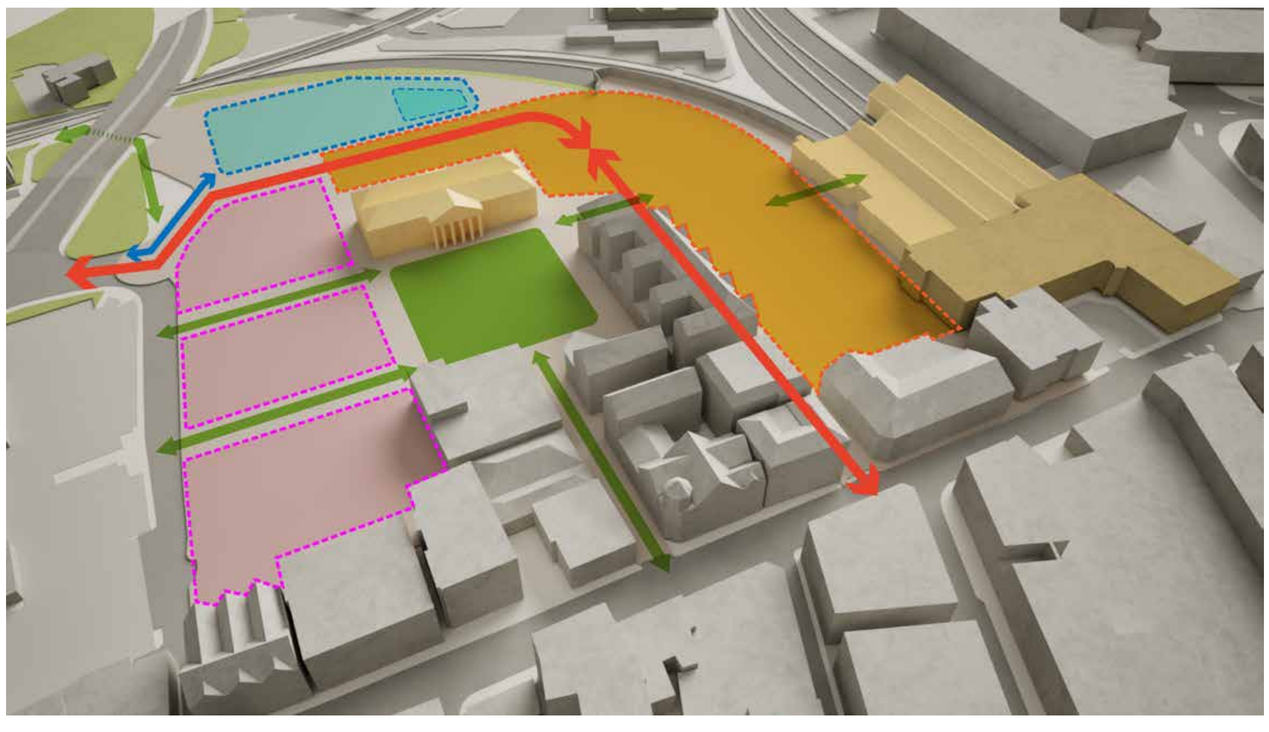




The Outline Proposals recommend the demolition of;

- the existing Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park
- the existing Bus Station on Farraline Park
- the former Sorting Office
- the retail unit on Strothers Lane





The Outline Proposals suggest;

- **a new Bus & Coach Station north and/or east of Farraline Park**
- **a new Multi-Storey Car Park (MSCP) behind the Library building**
- **a new civic square at Farraline Park**
- **scope for mixed use redevelopment on available sites around Farraline Park**

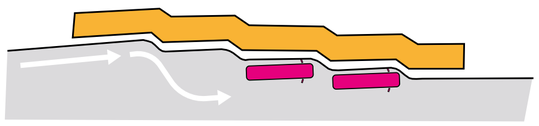
Austin·Smith:Lord SCP TRANSPORT PLANNING INFRASTRUCTURE DESIGN Cameron+Ross The Highland Council Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd SCOTLAND'S RAILWAY HITRANS THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

INVERNESS INTERCHANGE FEASIBILITY STUDY
BUS STATION & MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK

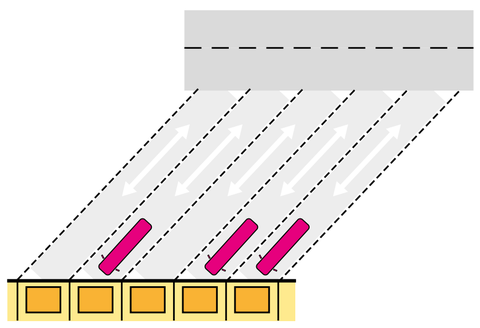
Indicative Option 1

This Indicative Option proposes;

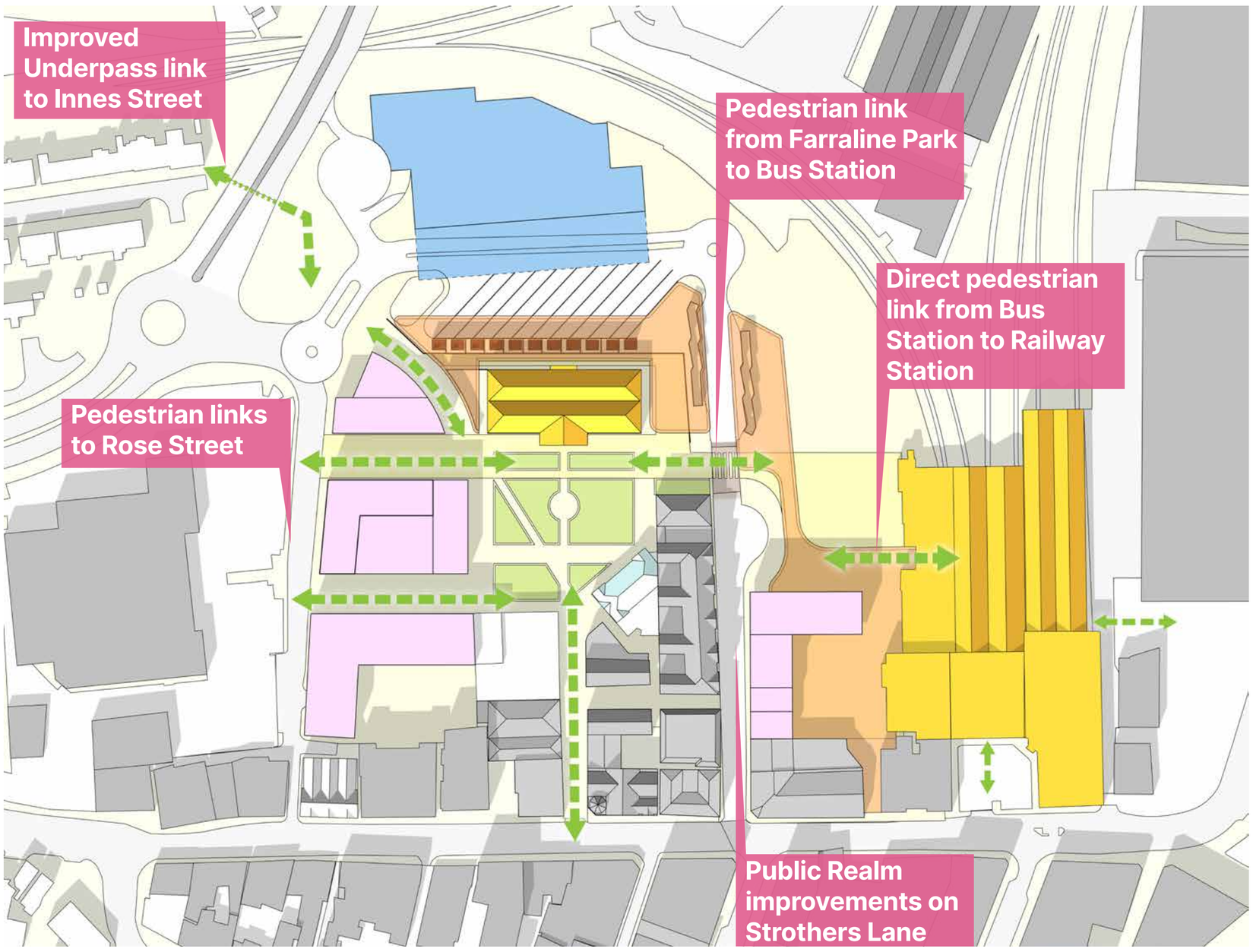
- a 16-stance Bus & Coach Station with 10 stances behind the Library and 6 stances on Strothers Lane (two-way linking to A82 Longman Road and Academy Street)
- a Multi-Storey Car Park behind the Library accessed from A82 Longman Road



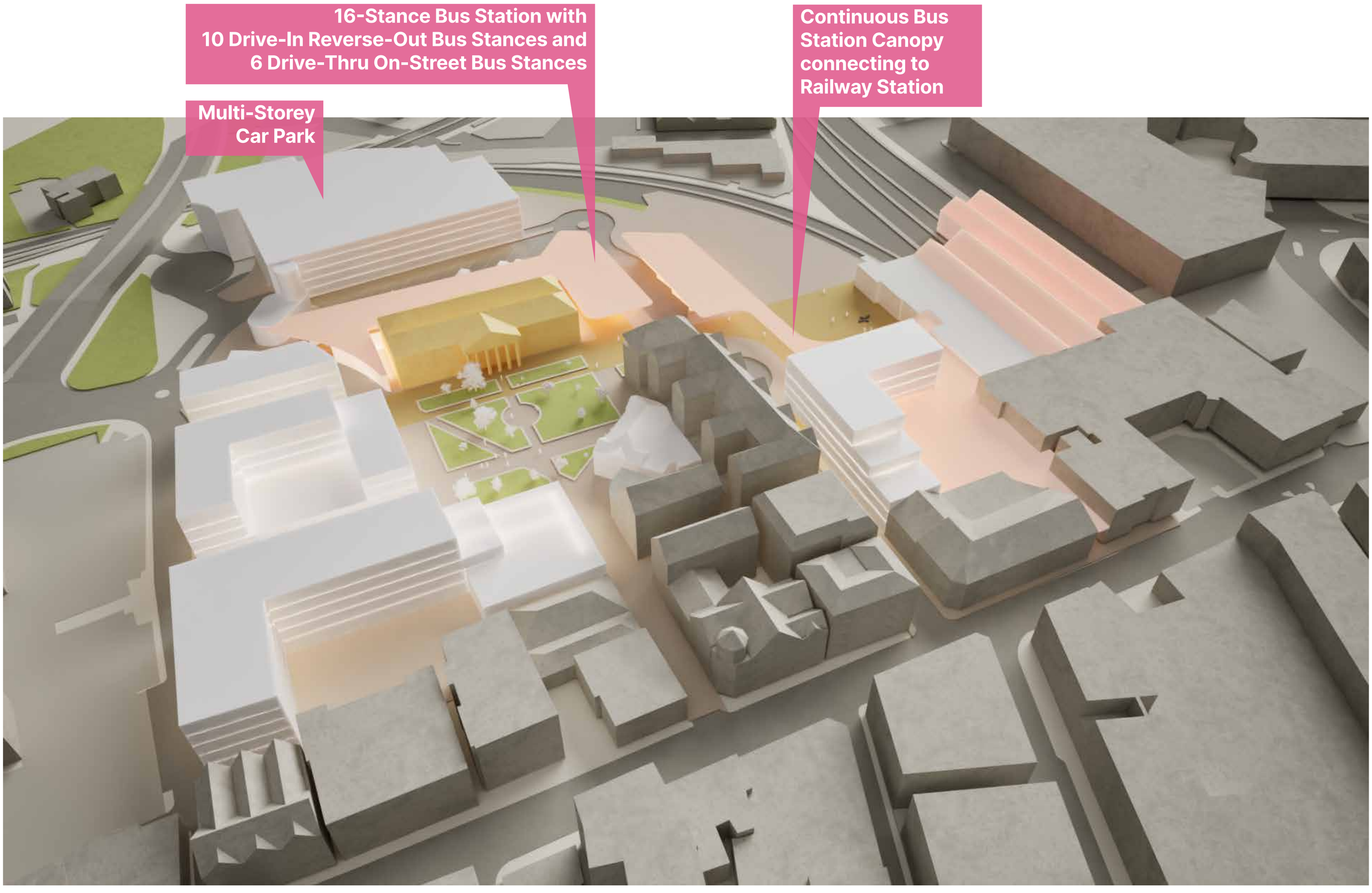
Drive-Thru
Bus Stance Configuration :
Buses drive up and stop parallel to the stance and drive straight out.



DIRO (drive-in, reverse-out) Bus Stance Configuration :
Buses drive in to the stance and reverse out.



Indicative Plan View



View from south-west

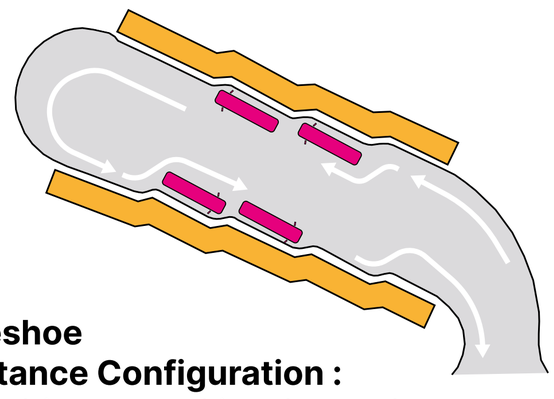
Austin·Smith:Lord SCP TRANSPORT PLANNING INFRASTRUCTURE DESIGN Cameron+Ross The Highland Council Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd SCOTLAND'S RAILWAY HITRANS THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

INVERNESS INTERCHANGE FEASIBILITY STUDY
BUS STATION & MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK

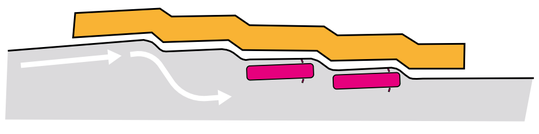
Indicative Option 2

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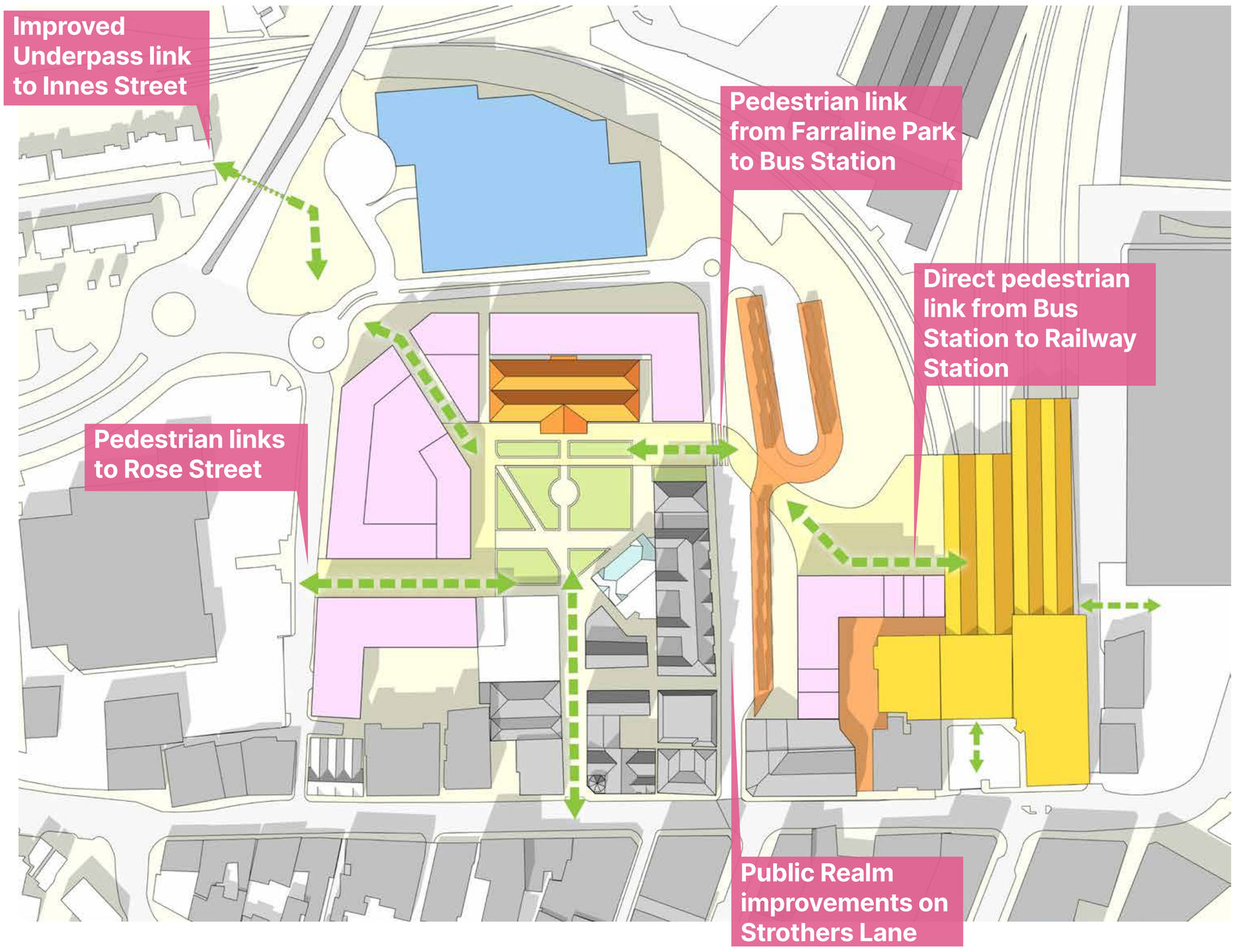
- a 15-stance Bus & Coach Station with 8 stances off-street and 7 stances on Strothers Lane (two-way linking to A82 Longman Road and Academy Street)
- a Multi-Storey Car Park behind the Library accessed from A82 Longman Road



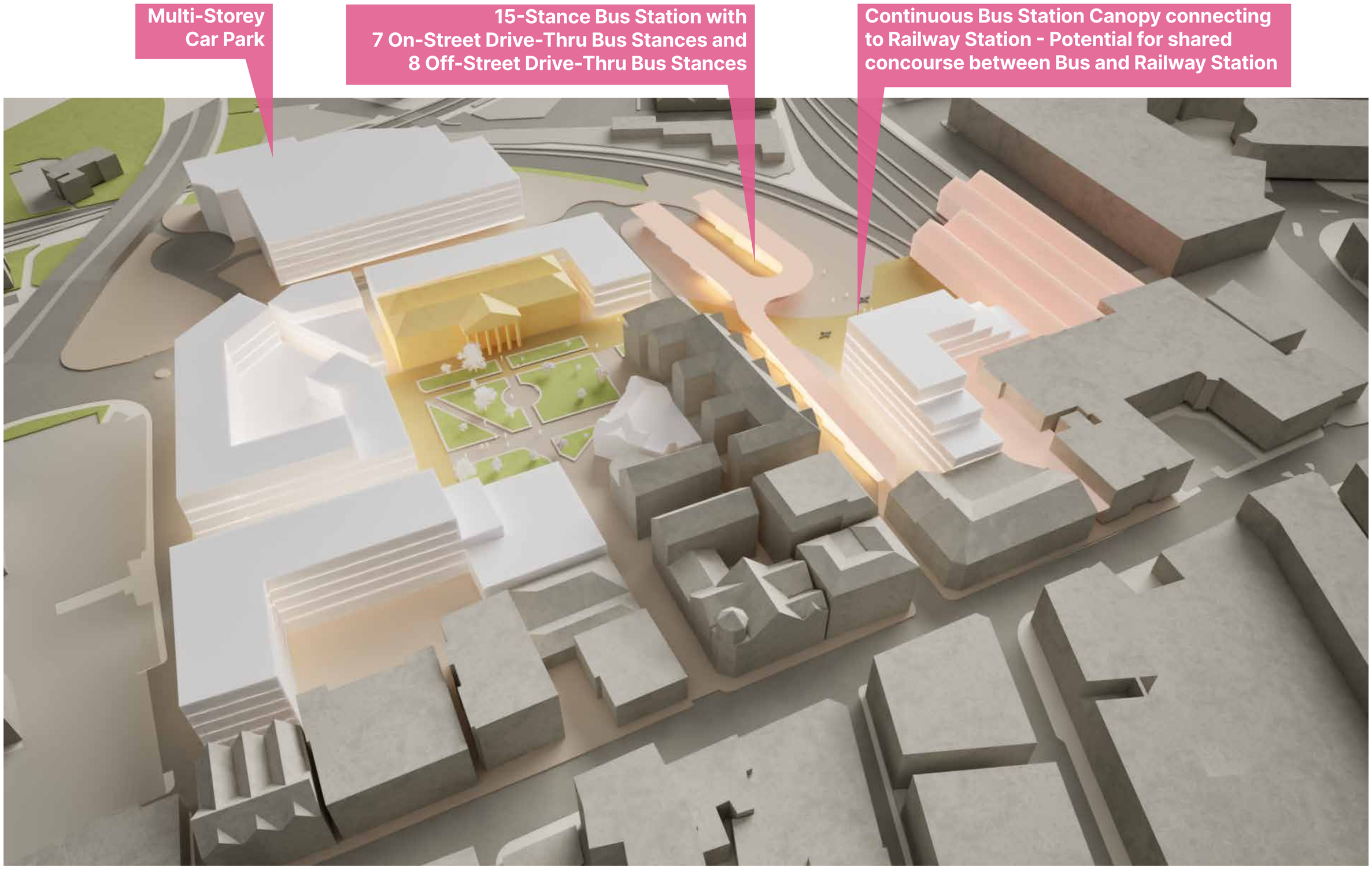
Horseshoe
Bus Stance Configuration :
Buses drive around in a horseshoe configuration, stop parallel to the stance and drive straight out.



Drive-Thru
Bus Stance Configuration :
Buses drive up and stop parallel to the stance and drive straight out.



Indicative Plan View



View from south-west

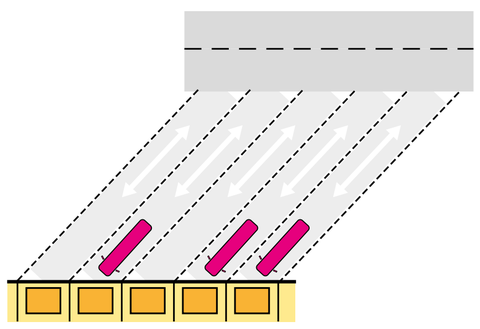
Austin·Smith:Lord SCP TRANSPORT PLANNING INFRASTRUCTURE DESIGN Cameron+Ross The Highland Council Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd SCOTLAND'S RAILWAY HITRANS THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

INVERNESS INTERCHANGE FEASIBILITY STUDY
BUS STATION & MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK

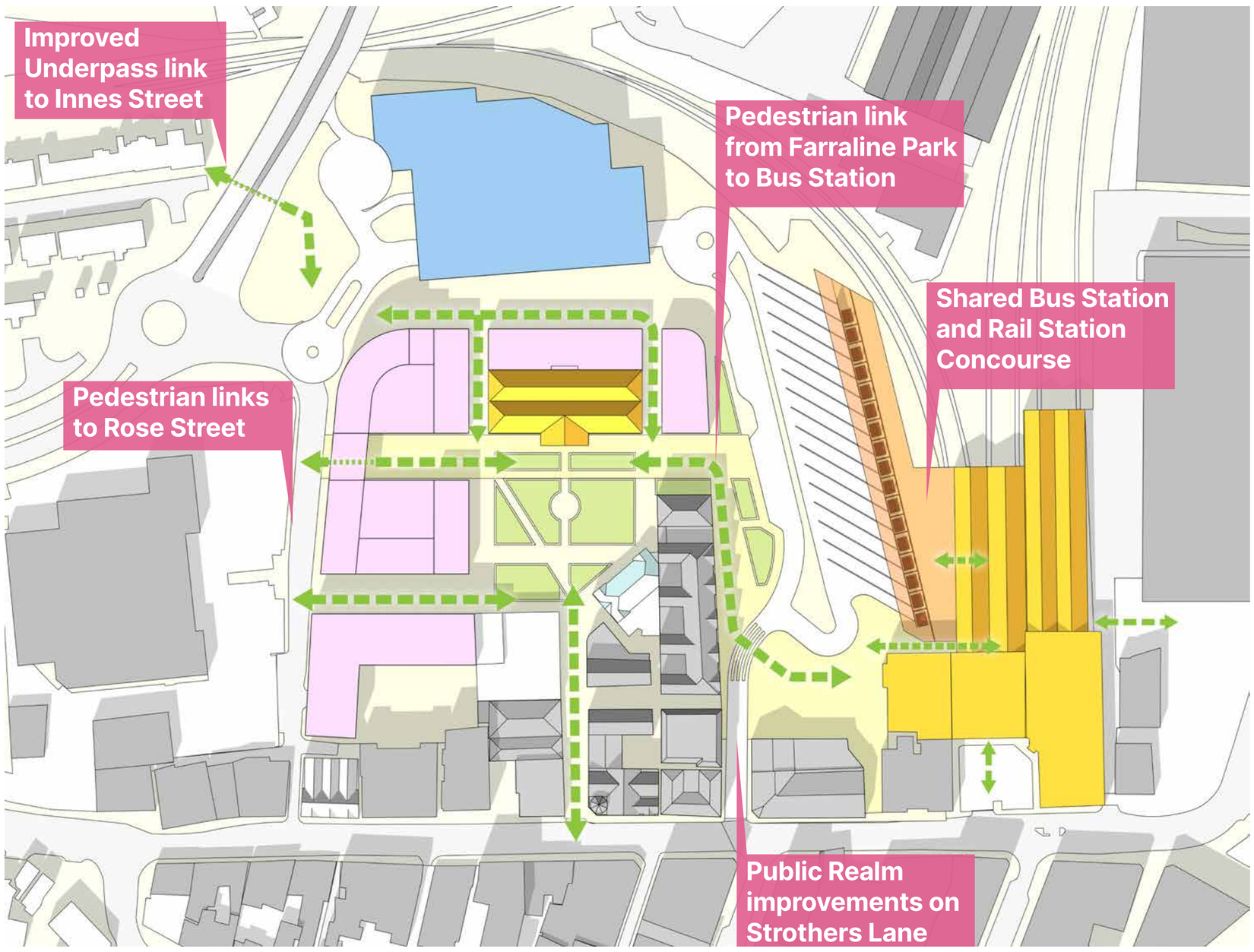
Indicative Option 3

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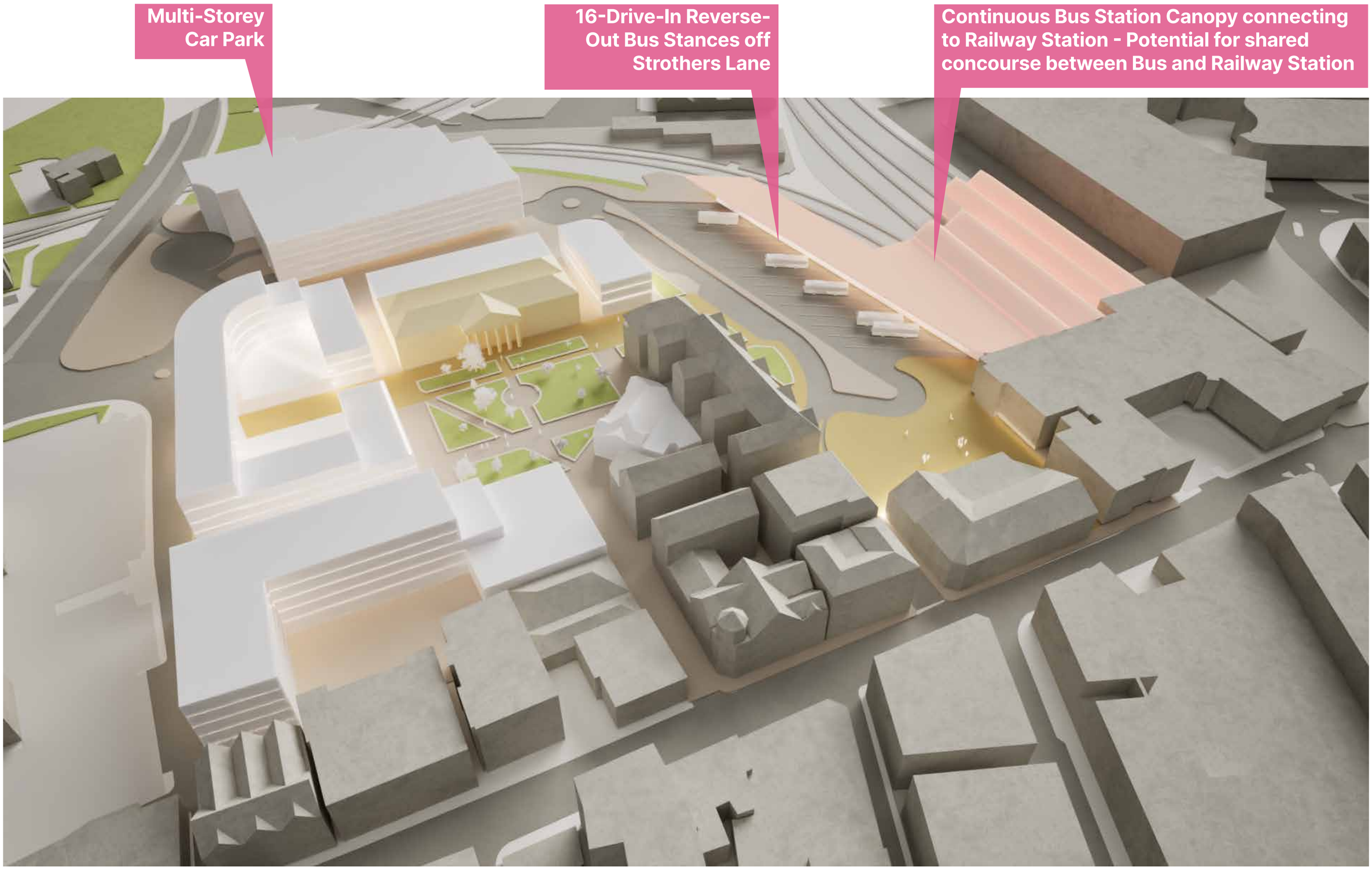
- a 16-stance Bus & Coach Station accessed off Strothers Lane (two-way linking to A82 Longman Road and Academy Street)
- a Multi-Storey Car Park behind the Library accessed from A82 Longman Road



DIRO (drive-in, reverse-out) Bus Stance Configuration :
Buses drive in to the stance and reverse out.



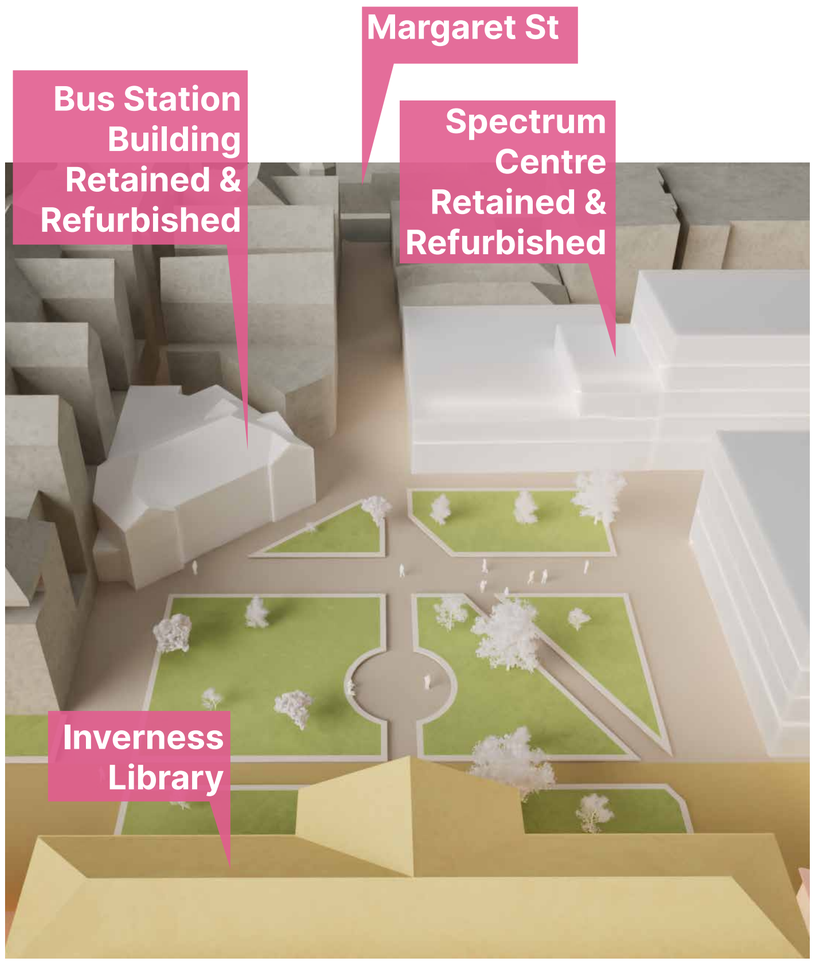
Indicative Plan View



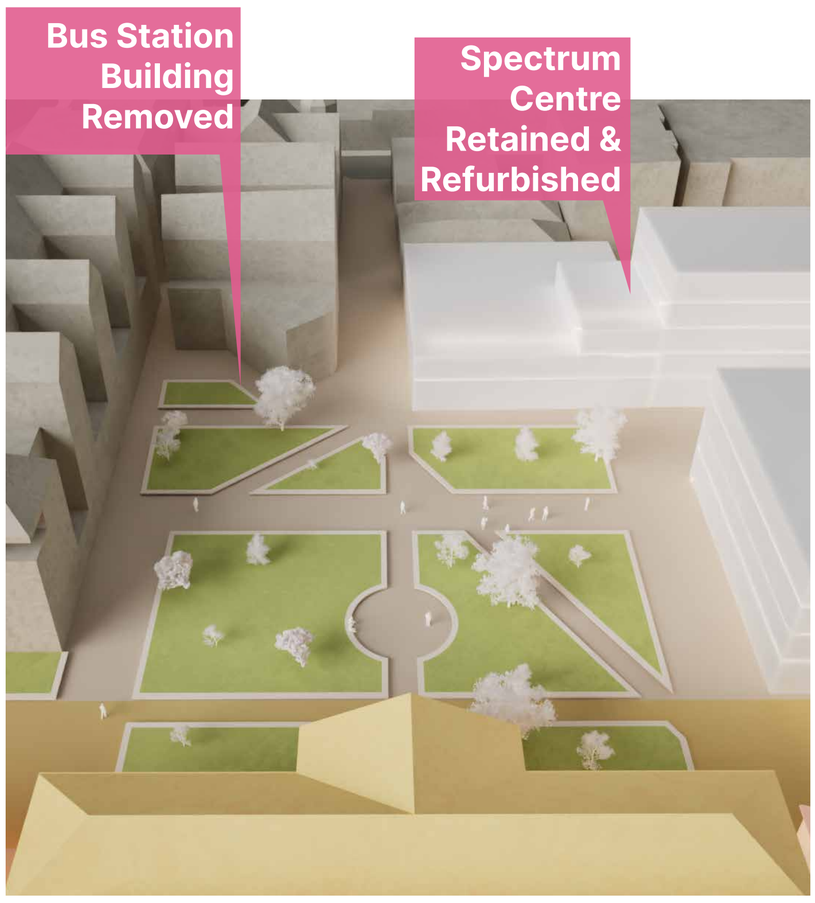
View from south-west

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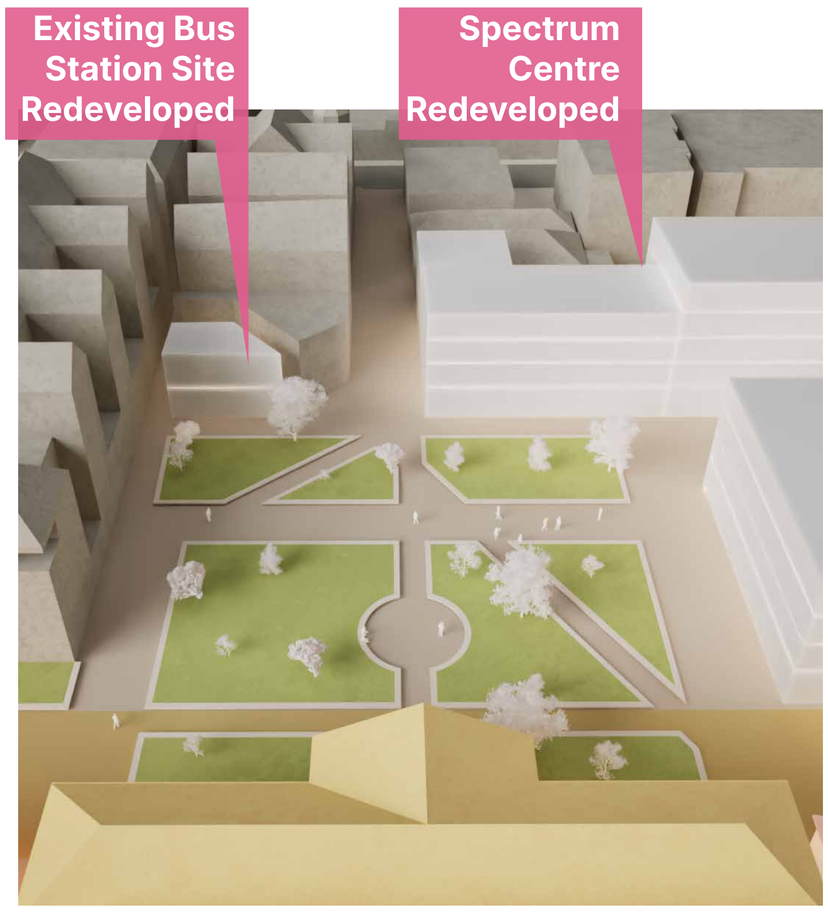
INVERNESS INTERCHANGE FEASIBILITY STUDY
BUS STATION & MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK



Option A : Existing Bus Station Building retained and refurbished for a new use. Spectrum Centre retained and refurbished.



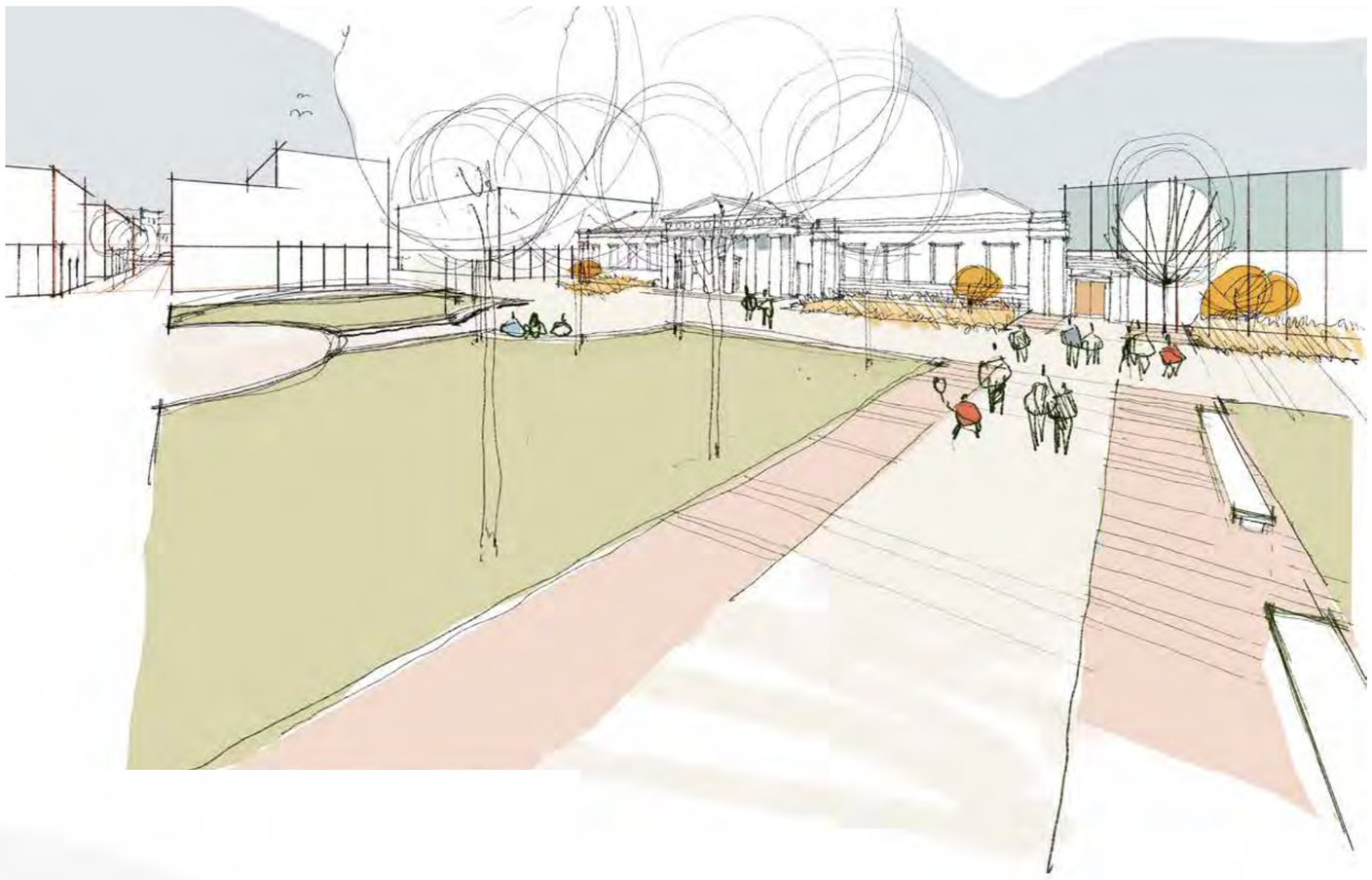
Option B : Existing Bus Station Building demolished. Spectrum Centre retained and refurbished.



Option C : Existing Bus Station Building and Spectrum Centre replaced with new development.

Improving public realm across the station quarter :
Establishing a new City Centre Urban Park at Farraline Park

The relocation of the Bus Station presents an opportunity for Farraline Park to become a traffic-free civic square in front of the Listed Library building.



Farraline Park Looking towards Inverness Library

The proposed new urban square on Farraline Park would directly link to the proposed Bus Station and to Inverness Railway Station.



View from Strothers Lane towards Farraline Park

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INVERNESS INTERCHANGE FEASIBILITY STUDY
BUS STATION & MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK

Frequently Asked Questions

How much will this cost?

The construction of a new Bus & Coach Station and Multi-Storey Car Park will be a significant multi-million pound investment. A priority task in the next phase of design work will be to establish a budget cost estimate for the design, development, construction and running costs for these facilities. This would inform a business case, alongside an assessment of the revenue income and wider benefits to the City and Region (socio-economic, environmental etc.)

How will it be funded?

A key part of the business case will be to establish how to fund the proposed redevelopment. The Initial feasibility work was funded by HITRANS, with the current work being funded by The Highland Council through the Bus Infrastructure Fund which is administered by Transport Scotland. A new funding application has been submitted by The Highland Council to Transport Scotland A funding application has been made by the Highland Council to Transport Scotland to secure funding to progress the next stage of project and design development (including preparing budget costs).

Delivering the construction of the new facilities will require a robust funding and investment case to be made. At this stage it could be anticipated that these proposals will probably be delivered over several phases and will require very close partnership working between public sector organisations. This could involve funding from national and local public sector organisations potentially including Transport Scotland, Scotland's Railway, HITRANS, The Highland Council and others. It may also involve realising land value from the sites within the 'Station Quarter' to cross fund the Bus & Coach Station and Multi-Storey Car Park.

A range of funding and investment models would be considered – drawing upon successful best practice from elsewhere in the UK – and this may also include identifying private sector investment and development partnerships to ensure effective delivery.

How long will it take?

Another priority task for the next phase of work is developing a project programme / timeline and assessing the best way to phase and deliver the project. This may require enabling works to provide temporary facilities, allow for periods for demolition and phased construction of new facilities. Equivalent projects take several years from start to finish and it will be essential to establish what the priorities are to ensure the first phases are progressed accordingly.

Who owns the land?

The Highland Council and Scotland's Railway own most of the land identified within the 'Station Quarter' being considered in this Feasibility Study. The sites being considered for a new Bus & Coach Station and Multi-Storey Car Park are all within the ownership of the Council or Scotland's Railway.

How does this work relate to the Railway Station and the Masterplan for it?

The proposed redevelopment and reconfiguration of the Bus & Coach Station and Multi-Storey Car Park have been developed to improve integration with, and access to, the Railway Station. These proposals are compatible with the Railway Station as it is today, but also would fit with the future ambitions for the Railway Station Masterplan.

Access to the Railway Station from Strothers Lane would be retained and significantly enhanced by the proposals outlined here. The proposals look to improve accessibility and interchange with the Railway Station via convenient connections with the Bus & Coach Station and the Multi-Storey Car Park.

The redevelopment of the Bus & Coach Station and Multi-Storey Car Park is not reliant on the redevelopment of the Railway Station, and vice versa. However, through careful coordination, there is the possibility and intention to maximise the benefits for a very well-integrated passenger experience connecting all modes of public transport, which could include a shared concourse (subject to further design development).

What happens with the A-listed Library building?

The listed building currently used for the Library is one of the finest buildings in Inverness, but the existing bus station and the vacant sorting sheds blight its setting. The proposals outlined here seek to significantly improve the setting of the listed building to ensure that it fulfils its role as a landmark building at the gateway to the City Centre.

The proposals outlined here anticipate that the listed building continues as a significant publicly accessible building.

What happens with the Spectrum Centre?

The proposals outlined here would enable the Spectrum Centre to remain in its current location and be refurbished, subject to funding. Equally there would be the opportunity to reprovide and relocate the Spectrum Centre activities within a purpose-designed facility on or near Farraline Park as part of the wider illustrative 'Station Quarter' Masterplan outlined here.

What's happening with the existing Multi-Storey Car Park on Rose Street?

The existing Multi-Storey Car Park does not meet current standards compatible with the size and weight of contemporary vehicles. It is near to the end of its lifespan and, despite remedial repair works and ongoing maintenance, has restrictions imposed which have incrementally reduced parking capacity. These repairs and restrictions have been imposed to ensure health and safety of users and extend the operational lifespan of the concrete structure of the existing Multi-Storey Car Park.

What size would a new Multi-Storey Car Park need to be?

Initial analysis by SCP, transport planning consultants for this Study, recommends at this stage the reprovision of circa 850 spaces in a new, purpose-built replacement Multi-Storey Car Park. This recommendation is based upon available and historic Council parking surveys (which show surplus spaces and over-provision over a prolonged period), traffic count trends, the impact of incrementally reduced capacity due to increasing restrictions and a tally of nearby surface car parks.

The recommended circa 850 spaces includes consolidating the surface car parks of the retail unit on Strothers Lane and the Railway Station into a new Multi-Storey Car Park, designed to contemporary standards and allowing for future demand projections, including best-practice provision of EV charging points, motorcycles and disabled parking bays. These initial findings and demand projections would need to be refined through further survey, analysis and design work in the next phase.

Why does the Bus Station need replacement or upgrading?

The existing Bus Station does not meet current standard or future demands in terms of capacity or layout. Nor does it meet the quality of passenger experience expected in modern facilities serving a City Centre. Whilst there are ongoing improvements to the Bus Station to improve the passenger experience further, more extensive upgrades are required.

The existing 7 island stances operate 'double-stacked' providing an equivalent to 14 stances. However, initial assessment suggests that up to 16 stances are required in a layout that accommodates the modern Bus and Coach dimensions, reduces passenger / vehicular conflict and has the passenger and staff facilities expected of a City Centre Interchange.

Is there taxi and drop-off provision serving the Bus and Railway Stations in the proposals?

Yes. In the options outlined here there is scope for a taxi rank and drop-off on Strothers Lane serving the public transport interchange.

Would the proposed Bus and Coach Station accommodate tourist coaches?

The Feasibility Study indicates that it is not advisable to provide tourist coach drop-off and pick-up within the proposed Bus and Coach Station and these should continue to be provided 'off site' (at Ardross Street, as currently). This avoids compromising the timetabled public transport services serving the Interchange.

Would rail replacement bus services be accommodated in the proposed new Bus and Coach Station?

Yes. This would provide a better option than the current arrangements provided at the rear of the Eastgate Shopping Centre.

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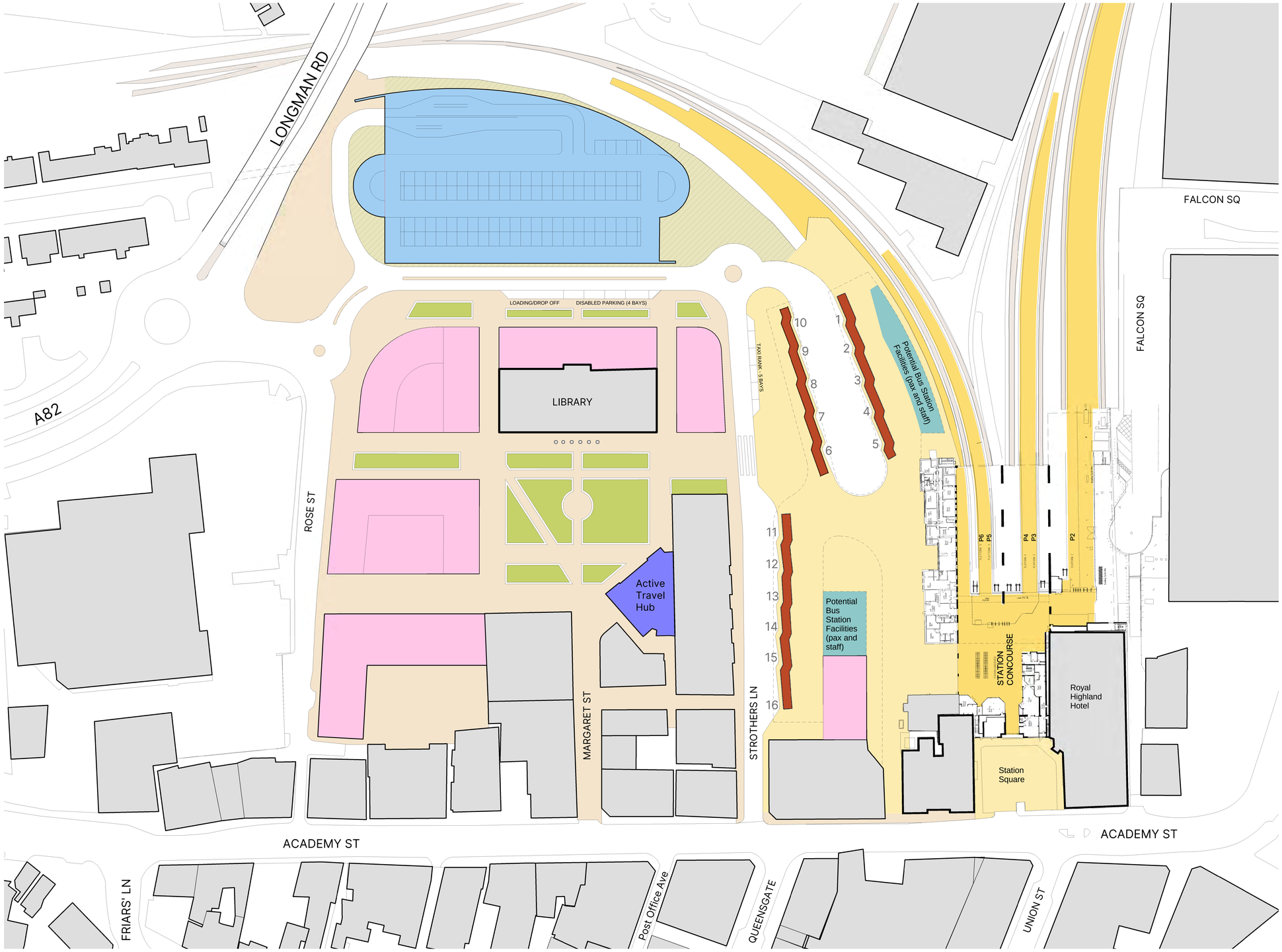
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OPTION 2



Railway station concourse
Bus station concourse
Bus station facilities
MSCP
Urban realm
Landscape areas
New development
Active travel hub
Bus stance seating

Bus routes
Private car routes
Taxi routes
Service access
Pedestrian routes
Cycle paths
Security line

0m 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m

VISUAL SCALE 1:500 @ A1

1 Plan View - Option J GF Plan

1 : 500

Rev	Description	Drawn	Checked	Date Issued
P1	Initial Issue	JW		03.05.2018

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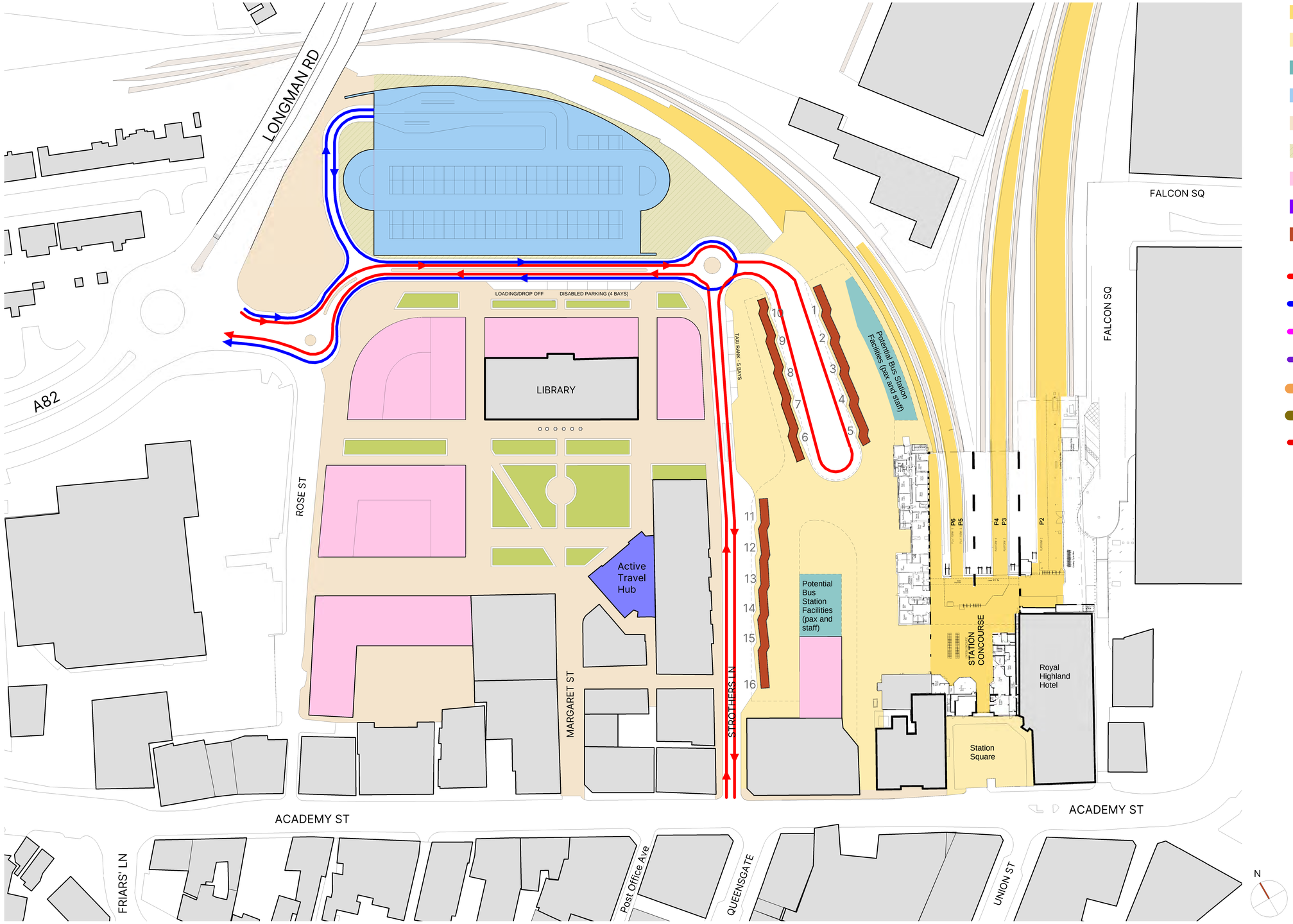
Project Project Name

Description GFP Option J 1-500

Job No. | Drawing No. | Revision P1

Project Number 224069-ASL-XX-00-DR-A-00110

OPTION 2



- Railway station concourse
- Bus station concourse
- Bus station facilities
- MSCP
- Urban realm
- Landscape areas
- New development
- Active travel hub
- Bus stance seating
- Bus routes
- Private car routes
- Taxi routes
- Service access
- Pedestrian routes
- Cycle paths
- Security line

0m 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m

VISUAL SCALE 1:500 @ A1

1 Plan View - Option J GF Plan bus + car route
1 : 500

Rev	Description	Drawn	Checked	Date Issued
P1	Initial Issue	AW		02-03-2026

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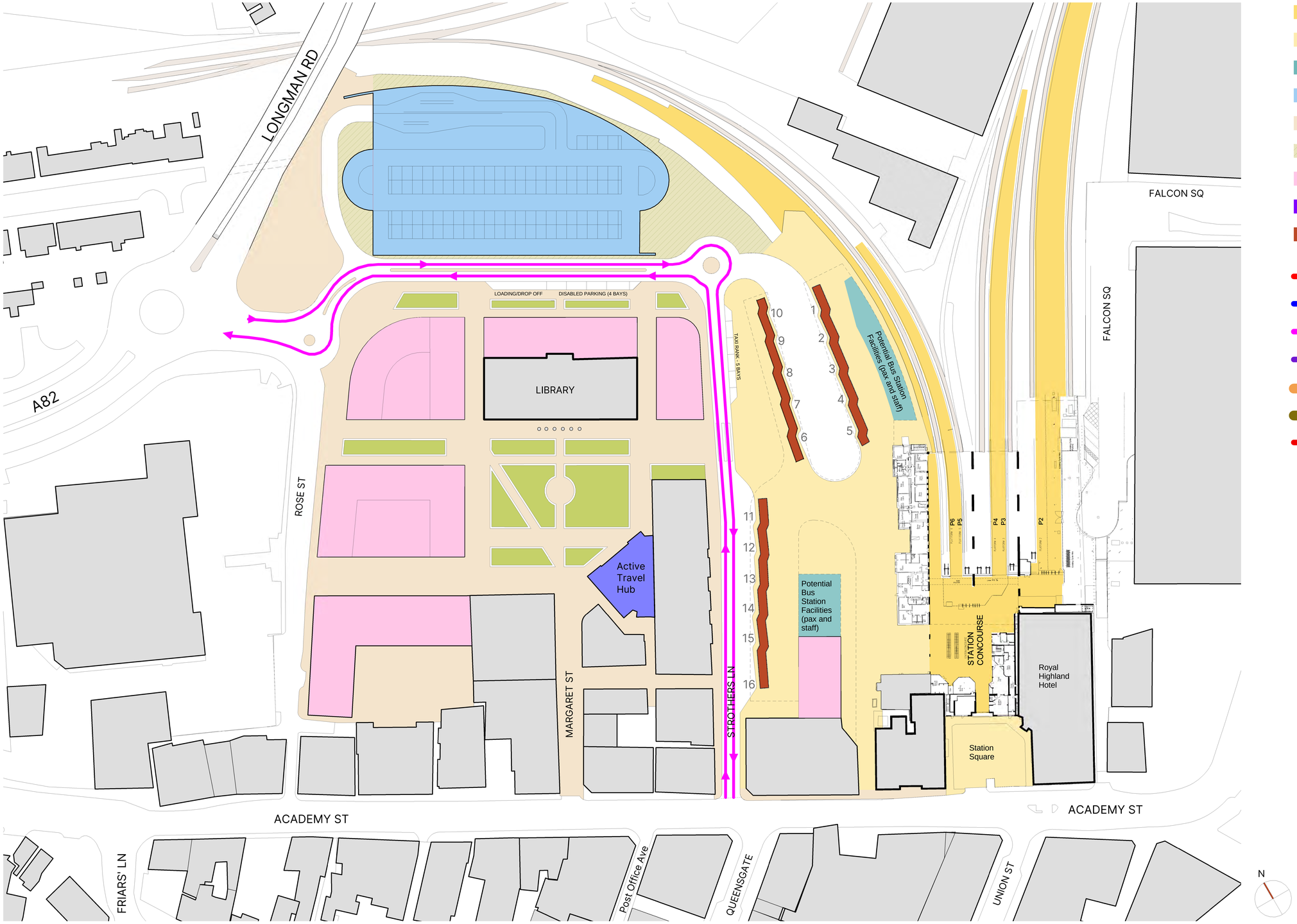
Project Project Name

Description GPP Option J 1-500 Bus + car routes

Job No. Drawing No. Revision P1

Project Number 224069-ASL-XX-00-DR-A-00111

OPTION 2



- Railway station concourse
- Bus station concourse
- Bus station facilities
- MSCP
- Urban realm
- Landscape areas
- New development
- Active travel hub
- Bus stance seating

- Bus routes
- Private car routes
- Taxi routes
- Service access
- Pedestrian routes
- Cycle paths
- Security line

0m 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m

VISUAL SCALE 1:500 @ A1

1 Plan View - Option J GF Plan Taxi route

1 : 500

Rev	Description	Drawn	Checked	Date Issued
P1	Initial Issue	AW		02-03-2026

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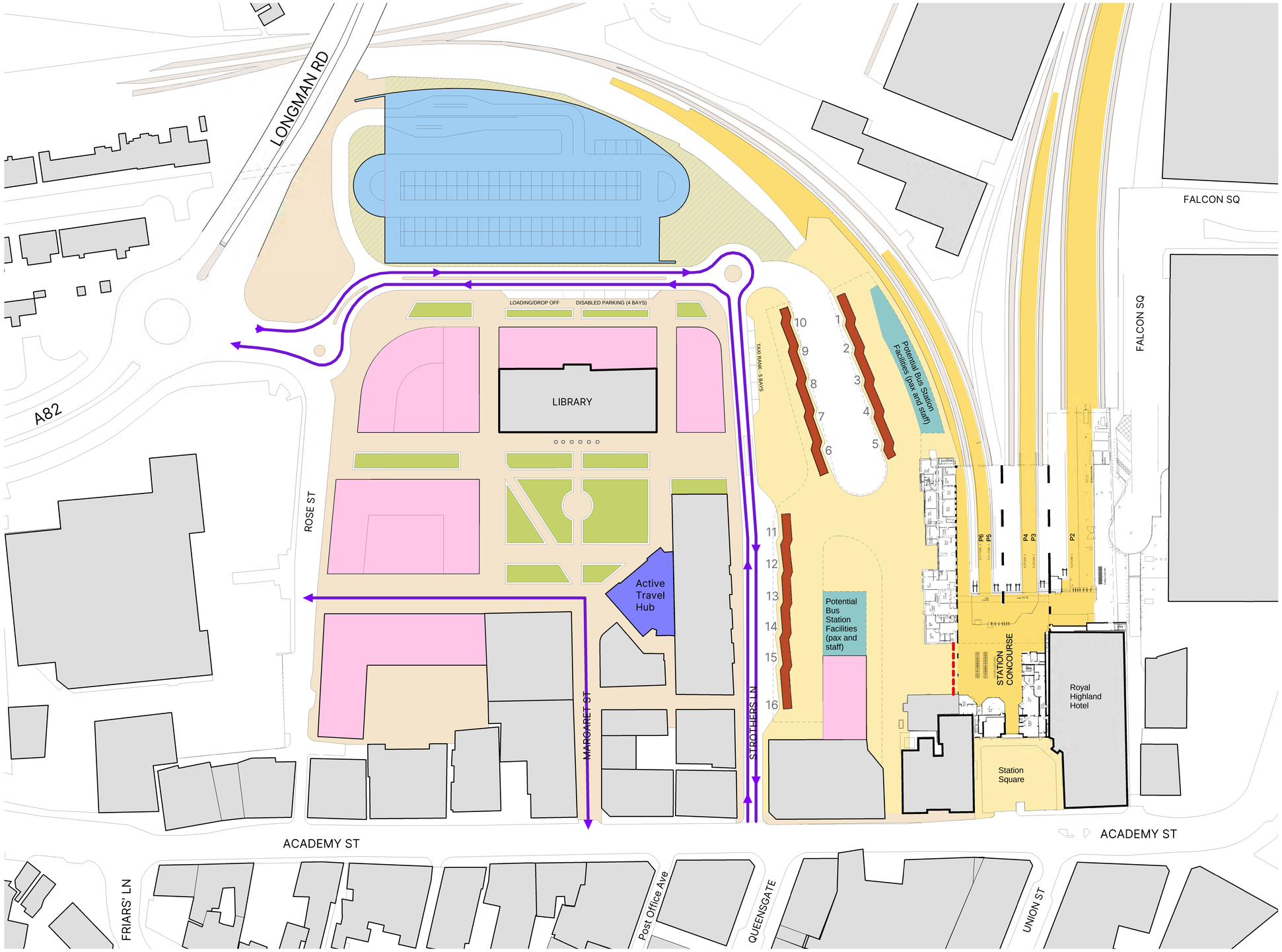
Project Project Name

Description GPP Option J 1-500 Taxi routes

Job No. Drawing No. Revision P1

Project Number 224069-ASL-XX-00-DR-A-00112

OPTION 2



- Railway station concourse
- Bus station concourse
- Bus station facilities
- MSCP
- Urban realm
- Landscape areas
- New development
- Active travel hub
- Bus stance seating

- Bus routes
- Private car routes
- Taxi routes
- Service access
- Pedestrian routes
- Cycle paths
- Security line

0m 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m

VISUAL SCALE 1:500 @ A1

1 Plan View - Option J GF Plan Service routes
1 : 500

Rev	Description	Drawn	Checked	Date Issued
P1	Initial Issue	JW		03.03.2016

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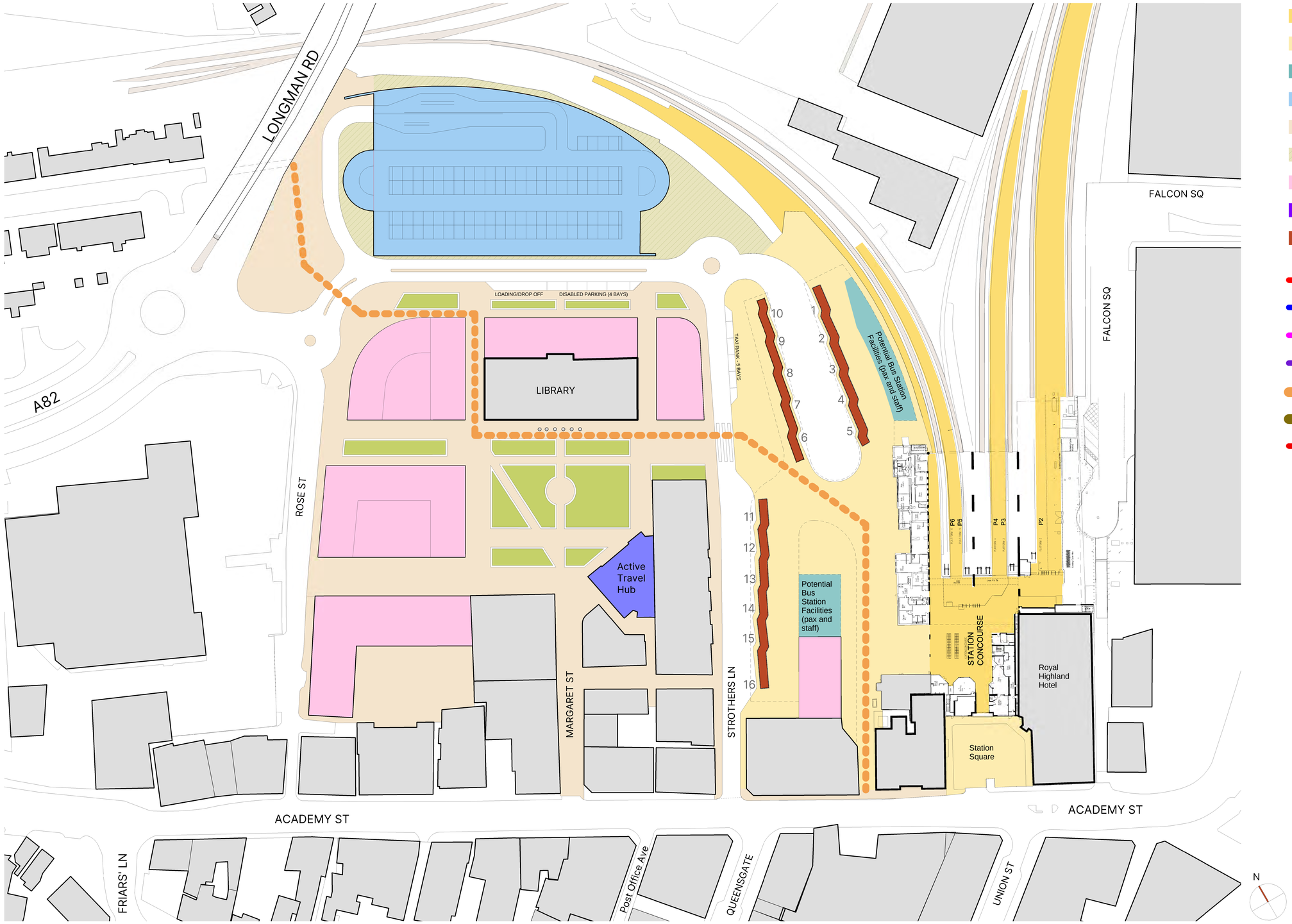
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Project Project Name

Description GFP Option J 1-500 Service routes

Job No.	Drawing No.	Revision
Project Number	224069-ASL-XX-00-DR-A-00113	P1

OPTION 2



Railway station concourse
Bus station concourse
Bus station facilities
MSCP
Urban realm
Landscape areas
New development
Active travel hub
Bus stance seating

Bus routes
Private car routes
Taxi routes
Service access
Pedestrian routes
Cycle paths
Security line

0m 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m

VISUAL SCALE 1:500 @ A1

1 Plan View - Option J GF Plan Active travel route
1 : 500

Rev.	Description	Drawn	Checked	Date Issued
P1	Initial Issue	JW		22.01.2026

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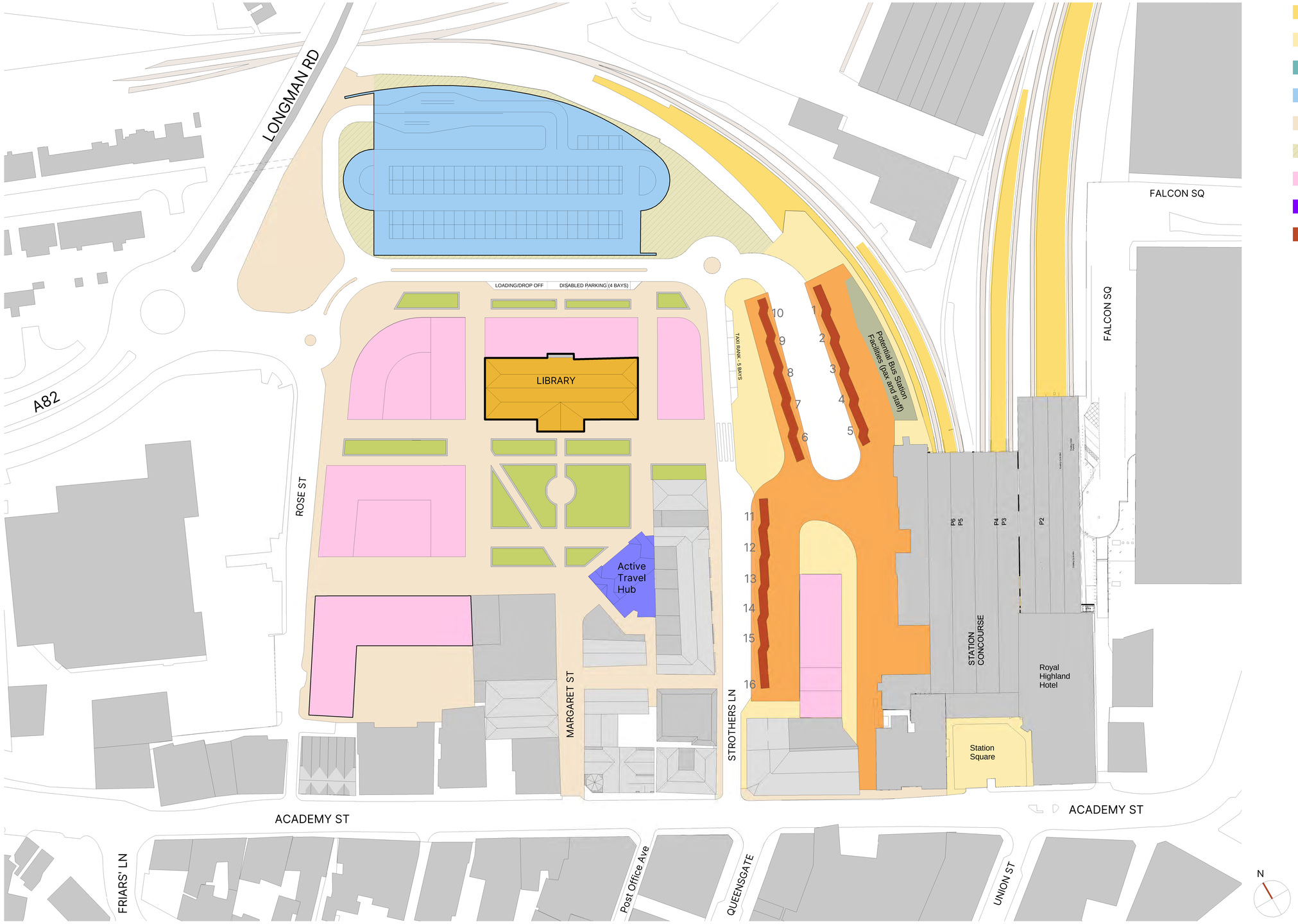
Austin·Smith:Lord

Project Project Name

Description GFP Option J 1-500 Active Travel routes

Job No.	Drawing No.	Revision
Project Number	224069-ASL-XX-00-DR-A-00114	P1

OPTION 2



0m 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m

VISUAL SCALE 1:500 @ A1

1 Plan View - Option J Roof plan
1 : 500

Rev	Description	Drawn	Checked	Date Issued
P1	Initial Issue	AW		02-03-2026

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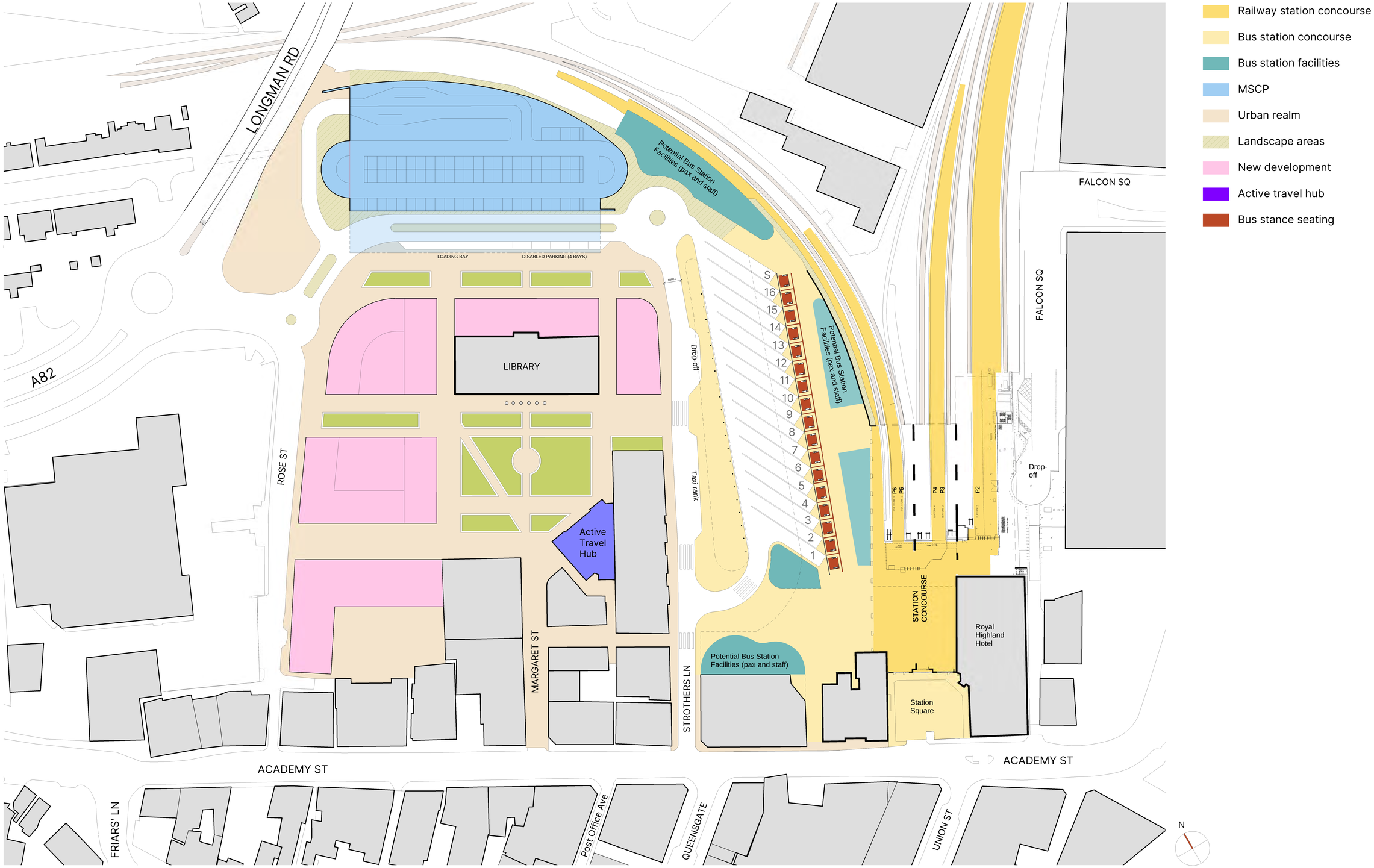
Project Project Name

Description Roof Plan Option J 1-500

Job No. Drawing No. Revision P1

Project Number 224069-ASL-XX-00-DR-A-00115

OPTION 3



- Railway station concourse
- Bus station concourse
- Bus station facilities
- MSCP
- Urban realm
- Landscape areas
- New development
- Active travel hub
- Bus stance seating

0m 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m

VISUAL SCALE 1:500 @ A1

1 Plan View - Option L GF Plan
1 : 500

Rev	Description	Drawn	Checked	Date Issued
P1	Initial Issue	JW		22.03.2026

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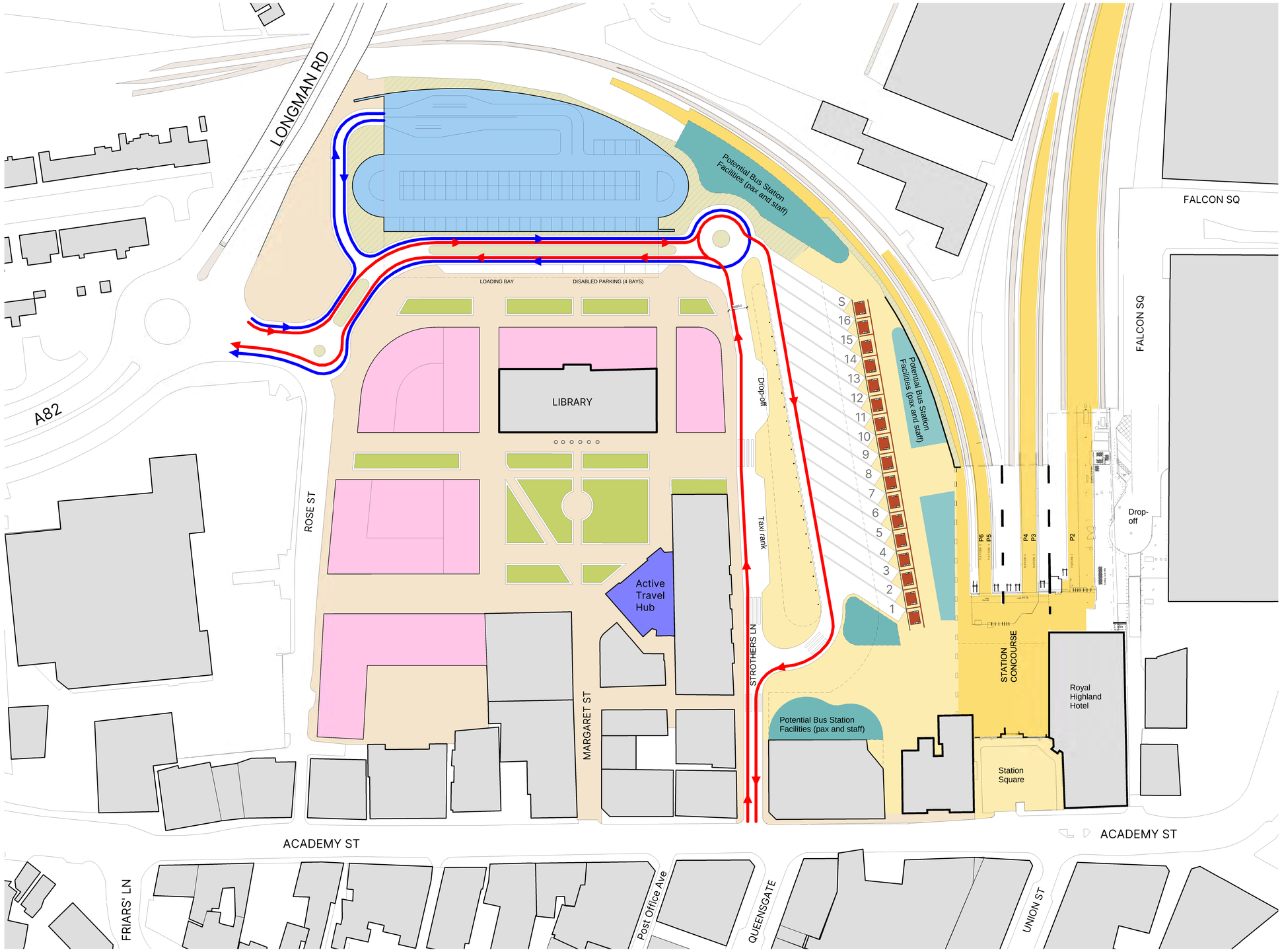
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Project Project Name

Description GFP Option L 1-500

Job No.	Drawing No.	Revision
Project Number	224069-ASL-XX-00-DR-A-00120	P1

OPTION 3



- Railway station concourse
- Bus station concourse
- Bus station facilities
- MSCP
- Urban realm
- Landscape areas
- New development
- Active travel hub
- Bus stance seating
- Bus routes
- Private car routes
- Taxi routes
- Service access
- Pedestrian routes
- Cycle paths
- Security line

0m 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m

VISUAL SCALE 1:500 @ A1

1 Plan View - Option L GF Plan Bus + Car route

1 : 500

Rev	Description	Drawn	Checked	Date issued
P1	Initial issue	AN		02.03.2026

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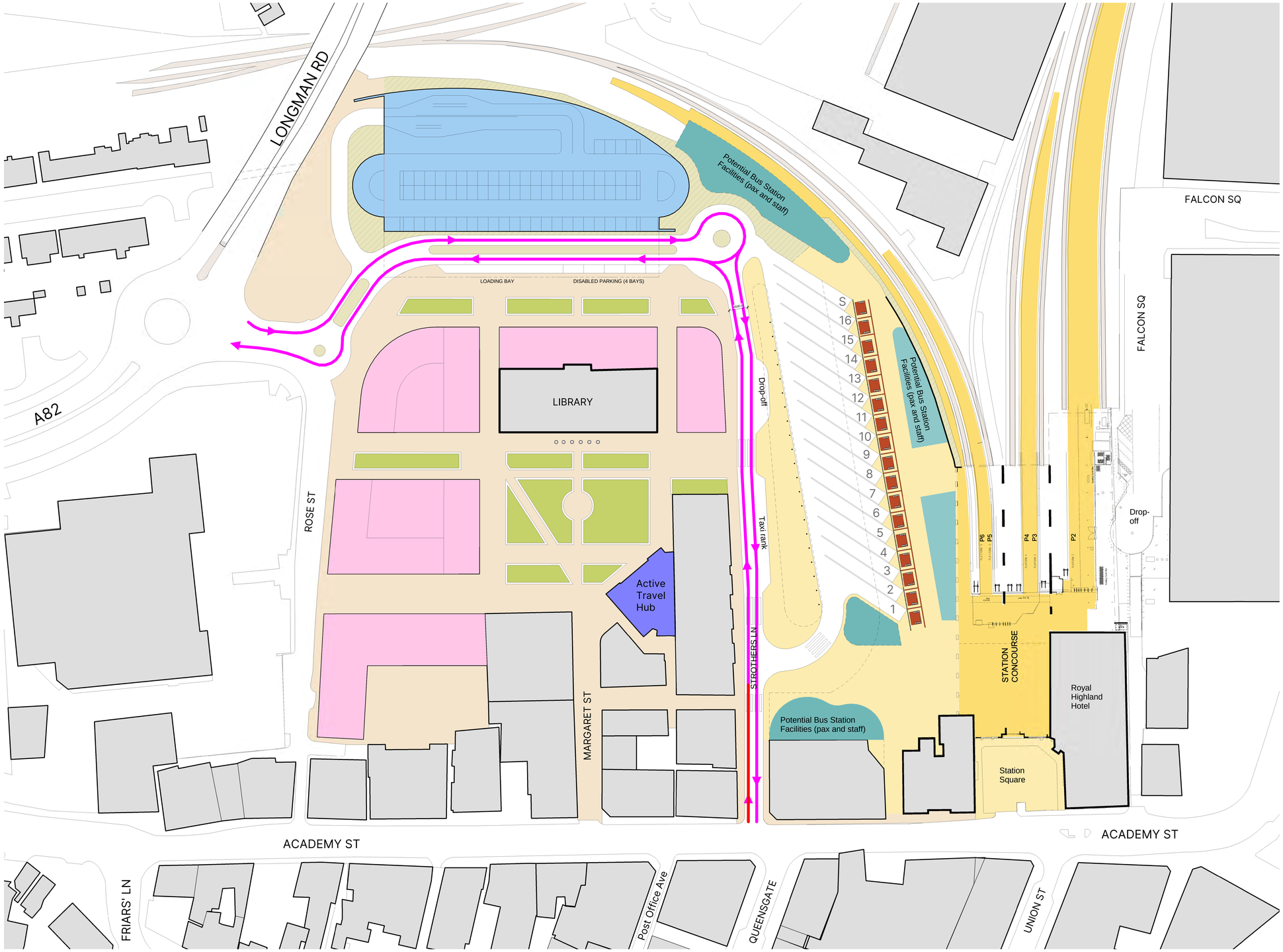
Project Project Name

Description GFP Option L 1-500 Bus + Car routes

Job No. Drawing No. Revision P1

Project Number 224069-ASL-XX-00-DR-A-00121

OPTION 3



- Railway station concourse
- Bus station concourse
- Bus station facilities
- MSCP
- Urban realm
- Landscape areas
- New development
- Active travel hub
- Bus stance seating
- Bus routes
- Private car routes
- Taxi routes
- Service access
- Pedestrian routes
- Cycle paths
- Security line

0m 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m

VISUAL SCALE 1:500 @ A1

1 Plan View - Option L GF Plan Taxi routes
1 : 500

Rev.	Description	Drawn	Checked	Date Issued
P1	Initial Issue	JAU		02.02.2026

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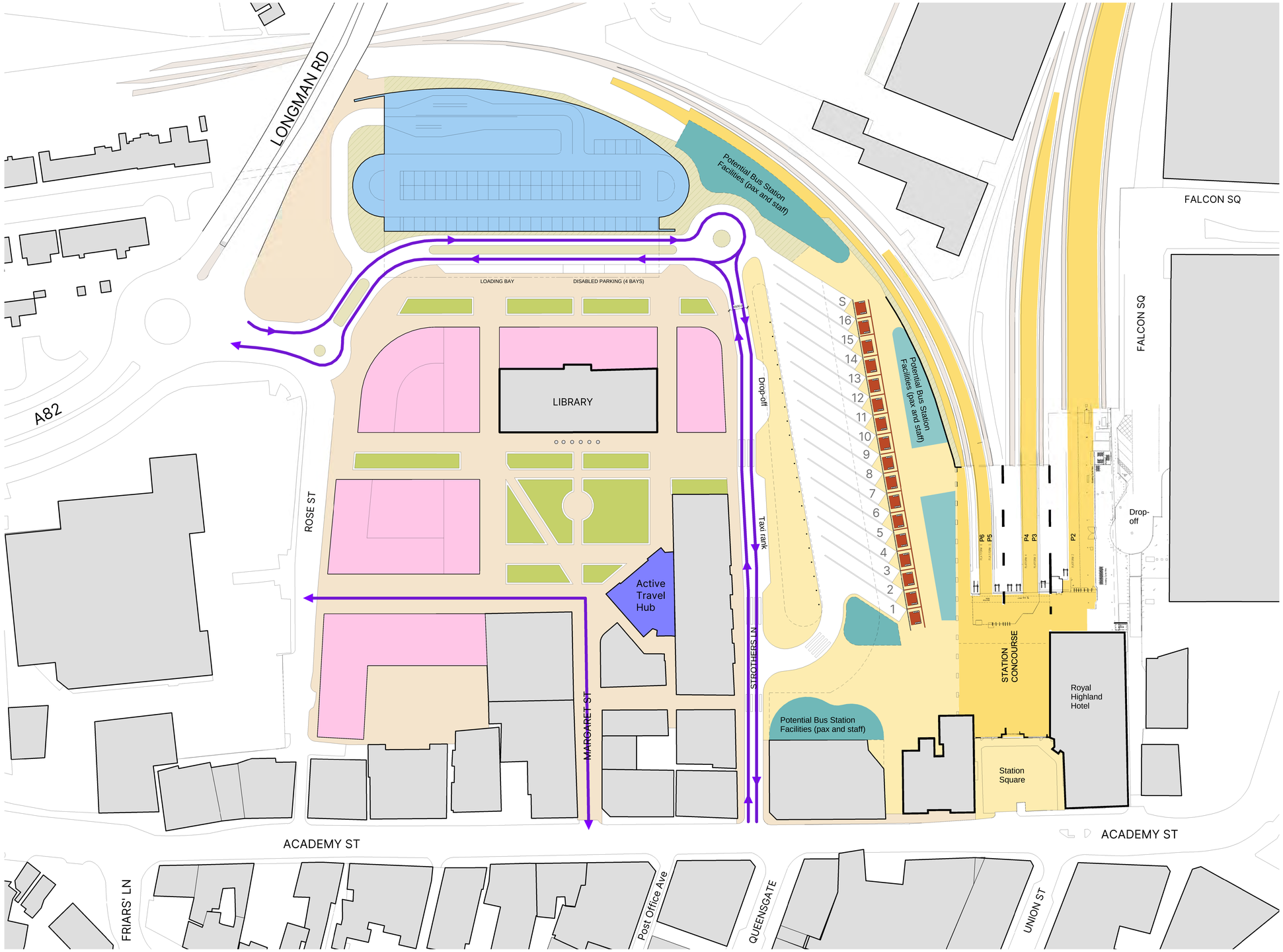
Austin·Smith:Lord

Project Project Name

Description GFP Option L 1-500 Taxi Routes

Job No.	Drawing No.	Revision
Project Number	224069-ASL-XX-00-DR-A-00122	P1

OPTION 3



- Railway station concourse
- Bus station concourse
- Bus station facilities
- MSCP
- Urban realm
- Landscape areas
- New development
- Active travel hub
- Bus stance seating
- Bus routes
- Private car routes
- Taxi routes
- Service access
- Pedestrian routes
- Cycle paths
- Security line

0m 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m

VISUAL SCALE 1:500 @ A1

1 Plan View - Option L GF Plan Service routes
1 : 500

Rev.	Description	Drawn	Checked	Date Issued
P1	Initial Issue	JW		02.03.2026

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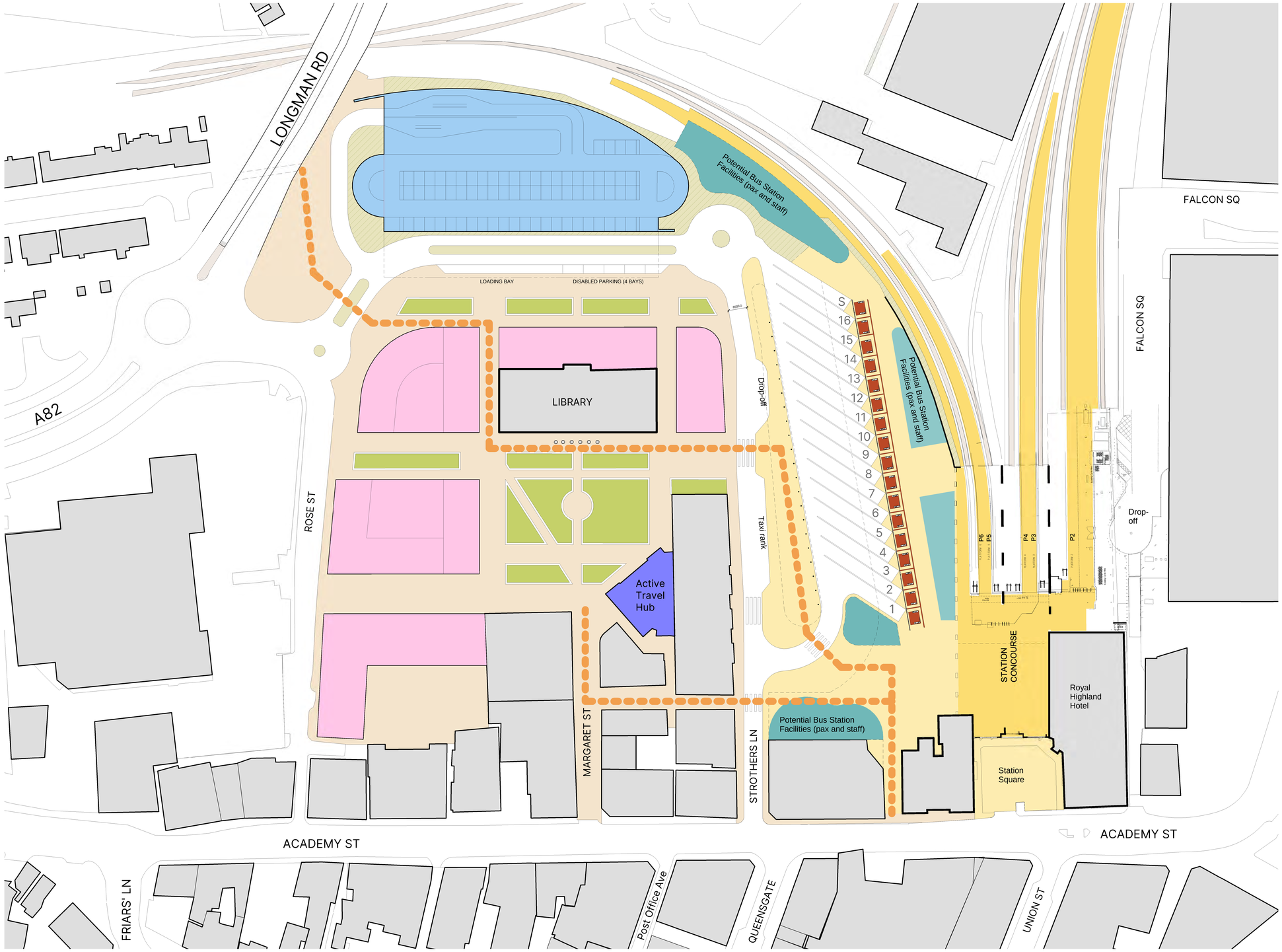
Project Project Name

Description GFP Option L 1-500 Service Routes

Job No. | Drawing No. | Revision P1

Project Number 224069-ASL-XX-00-DR-A-00123

OPTION 3



- Railway station concourse
- Bus station concourse
- Bus station facilities
- MSCP
- Urban realm
- Landscape areas
- New development
- Active travel hub
- Bus stance seating
- Bus routes
- Private car routes
- Taxi routes
- Service access
- Pedestrian routes
- Cycle paths
- Security line

0m 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m

VISUAL SCALE 1:500 @ A1

1 Plan View - Option L GF Plan Active travel routes
1 : 500

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P1	Initial Issue	AW		02.03.2026

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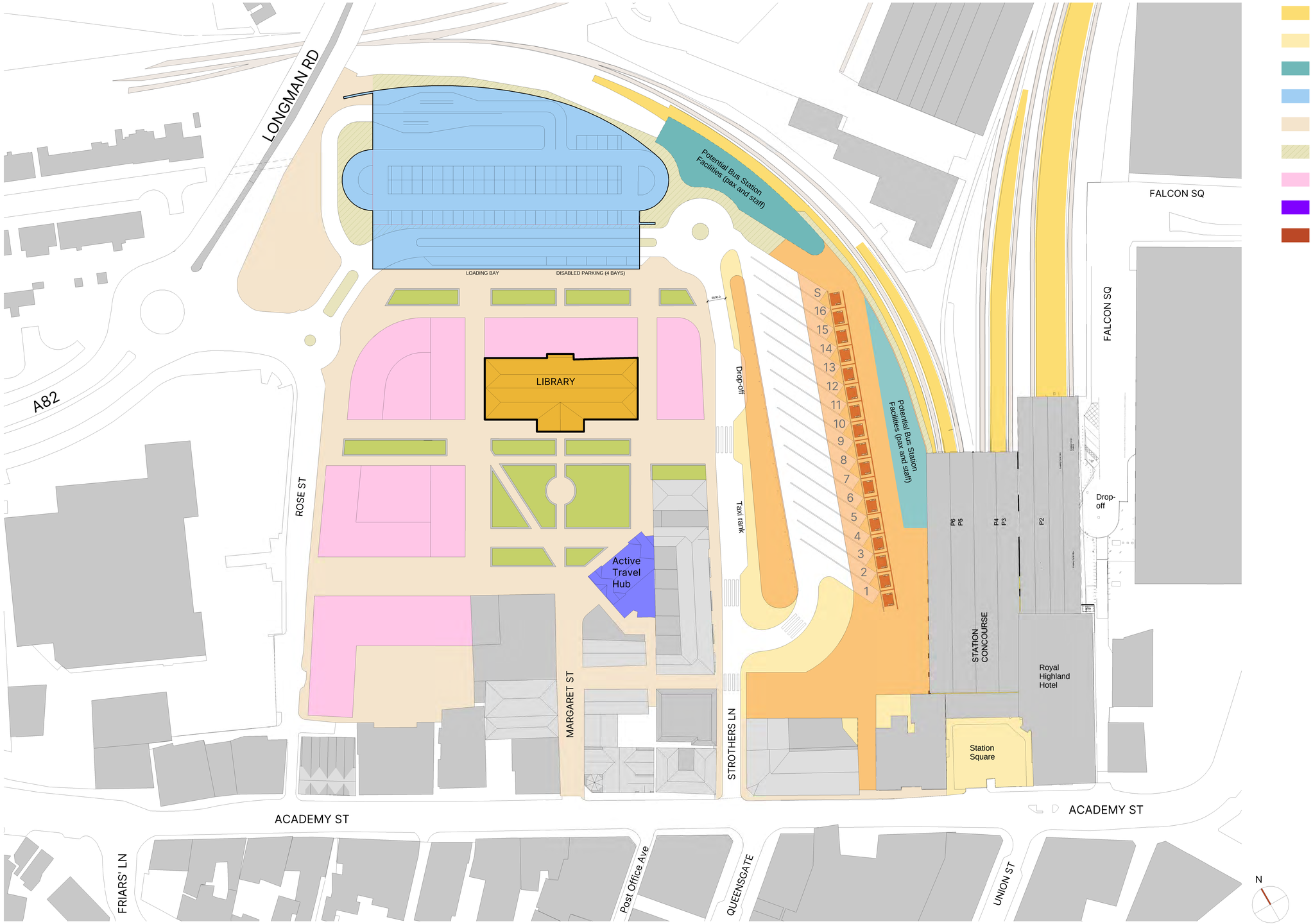
Project Project Name

Description GFP Option L 1-500 Active Travel Routes

Job No. Drawing No. Revision P1

Project Number 224069-ASL-XX-00-DR-A-00124

OPTION 3



- Railway station concourse
- Bus station concourse
- Bus station facilities
- MSCP
- Urban realm
- Landscape areas
- New development
- Active travel hub
- Bus stance seating

0m 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m

VISUAL SCALE 1:500 @ A1

1 Plan View - Option L Roof plan
1 : 500

Rev	Description	Drawn	Checked	Date Issued
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Austin·Smith:Lord

Project Project Name

Description Roof Plan Option L 1-500

Job No. Drawing No. Revision P1

Project Number 224069-ASL-XX-00-DR-A-00125

APPENDIX 1

Inverness Interchange Bus Station & Car Park Feasibility Study

HITRANS
June 2026
Public Engagement Report v1

Austin·Smith:Lord



Public Consultation Survey Findings : Executive Summary

Background and Purpose

HITRANS, with The Highland Council and Network Rail/ Scotland's Railway, commissioned the Inverness Interchange Feasibility Study to examine reprovision of the Bus and Coach Station, Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park and an Active Travel Hub in the 'Station Quarter' adjacent to Inverness Railway Station.

Public consultation explored views on the findings of the Feasibility Study, feedback on the existing facilities and options to reconfigure the Interchange and gauge the appetite for change. The response of public and key stakeholders was captured in a Public Consultation Survey which was available online and in person at Inverness Library during a 6 week period. 523 responses were received.





Public Consultation Survey Findings : Executive Summary

Overview

A review of the Engagement responses in the Public Consultation Survey confirms;

- A good level of engagement from a wide range of participants with local and lived experience of the existing area and facilities,
- An overwhelming level of dissatisfaction with the existing Bus Station and Multi-Storey Car Park with concerns raised about the poor first impression, personal safety and security and a challenging experience for passengers, especially those with disabilities.
- A strong level of support for a new Bus and Coach Station, replacement Multi-Storey Car Park and new Active Travel Hub. There is also strong support for a new civic square at Farraline Park and the proposed mixed-use redevelopment of the Station Quarter.
- Support is conditional with an emphasis on the need to manage cost, phasing and minimise disruption.
- A strong preference for layouts that relocate the Bus and Coach Station closer to the Railway Station and an expectation that any new development must provide a fully accessible, high quality and convenient passenger experience and enhance the look and feel of Inverness city centre.

Participation

The consultation ran from 27 February to 10 April 2026 and received 523 responses to a Public Consultation Survey. Most respondents live or work in Inverness City Centre, with many regular users of the bus station, railway station and car park across a broad age range and good gender balance, indicating that feedback reflects everyday users as well as visitors.

The Survey was available online and hard copy at Inverness Library. The Public Consultation Survey was widely publicised online, via media outlets, social media and poster campaigns. An in person drop-in event was held at Inverness Library on 11 March 2026 and was attended by 117 attendees. Briefing meetings and site visits were arranged with a wide range of key local stakeholders to promote wide participation. This included sessions with the Inverness Access Panel, Inverness BID and Inverness Chamber of Commerce amongst others.



Public Consultation Survey Findings : Executive Summary

Views on the Existing Situation

Public feedback is clear and consistent. The Inverness Bus Station, Rose Street Multi- Storey Car Park and surrounding area are widely regarded as outdated, unattractive, poorly connected and increasingly unfit for purpose as the main transport gateway to the capital of the Highlands.

Across all survey questions respondents overwhelmingly indicate that the bus station or car park fail to meet their needs or provide a positive first impression of the city. The strongest dissatisfaction relates to the appearance, arrival experience and civic image, with many describing the area as an embarrassing or unwelcoming gateway for residents, visitors and tourists. The poor setting of the listed Inverness Library is repeatedly highlighted as a major concern.

Connectivity between bus, rail, car and pedestrian routes is widely perceived as confusing, unsafe and inaccessible, particularly for older people, disabled users, parents with children and those travelling with luggage. Concerns about safety, comfort, weather protection and personal security (especially outwith peak hours) are recurring themes.

Support for Change and indicative proposals

Despite concerns about cost and disruption, support for redevelopment is strong. A clear majority agree that:

- a new Bus and Coach Station is needed;
- the Multi-Storey Car Park should be replaced;
- an Active Travel Hub should be included;
- a traffic-free civic square at Farraline Park would improve Inverness city centre; and
- the Station Quarter offers mixed-use redevelopment opportunity.

Support is strongest where proposals improve integration, accessibility, public realm and city image.

Key Conditions and Expectations

The consultation ran from 27 February to 10 April 2026 and received 523 responses to a Public Consultation Survey. Most respondents live or work in Inverness City Centre, with many regular users of the bus station, railway station and car park across a broad age range and good gender balance, indicating that feedback reflects everyday users as well as visitors.

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Location and Layout

There is very strong consensus that any new Bus and Coach Station should be located closer to the Railway Station, reinforcing the desire for a genuinely integrated interchange. There is support for all Option presented with strongest preference for Option 3, followed by Option 2 and 1 in that order.

Views on the precise location of replacement car parking are more mixed, with higher levels of neutrality indicating the need for further design development and reassurance.

Overall Conclusion

There is a clear mandate for change. Overall many respondents declare an eagerness to make progress to delivery.

While the detail varies, respondents agree the status quo is unacceptable. There is clear consensus to locate the Bus ad Coach Station closer to the Railway Station to deliver greater interchange integration. The Station Quarter has strong backing from respondents to become a welcoming, safe and accessible gateway befitting Inverness. Support is conditional on the basis that costs, disruption and phasing are well managed.

Public Consultation Survey Findings : Executive Summary

Project Background

Inverness is a growing City at the heart of a City Region and as the Gateway to the Highlands. It is undergoing a strategic masterplanning process to reimagine and guide the transformation of its City Centre, and its public transport infrastructure.

As part of this initiative **HITRANS** (the Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership), in partnership with **The Highland Council and Network Rail / Scotland's Railway**, commissioned an **Inverness Interchange Feasibility Study** to explore the scope for a new public transport interchange serving Inverness Railway Station and the City Centre.

The Feasibility Study (dated January 2026) explores the need and scope for the reprovision of a **Bus and Coach Station, Multi-Storey Car Park and Active Travel Hub** adjacent to Inverness Railway Station. The Active Travel Hub would provide facilities to encourage and enable more walking, wheeling and cycling to, in and around the City Centre.

This work complements and is part of the Inverness Station Masterplan, being promoted by Network Rail / Scotland's Railway, and is in line with Recommendation 43 in Transport Scotland's Strategic **Transport Projects Review 2** (STPR2).

The Feasibility Study

The Feasibility Study (dated January 2026) was progressed by Austin-Smith:Lord (masterplanners, architects, landscape architects), SCP (transport planners) and Cameron & Ross (engineers).

The Feasibility Study finds that;

1. The existing Bus Station and Multi-Storey Car Park need to be replaced.
2. There is sufficient space to accommodate a replacement Bus and Coach Station, MSCP and Active Travel Mobility Hub as part of a wider mixed-use regeneration of the 'Station Quarter' on land assembled by, and within the ownership of, The Highland Council and Network Rail / Scotland's Railway.

The Inverness Interchange Feasibility Study recommended a series of next steps to progress the technical design, options appraisal and public and stakeholder engagement require to inform the case for change.

The Feasibility Study findings were presented to The Highland Council City of Inverness Area Committee on 2 February 2026. Approval was sought and granted to proceed to undertake public consultation and stakeholder engagement based on the findings of the Feasibility Study. Subject to the findings of the consultation process it was anticipated that the evidence from the public consultation and stakeholder engagement would help support the case for funding to progress the design work.



Engagement Strategy

At this stage it was envisaged to have an Engagement Strategy in 3 phases as the project and proposals develop;

Phase 1 – Project Objectives and Options Review

Purpose : to outline the project context, brief and objectives. Consult on the general design principles and emerging options (as outlined in the Feasibility Study – January 2026) to inform design development.

Based on findings from the Phase 1 Consultation preferred option(s) would be identified (taking account consultation feedback and technical analysis). The preferred option(s) would be developed through to RIBA Stage 3

Phase 2 – Proposed Preferred Option

Purpose : to outline the proposed design prior to final technical design. Consult on the design concept, look and feel, phasing of the project and public space design.

Based on the findings from Phase 2 Consultation final design development would be undertaken in anticipation of a Planning Application.

Phase 3 – Pre-Application Consultation

Purpose : as required by planning policy for 'major applications' a final consultation would be undertaken during a statutory 12 week pre-application period to outline the final draft proposals prior to submission of a planning application. Any design adjustments in response to the pre-application consultation would be cited in the design and access statement accompanying the application.

This Report outlines the findings of the Consultation and Engagement undertaken in March / April 2026 as per Phase 1 of the process outlined above.

Purpose of the Phase 01 : March / April 2026 Engagement

This initial phase of engagement activity sought to;

- Raise awareness of the Inverness Interchange Feasibility Study and summarise its headline findings
- Present a series of indicative options that establish a series of key design principles namely;
    1. Seeking to re-locate a new 14-16 stance Bus and Coach Station adjacent to the Railway Station
    2. Re-provide a circa 850 multi-storey car park (MSCP) to the north of the study area
    3. To establish a pedestrian first zone around the 'Station Quarter' including a traffic-free new civic square at Farraline Park
    4. Promote a mixed-use city centre regeneration masterplan for the 'Station Quarter'
- Seek feedback and an indication of support (or otherwise) on the key design principles
- With reference to the indicative options invite consultees to indicate any preference and suggest any further improvements to the proposals to inform the preparation of a preferred option.



Engagement Strategy

Phase 1 Approach / Activities

Public Survey

The means of capturing feedback / evidence during Phase 1 Engagement was via a Public Survey which ran from 27 February 2026 at 9am until 10 April 2026 at 8pm.

This Survey was available online via The Highland Council's Objective platform, and via hard copies available at Inverness Library. To assist consultees a digital copy of the Information Panels on display in the Library were available for online review, alongside the Survey.

There were 523 completed survey responses, 493 online and 30 hard copies handed into the Library.

The outcome of the Public Consultation Survey is outlined in the Report prepared by the Highland Council (see below).



Encouraging Participation in the Process

To raise awareness of the Engagement process and encourage participation there was an Engagement Strategy and Communication Plan put in place. Activities to encourage wider participation included;

- **Public Exhibition in Inverness Library :** with information boards, copies of relevant Feasibility Report and hard copy surveys for completion available throughout the Survey period.
- **Public Drop-In Event :** staffed / facilitated event held in Inverness Library from 12 noon until 6.30pm on Wednesday 11 March. 117 participants attended the event.
- **Social Media :** THC promoted the Survey and associated public events online
- **Media :** local and national coverage of the Survey / Engagement via the BBC, Press and Journal and Inverness Courier
- **Flyers and Posters :** large format posters in highly visible locations in Inverness Railway Station, Bus Station and Library and wider flyer / poster distribution in city centre.
- **Stakeholder Meetings and Site Tours :** to encourage wide participation from a range of key stakeholders and groups the following meetings / presentation occurred;

1. Inverness BID (in person briefing) : 25 February 2026
2. Inverness Chamber of Commerce (in person briefing) : 25 February 2026
3. Scotrail (in person briefing) : 25 February 2026
4. Inverness Design Review Panel (online meeting) : 25 February 2026
5. Inverness Access Panel (in person meeting) : 25 February 2026
6. Inverness Councillors site visit : 11 March 2026
7. Inverness Chamber of Commerce member's lunch event : 24 March 2026
8. Inverness Access Panel site visit : 24 March 2026
9. Inverness BID Board Meeting (in person) : 30 March 2026
10. Inverness High School (in person) 2 April 2026

- **Press Coverage included;**

1. Inverness Courier : 27 January 2026 : https://www.inverness-courier.co.uk/news/pictured-the-before-and-after-of-the-planned-inverness-bus-425618/
2. Press & Journal : 28 January 2026 : https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/inverness/6943544/inverness-station-quarter-plans/
3. Press & Journal : 29 January 2026 : https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/inverness/6944856/inverness-station-quarter-revamp-people-react/
4. Press & Journal : 2 February 2026 : https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/6946394/inverness-station-quarter-consultation-event/
5. BBC News : 27 Feb 2026 https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c9wnvvv4e2wo
6. Inverness Courier : 27 February 2026 : https://www.inverness-courier.co.uk/news/consultation-launched-on-inverness-station-quarter-overhau-428441/
7. Press & Journal : 6 March 2026 : https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/inverness/6971373/inverness-station-quarter-interview-with-councillors-consultation/
8. Press & Journal : 11 March 2026 : https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/inverness/6975037/inverness-station-quarter-inverness-library-vox-pops/
9. Press & Journal : 13 March 2026 : https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/inverness/6975636/inverness-station-quarter-graham-ross-architect-interview/
10. Inverness Courier : 8 April 2026 : https://www.inverness-courier.co.uk/news/last-chance-to-comment-on-inverness-station-quarter-revamp-431988/



Encouraging Participation in the Process

Public Drop-In Event

To encourage participation and enable he local resident and business community to meet the client and consultant team to discuss the project a public drop-in event was held at Inverness Library on the 11 March 2026 from 12 noon to 6:30pm. The event was attended by a total of 117 people throughout the day.

All participants were invited to record their feedback via the Public Consultation Survey. However the points below reflect verbal feedback received in the course of the event.

Key Themes Identified:

Overall support and understanding:

Attendees at the public drop-in were almost unanimously supportive of the public transport Interchange proposals. There was general support for creating a public open and green space at Farraline Park and for improving the overall environment of the area.

Connectivity, circulation, and transport integration:

There was recurring concern at the poor quality of existing routes between Farraline Park (incl. MSCP and Bus Station) and the Railway Station. There was widespread support to improve these connections.

There was strong interest in better integration with local bus services and future accommodation of other city bus routes. Questions seeking clarification about road connections and circulation were common; with many welcoming confirmation that the MSCP would be directly accessible from the A82.

There was a desire expressed by some for segregated pick-up and drop-off for the bus station to avoid mixing with general traffic. Car access for businesses and residents in the Station Quarter, both for parking and drop-off, was highlighted as important.

Some attendees asked about railway services, focusing not on the station itself but on

improvements to the Aberdeen–Inverness line, longer and more frequent Highland Mainline trains, and low service levels on the Far North Line.

Underpass improvements under Longman Road and removal of bollards at the underpass were raised as priorities by some. Camper van parking was raised as an emerging issue in Inverness.

Site conditions, Facilities and Urban Environment:

There was widespread dissatisfaction at the pooor quality of the look, feel and layout of the existing bus station, MSCP and links to the Railway Station and city centre.

Ensuring that any new greenspace at Farraline Park not attract antisocial behaviour was a concern raised by some. The night-time economy in the area was mentioned as a factor influencing design and safety.

Public toilet provision was raised as an important amenity atht is lacking and should be provided. Accessibility, especially for people with sensory or mobility impairments and other vulnerable users came up frequently.

Ideas and opportunities:

Some suggestions were made by members of the public beyond the suggestions shown in the Information Panels. The idea of a new concert venue was suggested within one of the mixed-use blocks, potentially replacing the Ironworks.

Delivery, Phasing, and Expectations:

Attendants were keen to understand timelines for delivery, with a clear preference for progress as soon as possible. Phasing of the proposed works was raised as an important

consideration. Some negative comments were made about previous Academy Street proposals, though these did not appear to affect support for the Interchange.

Preference

Strong preference for Option 3 was expressed by many members of the public during the consultation, with a general desire to see the Bus and Coach Station located closer to the Railway Station for convenience and integrate services.

Scope of Redevelopment

It was noted by a participant at the Public Drop-In Event on 11 March 2026 that a commercial property on Margaret Street was incorrectly shown in the original Public Exhibition Information Boards as being within the scope of the proposals. This error was acknowledged and remedied and the online version of the Information Boards were adjusted to include the corrected 3d views. The Information Boards included at the end of this Report have the corrected plans and 3d views indicating that the existing Bus Station building and the Spectrum Centre are the only sites on Margaret Street included for proposed potential redevelopment.



Public Consultation March 2026

Online Survey Summary

The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

Inverness Interchange:

Bus Station and Car Park Feasibility Study

Co-iomlaid Inbhir Nis:

Sgrùdadh So-dhèantachd Stèisean Bhusaichean is Pàirc Chàraichean



Report on Consultation Responses

May 2026

www.highland.gov.uk



Executive summary

Background and purpose

HITRANS, with The Highland Council and Network Rail/Scotland's Railway, commissioned the Inverness Interchange Feasibility Study to examine reprovision of the Bus and Coach Station, Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park and an Active Travel Hub in the Station Quarter. Public consultation explored views on existing facilities and appetite for change.

Participation

The consultation ran from 27 February to 10 April 2026 and received 493 responses, plus 30 paper responses (total 523). Most respondents live or work in Inverness City Centre, with many regular users of the bus station, railway station and car park across a broad age range, indicating that feedback reflects everyday users as well as visitors.

Views on the existing situation

Public feedback is clear and consistent. The Inverness Bus Station, Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park and surrounding area are widely regarded as outdated, unattractive, poorly connected and increasingly unfit for purpose as the main transport gateway to the capital of the Highlands.

Across all survey questions, negative sentiment significantly outweighs positive sentiment. Respondents overwhelmingly disagree that the bus station or car park meet their needs or provide a positive first impression of the city. The strongest dissatisfaction relates to appearance, arrival experience and civic image, with many describing the area as an embarrassing or unwelcoming gateway for residents, visitors and tourists. The poor setting of the listed Inverness Library is repeatedly highlighted as a major concern.

Connectivity between bus, rail, car and pedestrian routes is widely perceived as confusing, unsafe and inaccessible, particularly for older people, disabled users, parents with children and those travelling with luggage. Safety, comfort, weather protection and personal security (especially outwith peak hours) are recurring themes.

Inverness Interchange: Bus Station and Car Park Feasibility Study
Co-iomlaid Inbhir Nis: Sgrùdadh So-dhèantachd Stèisean Bhusaichean is Pàirc Chàraichean

Support for change and indicative proposals

Despite concerns about cost and disruption, support for redevelopment is strong. A clear majority agree that:

- a new Bus and Coach Station is needed;
- the car park should be replaced;
- an Active Travel Hub should be included;
- a traffic-free civic square at Farraline Park would improve the centre; and
- the Station Quarter offers mixed-use redevelopment opportunity.

Support is strongest where proposals improve integration, accessibility, public realm and city image.

Key conditions and expectations

Public support is conditional. Respondents emphasise that success depends on:

- High-quality, durable design appropriate to a regional capital.
- Inclusive, step-free and weather-protected connections between all modes.
- Retention of adequate car access, drop-off and parking provision reflecting Inverness's large rural catchment.
- A clear transport-led focus, with other uses supporting rather than competing with interchange functions.
- Careful phasing and long-term stewardship to avoid loss of facilities or repeated poor outcomes.

Location and layout

There is very strong consensus that any new bus and coach station should be located closer to the railway station, reinforcing the desire for a genuinely integrated interchange. Views on the precise location of replacement car parking are more mixed, with higher levels of neutrality indicating the need for further design development and reassurance. Where preferences were identifiable, Option **3** is clearly favoured.

Overall conclusion

There is a clear mandate for change. While detail varies, respondents agree the status quo is unacceptable. With careful delivery, the Station Quarter has strong backing to become a welcoming, safe and accessible gateway befitting Inverness.

Contents

Executive summary **1**
Background and purpose 1
Participation 1
Views on the existing situation 1
Support for change and indicative proposals 2
Key conditions and expectations 2
Location and layout 2
Overall conclusion 2
Contents **3**
Introduction **4**
Responses **4**
Respondents **5**
Location 5
Age and gender 7
Frequency of use of facilities 8
Sentiment towards existing situation **9**
Inverness Bus Station results 9
Rose Street Multi Storey Car Park results 12
Additional comments regarding current situation 14
Sentiment towards indicative proposals 18
Results 18
Additional comments regarding indicative proposals 22
Indicative layout **25**
Results 25
Additional comments disagreeing with the position of elements 27
Design preference **30**
Conclusion **31**

Inverness Interchange: Bus Station and Car Park Feasibility Study
Co-iomlaid Inbhir Nis: Sgrùdadh So-dhèantachd Stèisean Bhusaichean is Pàirc Chàraichean

Introduction

HITRANS (the Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership), in partnership with The Highland Council and Network Rail / Scotland's Railway, commissioned an Inverness Interchange Feasibility Study.

The Study explored the need and options for the reprovision of a new Bus and Coach Station, Multi-Storey Car Park and Active Travel Hub adjacent to Inverness Railway Station and serving the City Centre. The Active Travel Hub would provide facilities to encourage and enable more walking, wheeling and cycling to, in and around the City Centre.

As part of an initial phase of engagement, the public were invited to provide comment in response to the proposals and findings of the Inverness Interchange Feasibility Study.

Responses

The online survey ran from 27-February-2026 09:00 to 10-April-2026 20:00 and received **493** responses in total: 10 from agents or representative and 483 from individuals. An additional **30** paper responses from individuals were later received, bringing the total to **523** responses.

The highest number of visitors to the survey was recorded shortly before the end of the consultation period with 3794 unique visitors.

The top 5 referring domains were as follows:

1. $direct (direct access): **3,036** referrals.
2. m.facebook.com (Facebook's mobile web domain): **2,150** referrals.
3. lm.facebook.com (Facebook's link-management domain): **1,692** referrals.
4. www.highland.gov.uk (The Highland Council): **1,069** referrals.
5. www.bbc.co.uk (BBC): **995** referals.

Respondents

Location

Reponses to the question on location were mixed: some responses were coded but the results were greatly expanded on the inclusion of the "Other (describe)" field. This prompted recodifying the information in an attempt to consolidate the responses.

Primary classification was carried out by the respondent's primary relationship to Inverness City Centre and not by their opinion or method of transport. The following 12 core categories were developed based on this:

1. **City Centre Resident**: Lives in Inverness City Centre or within walking distance.
2. **Inverness Resident (Non-City Centre)**: Lives in Inverness but not in the city centre (suburbs/outskirts).
3. **Nearby Town/ Suburban Visitor**: Lives just outside Inverness (e.g. Black Isle, Culloden, Smithton, Balloch, Nairn, Dingwall, Muir of Ord).
4. **Wider Highland/ Regional Visitor**: Lives elsewhere in the Highlands or Islands (e.g. Ullapool, Skye, Thurso, Wester Ross, Moray, Ross-shire).
5. **Regular Commuter to Inverness**: Travels into Inverness regularly for work/study but does not live there.
6. **City Centre Worker**: Works in Inverness City Centre (but may or may not live there).
7. **City Centre Business Owner/ Operator**: Runs a business, tourism operation, or professional service linked to City Centre activity.
8. **Regular Visitor (Non-Resident)**: Does not live locally but visits frequently for shopping, leisure, services, or visiting family/friends.
9. **Transport Hub User/ Through-Traveller**: Uses Inverness primarily as a bus/rail/coach interchange or onward travel hub.
10. **Occasional Visitor/ Tourist**: Infrequent or seasonal visitors, tourists, former residents visiting occasionally.
11. **Former Resident**: Previously lived in Inverness but now lives elsewhere.
12. **Unclear/Non-Specific**: Responses that provide no meaningful locational or usage information (e.g. ".", "Na").

To avoid double-counting in applying a single category to responses with multiple attributes the following hierarchy was applied to ensure the strongest functional relationship is captured:

Inverness Interchange: Bus Station and Car Park Feasibility Study
Co-iomlaid Inbhir Nis: Sgrùdadh So-dhèantachd Stèisean Bhusaichean is Pàirc Chàraichean

1. City Centre Resident.
2. City Centre Worker.
3. Business Owner/Operator.
4. Inverness Resident (Non-Centre).
5. Regular Commuter.
6. Nearby Town/Suburban Visitor.
7. Wider Highland/Regional Visitor.
8. Transport Hub User.
9. Regular Visitor.
10. Occasional Visitor/Tourist.
11. Former Resident.
12. Unclear.

The breakdown of the respondents' location is shown in Table 1: location of respondents.

Table 1: Location of respondents

Location	Number of responses	%
Unclear/Non-Specific	153	29.25%
City Centre Resident	147	28.11%
City Centre Worker	103	19.69%
Wider Highland/Regional Visitor	27	5.16%
Regular Commuter to Inverness	24	4.59%
Transport Hub User/Through-Traveller	15	2.87%
Regular Visitor (Non-Resident)	15	2.87%
Inverness Resident (Non-City Centre)	15	2.87%
Nearby Town/Suburban Visitor	11	2.10%
Business Owner/Operator	9	1.72%
Former Resident	4	0.76%
Grand Total	**523**	**100.00%**

The application of the Unclear/Non-Specific classification could be refined to increase the quantity of usable data but it is clear from the information that the vast majority of respondents either work or live in Inverness City Centre.

A partial postcode was requested as part of the consultation although many respondents supplied their complete postcode instead. This information is available in the consultation output and could be joined to GIS data to provide a map of respondent location.

Age and gender

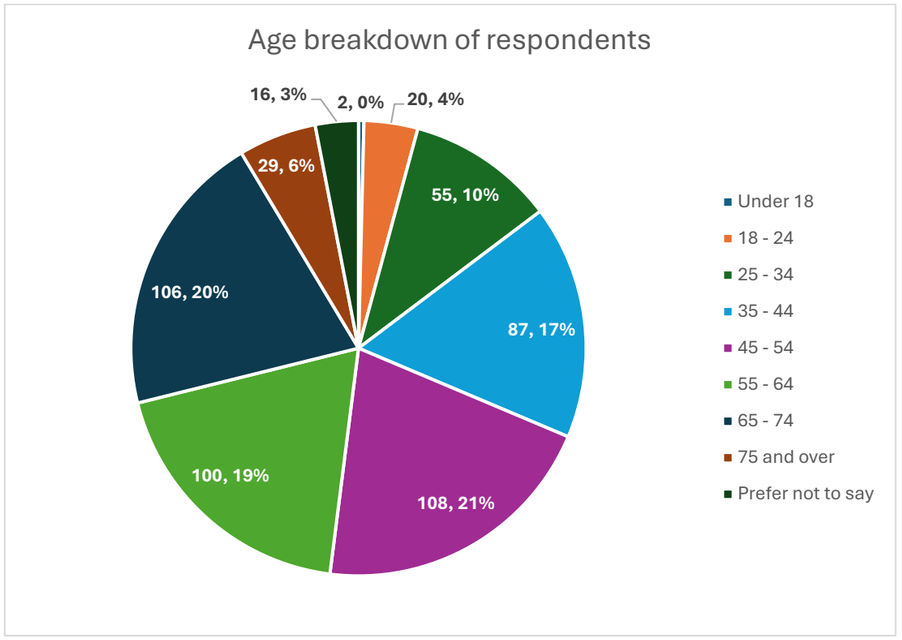
Age ranges were codified in the survey and can be seen in Table 2: Age of respondents.

Table 2: Age of respondents

Age	Number of responses	%
Under 18	2	0.38%
18 - 24	20	3.82%
25 - 34	55	10.52%
35 - 44	87	16.63%
45 - 54	108	20.65%
55 - 64	100	19.12%
65 - 74	106	20.27%
75 and over	29	5.54%
Prefer not to say	16	3.06%
Grand Total	**523**	**100.00%**

The ages of respondents are also expressed in Figure 1: Age breakdown of respondents.

Figure 1: Age breakdown of respondents



Gender was simply expressed as male, female or prefer not to say with the results shown in Table 3: Gender of respondents.

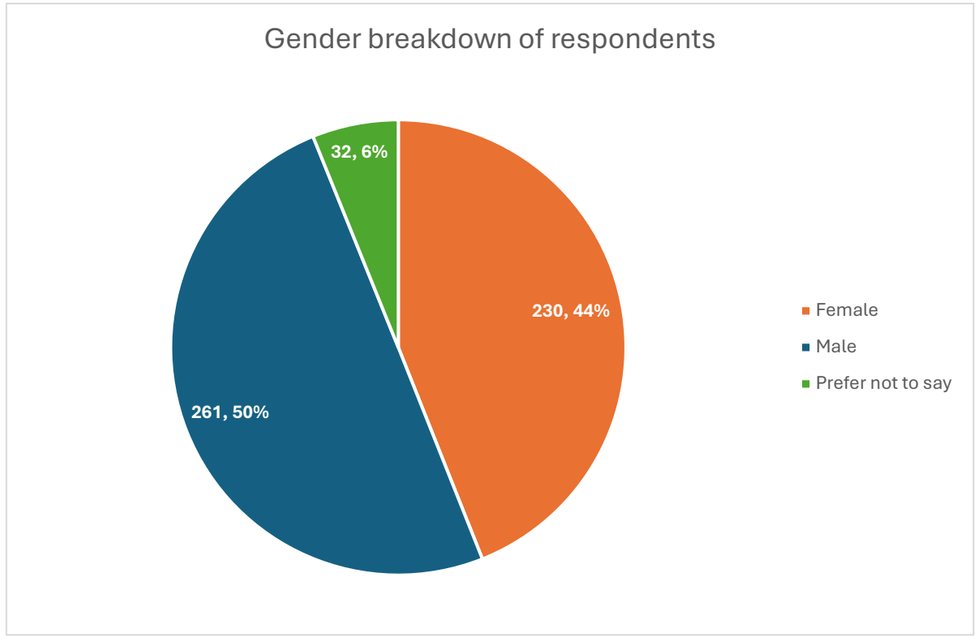
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Co-iomlaid Inbhir Nis: Sgrùdadh So-dhèantachd Stèisean Bhusaichean is Pàirc Chàraichean

Table 3: Gender of respondents

Gender	Number	%
Female	230	43.98%
Male	261	49.90%
Prefer not to say	32	6.12%
Grand Total	**523**	**100.00%**

The gender of respondents is also expressed in Figure 2: Gender breakdown of respondents.

Figure 2: Gender breakdown of respondents



Frequency of use of facilities

Respondents were also asked to indicate how frequently they used the facilities that are the focus of the Inverness Interchange Feasibility Study and how frequently they cycle in Inverness City Centre.

This information is summarised in Table 4: Frequency of use of Feasibility Study facilities.

Table 4: Frequency of use of Feasibility Study facilities

Frequency of use	Inverness Bus Station		Inverness Railway Station		Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park		Cycle in City Centre	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Frequently[1]	128	26.34%	127	26.24%	121	25.58%	115	24.84%
Occasionally[2]	283	58.23%	282	58.26%	277	58.56%	274	59.18%
Never	75	15.43%	75	15.50%	75	15.86%	74	15.98%
Grand Total	**486**	**100%**	**484**	**100%**	**473**	**100%**	**463**	**100%**

Sentiment towards existing situation

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with the following statements about the existing situation regarding the Feasibility Study area and its facilities:

Inverness Bus Station:

- Inverness Bus Station currently meets my needs and expectations.
- Inverness Bus Station is well connected with Inverness Railway Station.
- Inverness Bus Station currently provides an attractive arrival into Inverness City Centre.

Rose Street Multi Storey-Car Park:

- Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park currently meets my needs and expectations.
- Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park is well connected with Inverness Railway Station and Bus Station.
- Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park currently provides an attractive arrival into Inverness City Centre.

Inverness Bus Station results.

The sentiments towards Inverness Bus Station, its performance, connectivity and appearance are summarised in the following figures:

- Figure 3: Inverness Bus Station currently meets my needs and expectations.
- Figure 4: Inverness Bus Station is well connected with Inverness Railway Station.
- Figure 5: Inverness Bus Station currently provides an attractive arrival into Inverness City Centre.

[1] At least once a week.
[2] At least once a year.

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Figure 3: Inverness Bus Station currently meets my needs and expectations

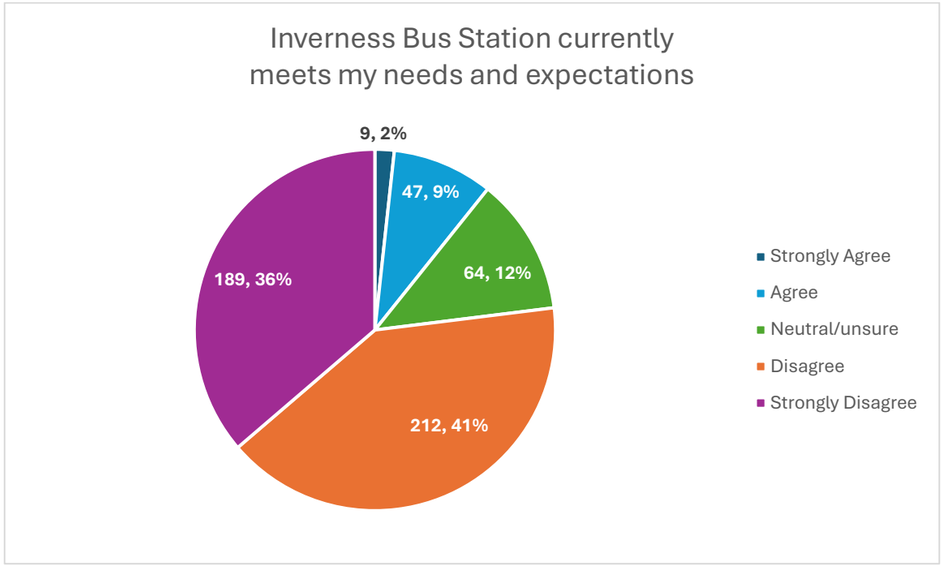


Figure 4: Inverness Bus Station is well connected with Inverness Railway Station

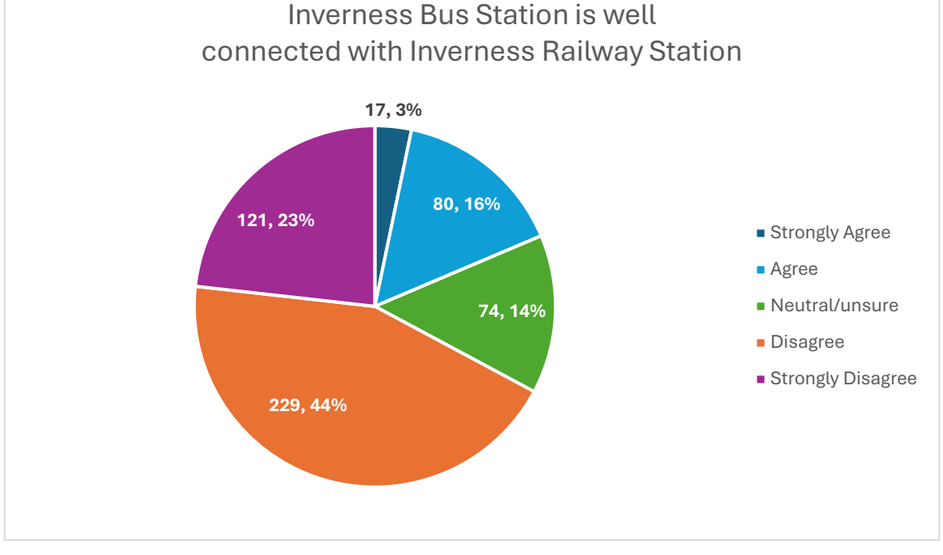
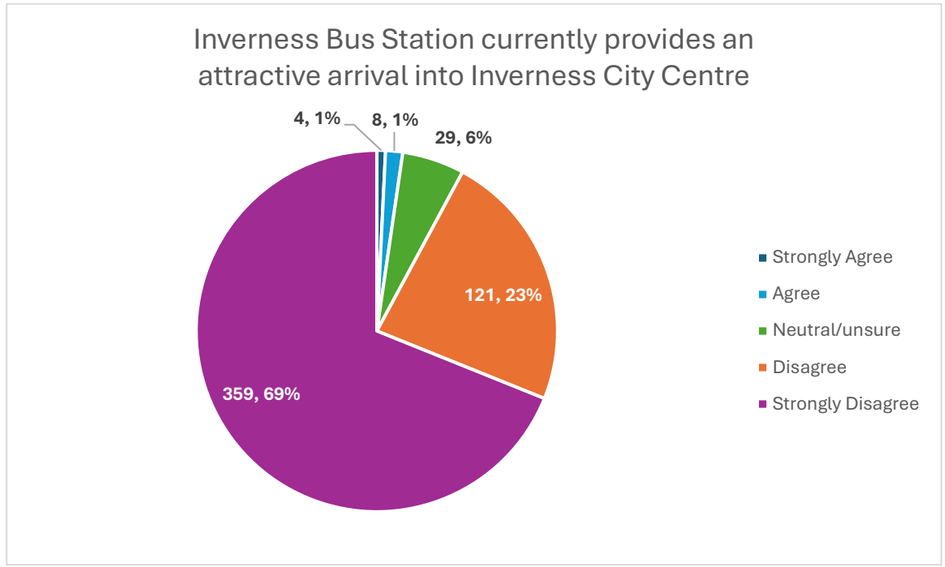


Figure 5: Inverness Bus Station currently provides an attractive arrival into Inverness City Centre



From these charts is can be seen that feedback on Inverness Bus Station is predominantly negative: a clear majority of the respondents either disagree or strongly disagree with each statement indicating widespread dissatisfaction with the performance, connectivity and appearance.

In brief:

- Most users feel the bus station does **not** meet their needs or expectations.
- While opinions are slightly less negative than for overall satisfaction, most respondents still feel the bus station is **not well connected** to the railway station.
- Respondents are highly critical of the bus station as an arrival point to the city, with attractiveness seen as a significant weakness.

The strongest concern relates to appearance and first impressions, followed closely by overall adequacy and interchange connectivity. Across all measures, only a very small minority express positive views, suggesting a clear mandate for improvement or redevelopment.

Inverness Interchange: Bus Station and Car Park Feasibility Study
Co-iomlaid Inbhir Nis: Sgrùdadh So-dhèantachd Stèisean Bhusaichean is Pàirc Chàraichean

Rose Street Multi Storey Car Park results

The sentiments towards the Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park, its performance, connectivity and appearance are summarised in the following figures:

- Figure 6: Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park currently meets my needs and expectations.
- Figure 7: Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park is well connected with Inverness Railway Station and Bus Station.
- Figure 8: Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park currently provides an attractive arrival into Inverness City Centre.

Figure 6: Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park currently meets my needs and expectations

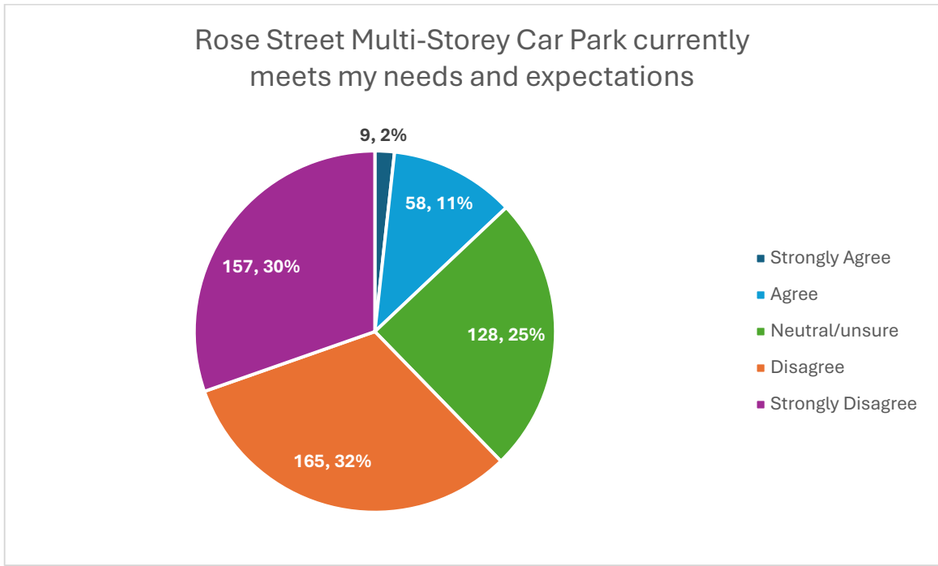


Figure 7: Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park is well connected with Inverness Railway Station and Bus Station

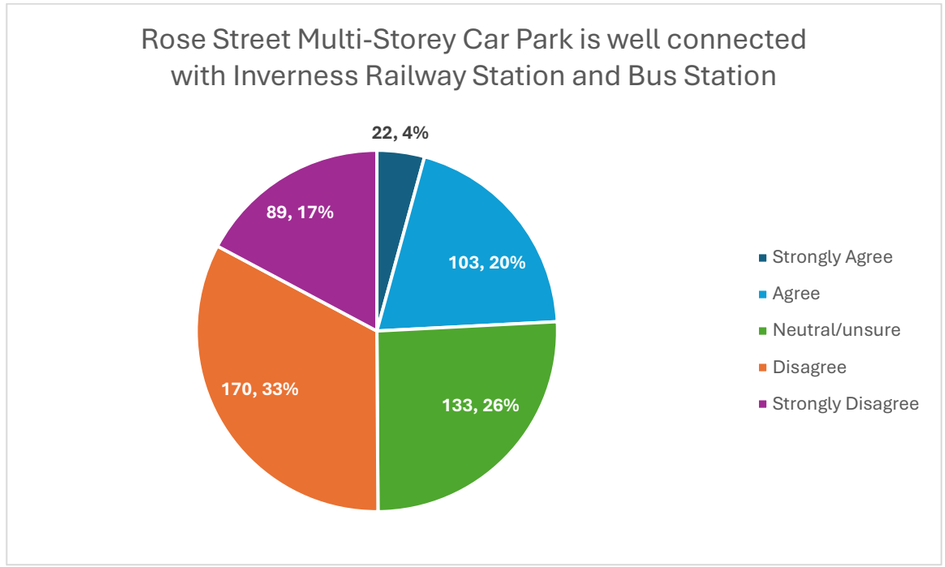
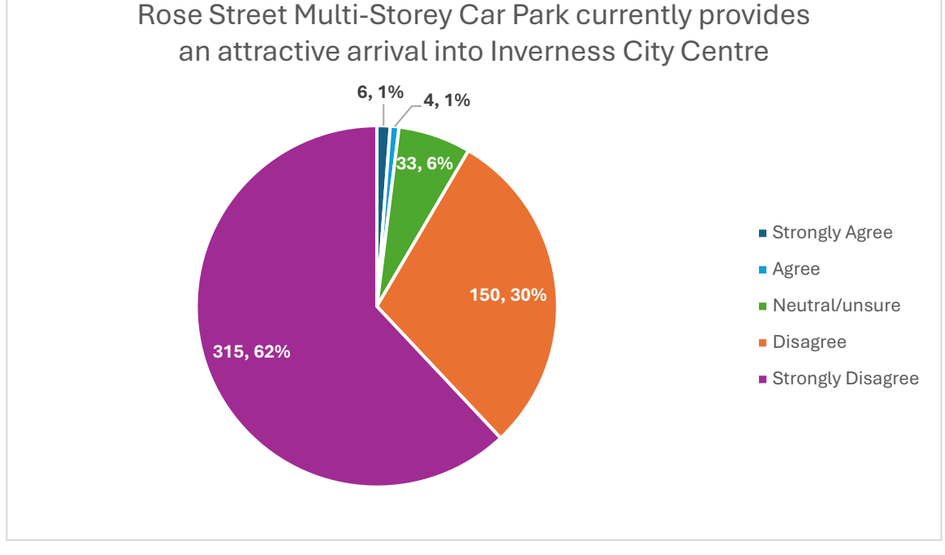


Figure 8: Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park currently provides an attractive arrival into Inverness City Centre



From these charts is can be seen that views on the Rose Street Car Park are generally negative however, opinions are more mixed on connectivity than on overall performance or attractiveness. As with the bus station, the appearance and arrival experience attract the strongest criticism.

Inverness Interchange: Bus Station and Car Park Feasibility Study
Co-iomlaid Inbhir Nis: Sgrùdadh So-dhèantachd Stèisean Bhusaichean is Pàirc Chàraichean

In brief:

- Opinions are less negative than for the bus station but a clear majority feel the car park does not adequately meet their needs.
- Connectivity is perceived more favourably than other aspects, but half of respondents still do not consider the car park well connected to public transport hubs.
- The car park is overwhelmingly seen as an unattractive arrival point into the city centre.

Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park performs slightly better than Inverness Bus Station in terms of connectivity but still falls short overall. The most critical issue is, again, poor first impressions and urban quality, suggesting that environmental, design, and placemaking improvements may be as important as functional upgrades.

Additional comments regarding current situation

In addition to recording their views on the prepared statements, respondents were also asked for any additional comments on the existing state of the Feasibility Study area.

These comments strongly reinforce the results shown in the charts. The dominant narrative is that the Bus Station, Rose Street Car Park and surrounding area are outdated, unattractive, poorly connected and increasingly unfit for a modern regional capital. A minority feel the facilities are “functional enough” or worry about cost and disruption, but there is broad agreement that the status quo is unacceptable, especially as the city’s primary gateway. Some responses indicate that parts of the existing provision are seen as **adequate in principle**, but this is tempered by poor condition, usability issues and an overall unsatisfactory experience.

Key common themes and concerns

- <u>First impressions and the city’s image:</u>
  - The area is repeatedly described as an “eyesore”, “embarrassing”, “grim”, “1970s concrete” and “a dreadful gateway to the Highlands”.
  - There is widespread concern that this is the first thing many visitors see, particularly tourists, NC500 travellers and people arriving by bus or train.
  - The contrast with the library building is repeatedly highlighted: the library is seen as a civic jewel that is hidden, diminished or surrounded by ugliness.
  - Many respondents compare Inverness unfavourably with Aberdeen, Glasgow, Perth and European cities, where transport interchanges are covered, integrated, safer and more welcoming.
  - The environment is frequently characterised as a congested, concrete-dominated and polluted setting, particularly around the bus station.

- Facilities are not fit for purpose:
    - Bus Station -
        - Too small for current and future demand.
        - Overcrowded stances and dangerous layouts.
        - Lack of full weather protection (rain, wind, cold).
        - Poor indoor waiting space and limited seating.
        - Toilets closed or unavailable outside business hours.
        - Layout that forces pedestrians to cross bus movements.
        - Inadequate information, signage and displays.
        - Feels unsafe, especially at night and for women, young people and older users.
        - Congestion and poor layout make it unpleasant and difficult to navigate, particularly for those unfamiliar with the city.
    - Rose Street Car Park -
        - Bays too small for modern vehicles (SUVs, vans, 4x4s).
        - Awkward pillars making spaces unusable.
        - Potholes, poor surfaces, leaks, concrete spalling.
        - Lifts frequently out of order.
        - Safety and structural concerns.
        - EV charging provision insufficient.
        - Many spaces closed, reducing capacity.
        - Overpriced for short stays, drop-off and long stays.
        - Poor experience for parents, disabled users and elderly drivers.
        - Reduced effective capacity due to frequent closure of bays, meaning users often need to park on upper levels.
- Poor connectivity despite proximity:
    - No clear, sheltered, direct pedestrian route between bus and train stations.
    - Walking routes pass through car parks, traffic, or poorly surfaced spaces.
    - Poor or confusing signage for visitors.
    - Unsafe crossings, high kerbs and poor segregation of pedestrians and vehicles.
    - Difficult or impossible for wheelchair users, people with buggies, suitcases or mobility impairments.
    - Lack of dedicated, marshalled drop-off and pick-up areas.
    - Taxis blocking roads due to lack of proper waiting areas.
    - While facilities are physically close, they are not effectively integrated, with:

Inverness Interchange: Bus Station and Car Park Feasibility Study
Co-iomlaid Inbhir Nis: Sgrùdadh So-dhèantachd Stèisean Bhusaichean is Pàirc Chàraichean

        - Walking routes described as unpleasant, exposed and difficult, particularly in winter.
        - A lack of covered, well-lit links, especially between the railway station and car park.
        - Poor coordination between bus and train timetables, limiting ease of interchange.
    - Difficulties with pick-up and drop-off are frequently highlighted as a major inconvenience.
- Accessibility and inclusion:
    - Difficulties for elderly people, disabled users, parents with children, visually impaired users and those with chronic illnesses.
    - High kerbs, uneven surfaces, long walking distances, exposure to weather.
    - Lack of step-free routes between modes.
    - Insufficient accessible parking, drop-off, and longer-stay options.
    - Anxiety and safety concerns, particularly after dark.
    - Limited consideration of Highland residents travelling long distances with specific accessibility needs.
    - The area is widely regarded as not pedestrian-friendly, particularly for infrequent users or visitors unfamiliar with the layout.
- Safety, comfort, and perception of security:
    - Many respondents describe feeling unsafe, particularly at night or early morning.
    - Poor lighting, enclosed concrete spaces, antisocial behaviour, and lack of staff presence are recurring issues.
    - Several mention verbal harassment, vandalism, unruly behaviour and fear when waiting alone.
    - Pedestrian–vehicle conflict is repeatedly described as dangerous.
    - Comfort is also a key concern with exposure to weather; cold, windy conditions and enclosed, poorly lit routes contributing to an overall unpleasant user experience.
- Lack of green space and civic quality:
    - Creating a civic square or park, particularly in front of the library.
    - More trees, planting and greenery.
    - Spaces to sit, linger, meet and shelter.
    - Design that reflects Highland identity, culture, language (including Gaelic) and pride.
    - Moving away from sterile, vehicle-dominated infrastructure.

  - Many explicitly say they want places to spend time, not just pass through and that the area feels “soulless” and “hostile”
- Desire for a truly integrated transport hub:
  - A combined bus and rail interchange.
  - Fully covered, weather-protected routes.
  - Integrated ticketing, timetables and information.
  - Dedicated coach and tour operator facilities.
  - Better provision for taxis, park and ride, bicycles and active travel.
  - Adequate capacity for future bus growth.
  - Reduction of congestion on Academy Street.
  - Emphasis on integration extends beyond physical layout to include timetable coordination, improved interchange experience in poor weather, and clear and intuitive wayfinding throughout the area.
- Economic and strategic concerns:
  - Cost concerns and fairness across the Highlands.
  - Carbon footprint of demolition and new build.
  - Fear of loss of parking capacity during construction.
  - Risk of repeating poor planning decisions.
  - Desire to tie transport improvements to retail, cafés, services and activity, not just infrastructure.
  - Calls for learning from successful examples like Union Square (Aberdeen), Broxden (Perth), and European hubs.
  - Some responses indicate that “neutral” survey responses may reflect basic adequacy rather than positive satisfaction, which is important for interpreting overall results.

Minority view

A smaller group argue the facilities are “functional enough” and money should instead go to public transport services, roads, or rural areas. However, even many of these acknowledge the area is unattractive, outdated or in poor condition.

Areas of broad consensus

- The area is a poor and embarrassing gateway to Inverness.
- The Bus Station and Rose Street Car Park are dated and unattractive.
- Connectivity between modes is confusing, unsafe and inaccessible.
- The environment prioritises vehicles over people.
- The library deserves a much better setting.
- Future investment should focus on integration, accessibility, safety and civic quality.

Inverness Interchange: Bus Station and Car Park Feasibility Study
Co-iomlaid Inbhir Nis: Sgrùdadh So-dhèantachd Stèisean Bhusaichean is Pàirc Chàraichean

Conclusion

Taken together, these comments show a powerful mandate for change. While views differ on how far redevelopment should go, the dominant concern is not only aesthetics, but safety, dignity, accessibility and civic pride. Respondents are asking for Inverness to function like a regional capital and transport hub for the Highlands, offering:

- a welcoming first impression;
- dignified public spaces;
- safe and accessible movement for all; and
- infrastructure that reflects the city’s importance, not its past.

Sentiment towards indicative proposals

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with the following statements about the indicative proposals:

- A new Bus and Coach Station is required and should be located within the ‘Station Quarter’ Study Area.
- A new Multi-Storey Car Park replacing the existing structure should be provided within the ‘Station Quarter’ Study Area.
- An Active Travel Hub providing access to e-bikes/cycle storage and encouraging more walking/wheeling/cycling should be provided within the ‘Station Quarter’ Study Area.
- A new traffic-free civic square at Farraline Park should be created and would improve the City Centre.
- The Station Quarter provides an opportunity for a mixed-use redevelopment (e.g. housing/leisure/retail/commercial) that would improve the City Centre.

Results

The sentiments towards the indicative proposals are summarised in the following figures:

- Figure 9: A new Bus and Coach Station is required and should be located within the ‘Station Quarter’ Study Area.
- Figure 10: A new Multi-Storey Car Park replacing the existing structure should be provided within the ‘Station Quarter’ Study Area.
- Figure 11: An Active Travel Hub should be provided within the ‘Station Quarter’ Study Area.

- Figure 12: A new traffic-free civic square at Farraline Park should be created and would improve the City Centre.
- Figure 13: The Station Quarter provides an opportunity for a mixed-use that would improve the City Centre.

Figure 9: A new Bus and Coach Station is required and should be located within the 'Station Quarter' Study Area

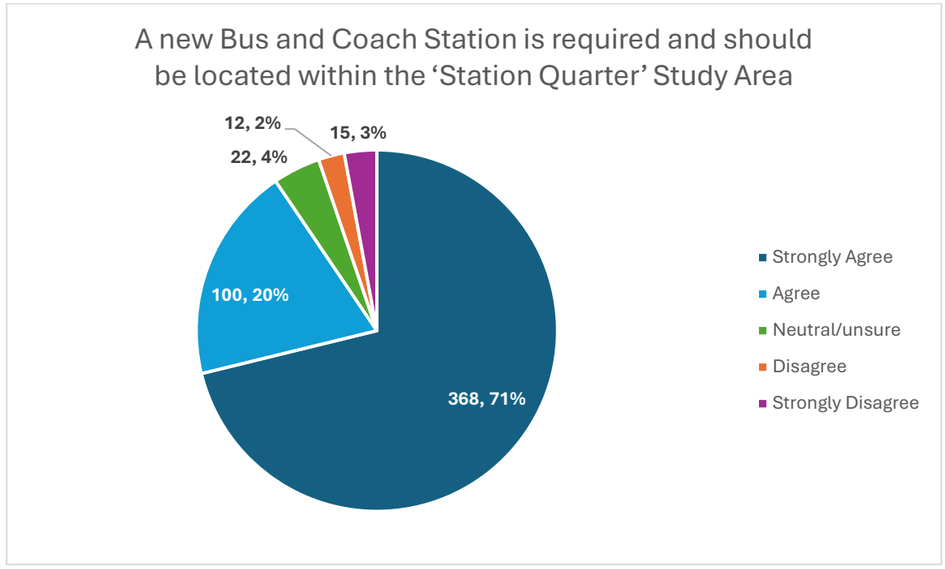
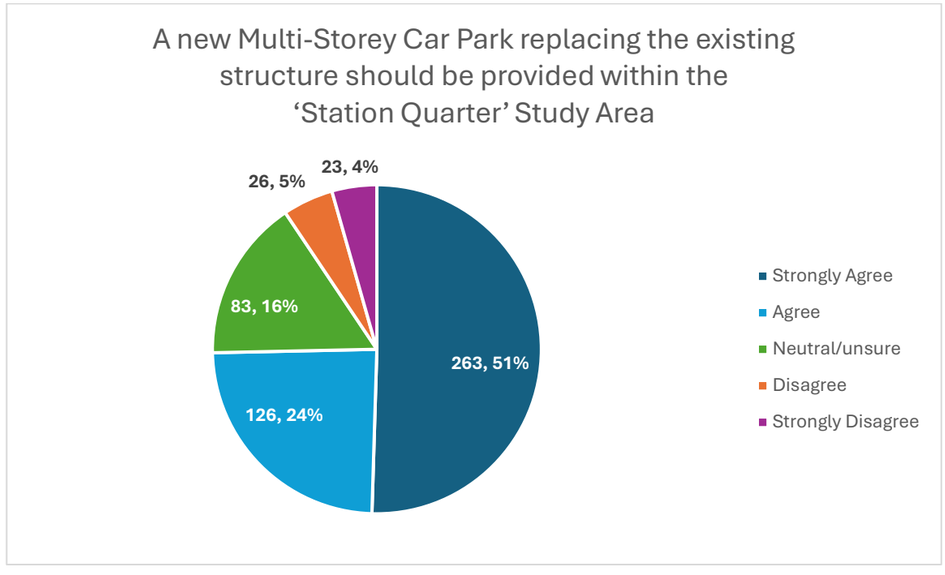


Figure 10: A new Multi-Storey Car Park replacing the existing structure should be provided within the 'Station Quarter' Study Area



Inverness Interchange: Bus Station and Car Park Feasibility Study
Co-iomlaid Inbhir Nis: Sgrùdadh So-dhèantachd Stèisean Bhusaichean is Pàirc Chàraichean

Figure 11: An Active Travel Hub should be provided within the 'Station Quarter' Study Area

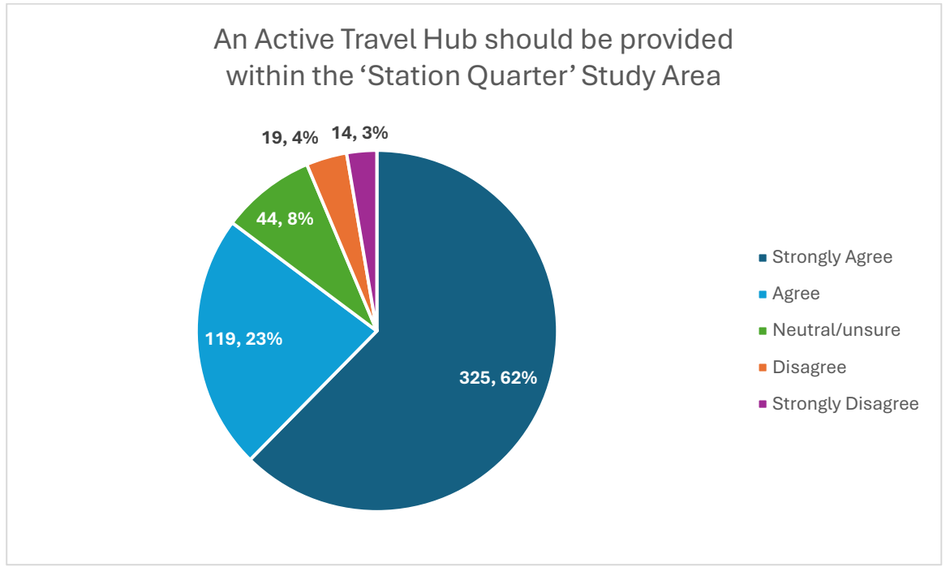


Figure 12: A new traffic-free civic square at Farraline Park should be created and would improve the City Centre

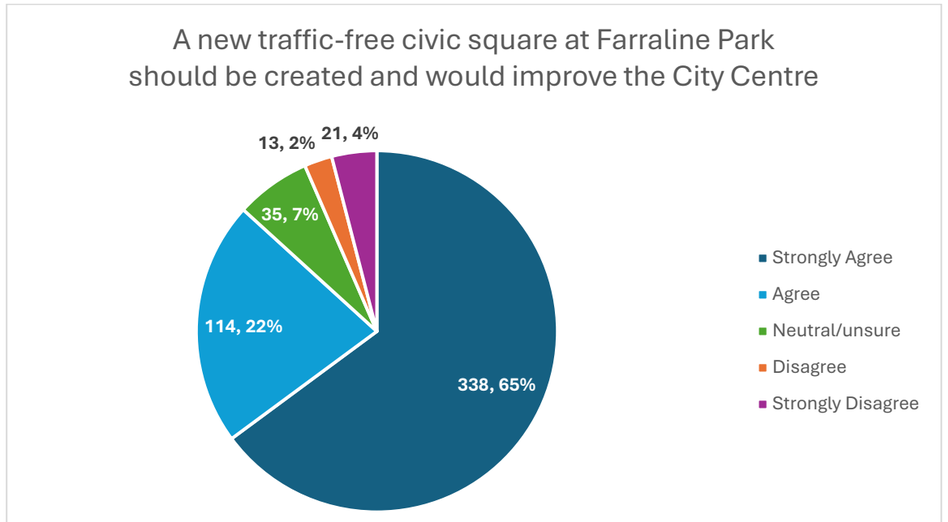
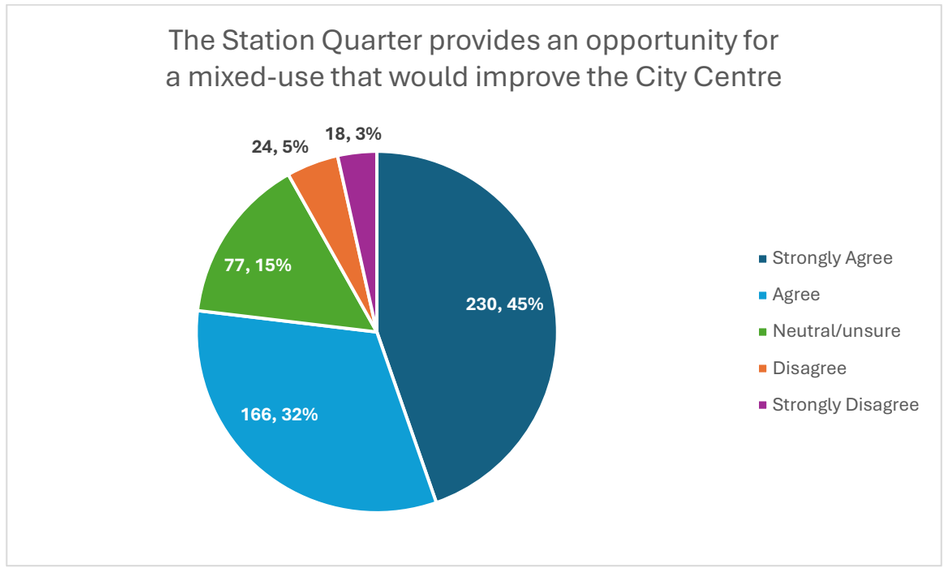


Figure 13: The Station Quarter provides an opportunity for a mixed-use that would improve the City Centre



From these charts it can be seen that there is strong and consistent public support for redevelopment within the Station Quarter. Across all five proposals, a clear majority of respondents agree or strongly agree, with particularly strong backing for a new bus and coach station, an active travel hub, and a new civic square. Opposition is limited in all cases.

In brief:

- There is overwhelming agreement that a new bus and coach station is needed and that the Station Quarter is the right location.
- Most respondents support replacing the existing car park with a new, modern facility, though there is slightly more neutrality than on the bus station question.
- There is broad agreement that provision for cycling, e-bikes and active travel should form a core part of the Station Quarter redevelopment.
- Respondents strongly support the creation of a traffic-free civic square, viewing it as a major opportunity to improve the City Centre.
- Most respondents recognise the Station Quarter as a key opportunity for mixed-use development, though this proposal attracts slightly more neutral responses than the transport-focused options.

Across all five proposals there is a strong and consistent mandate for change. Respondents clearly support:

- A new, modern bus and coach station.

Inverness Interchange: Bus Station and Car Park Feasibility Study
Co-iomlaid Inbhir Nis: Sgrùdadh So-dhèantachd Stèisean Bhusaichean is Pàirc Chàraichean

- Replacement of the existing multi-storey car park.
- Investment in active and sustainable travel.
- Creation of a high-quality civic square.
- A broader mixed-use redevelopment of the Station Quarter.

Public confidence is highest for transport integration, active travel and public space which reinforces the view that redevelopment should prioritise people, connectivity and City Centre quality.

Additional comments regarding indicative proposals

In addition to recording their views on the prepared statements, respondents were also asked for any additional comments on the indicative proposals.

These additional comments show strong overall support for the direction of travel set out in the indicative proposals, particularly the creation of a joined-up transport hub, a civic green space at Farraline Park and improved conditions for pedestrians and active travel. However, support is conditional: respondents repeatedly stress that success depends on good design, inclusive access, adequate car provision and long-term maintenance, rather than simply moving buildings around or delivering a “vanity project”.

Common themes and concerns

- <u>Strong support for a joined-up transport hub:</u>
  - Bus, rail, coach, taxi, cycling and walking should be co-located and seamlessly connected.
  - Interchange should be obvious, safe, sheltered and legible for visitors and locals.
  - Integration is particularly important for people arriving from across the Highlands, not just Inverness.
  - Many respondents emphasise that the primary purpose of the Station Quarter must remain transport, with commercial and leisure uses playing a supporting role.
  - Integration and ease of transfer matter more than flair.
  - There is also an expectation that the hub functions as a single, cohesive system, rather than separate or segmented elements, with clear provision for waiting, resting and basic traveller needs such as seating and refreshments.
- <u>The civic square and green space are seen as transformational:</u>
  - Restore the library as a focal civic building.
  - Create space for events, markets, performances, and informal use.

  - Provide a place to wait, rest, and spend time, especially between travel legs.
  - Improve wellbeing and the overall atmosphere of the city centre.
  - Many respondents see this as Inverness's opportunity to finally gain a true central green space, comparable to other Scottish and European cities.
  - The square must be active, well-maintained and overlooked or there are concerns it could feel unsafe or underused.
  - The space should be genuinely green, incorporating trees, planting and seating, and avoiding a hard-surfaced, "concrete plaza" outcome.
- <u>Active travel is strongly supported – but must be practical and secure:</u>
  - There is widespread backing for an Active Travel Hub, but comments show a desire for clarity and ambition.
  - Secure, covered cycle storage very close to bus and rail platforms.
  - Provision for non-standard cycles (cargo bikes, trikes, adapted cycles).
  - Facilities such as hire, repair and e-bike charging.
  - Improvements to the wider cycling and walking network, not just within the site.
  - Good lighting, surveillance and design to prevent theft and vandalism.
  - A common concern is active travel will only be widely used if it feels safe, convenient and continuous beyond the quarter itself.
  - There are also concerns about potential conflict between cyclists/e-bikes and pedestrians, reinforcing the need for careful design that prioritises pedestrian comfort and safety.
- <u>Car access remains essential, especially for a regional hub:</u>
  - Inverness serves a large, rural catchment where car use is unavoidable.
  - Adequate drop-off/pick-up space for private cars is essential (not taxis only).
  - Short-stay or free/low-cost drop-off is vital for elderly users, families and people with mobility issues.
  - Long-stay parking or park-and-ride options are needed to support rail and coach use.
  - Existing parking capacity should not be lost before replacements are in place.
  - Views differ on whether a multi-storey car park must be in the Station Quarter itself, but there is strong agreement that accessibility must not be reduced.
- <u>Mixed-use development: support, but with caution:</u>
  - Respondents are broadly positive about leisure, community, culture and small-scale retail uses, including cafés and food kiosks,community and

cultural facilities (often referencing a replacement for the Spectrum Centre) and spaces that keep the area active outside peak travel times.
  - However, housing is the most contested element: many oppose housing altogether in this location while others support housing only if it is social/affordable and not short-term lets.
  - Concerns include noise, amenity conflicts and blocking light or views to the civic space.
  - Several note Inverness already has many empty retail units and hotels.
  - Amenities and community uses are more important here than residential development.
  - There is also a preference for uses that support everyday activity and the travel experience (rest, waiting, community use) rather than additional retail or commercial development.
- <u>Design quality, phasing and long-term thinking matter:</u>
  - High-quality architecture that complements the listed library.
  - Avoiding "cheap" or short-term solutions.
  - Weather protection as a design driver (wind, rain, cold).
  - Clear, safe pedestrian routes between all elements.
  - Phasing development so existing facilities (especially parking) are not lost prematurely.
  - Considering long-term change: population growth, more buses, rail expansion, EVs, cycling.
  - Many stress this should be a once-in-a-generation piece of city-building, not a reshuffle of outdated assets.
  - There is also a clear expectation that proposals should move forward decisively and deliver tangible improvements.
- <u>Cost, fairness and trust concerns:</u>
  - Public spending priorities (roads, potholes, rural areas).
  - Embedded carbon in demolition.
  - Fear of over-ambitious or poorly justified projects.
  - Distrust of delivery, maintenance and governance.
  - Even among supporters, there is a call for clear justification, realistic costs, and demonstrable benefits for residents as well as visitors.

Additional observations

There is notable alignment between these comments and earlier feedback: people want accessibility, warmth, greenery, clarity and dignity, not just new buildings.

The library is unanimously viewed as a civic anchor whose setting should drive the design of the whole quarter.

Respondents repeatedly stress that doing nothing is not acceptable, but neither is getting it wrong.

Conclusion

The additional comments reinforce a strong mandate in principle for the five indicative proposals. Public support is highest where proposals:

- improve integration between transport modes;
- create a genuine civic green space;
- prioritise people over vehicles while still recognising rural car dependency; and
- focus on community, accessibility and everyday use.

The prevailing message is:

“Get the transport right first, make the place human and green, don’t exclude people who rely on cars, and build something Inverness can be proud of for decades.”

Indicative layout

As part of the engagement, respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with the following statements regarding the positioning of facilities within the indicative layouts in the Feasibility Study:

- Do you agree that any new Bus and Coach Station should be located closer to the Railway Station as shown in the indicative options?
- Do you agree that any new Multi-Storey Car Park should be located in the North of the Study Area behind the listed Library building as shown in the indicative options?

Results

The sentiments towards the location of the bus and coach station and the car park are summarised in the following figures:

- Figure 14: Do you agree that any new Bus and Coach Station should be located closer to the Railway Station?
- Figure 15: Do you agree that any new Multi-Storey Car Park should be located in the north of the Study Area behind the listed Library building?

Inverness Interchange: Bus Station and Car Park Feasibility Study
Co-iomlaid Inbhir Nis: Sgrùdadh So-dhèantachd Stèisean Bhusaichean is Pàirc Chàraichean

Figure 14: Do you agree that any new Bus and Coach Station should be located closer to the Railway Station?

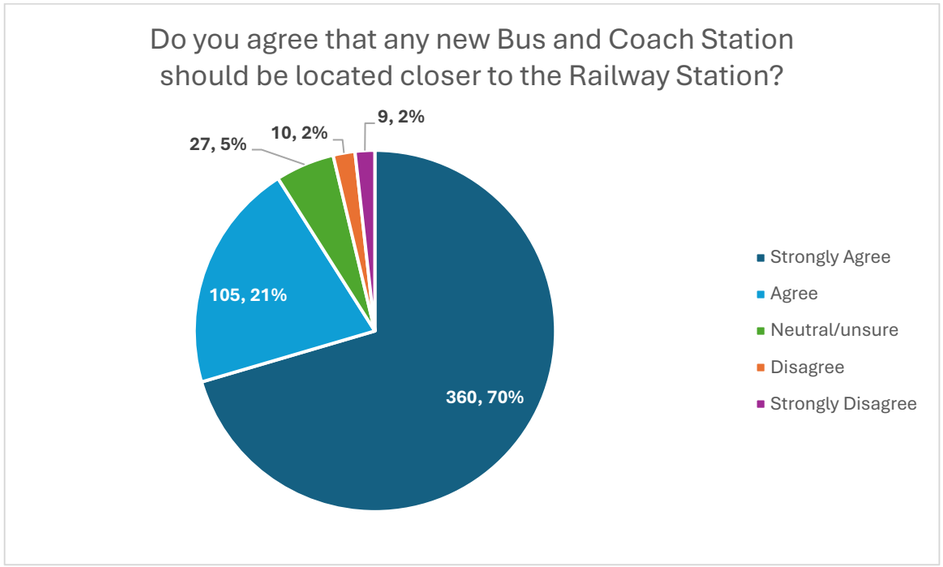
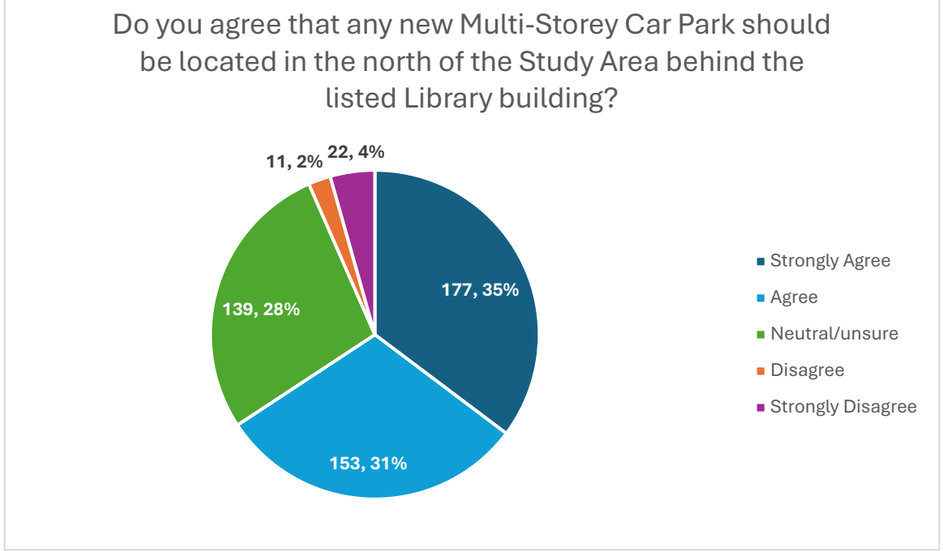


Figure 15: Do you agree that any new Multi-Storey Car Park should be located in the north of the Study Area behind the listed Library building?



From these charts it can be seen that there is very strong support for closer integration of transport facilities, particularly for locating a new bus and coach station nearer to the railway station. Views on the location of a replacement multi-storey car park are more mixed, with a substantial proportion neutral or uncertain.

In brief:

- There is an exceptionally strong consensus that any new bus and coach station should be located closer to the railway station.
- A majority support the proposed car park location, levels of neutrality are relatively high, suggesting ongoing uncertainty.

The results show a clear public mandate for closer bus-rail integration, with near-unanimous support for relocating the bus and coach station nearer the railway station clearly reinforcing the desire for a fully integrated transport interchange. In contrast, while there is general support for replacing the multi-storey car park, opinions are more cautious about its precise location, indicating this aspect may require further explanation, design development or reassurance as proposals progress.

Additional comments disagreeing with the position of elements

If respondents disagreed with the position of the bus station or car park in the indicative designs they were asked for reasons that led to their negative reaction.

Those who disagreed with the proposed bus station location formed a small minority, but their comments reveal clear and recurring objections. These are less about opposition to public transport itself and more about location preference, public spending, wider strategic priorities and perceived adequacy of the current arrangement.

Common themes and reasons for disagreement to bus station location

- Belief that relocation is unnecessary:
  - The bus station and railway station are already close enough.
  - Walking distance is seen as modest (often cited as a few hundred yards).
  - Improved signage or wayfinding, rather than relocation, would be sufficient.
  - The problem is not distance but clarity: better signage would solve it.
- Preference for alternative locations:
  - North of the city, closer to the A9.
  - Near existing rail maintenance land or Millburn Road.
  - Outside the city centre entirely, as part of a park-and-ride or edge-of-city interchange.
  - Near large sites such as UHI or major road corridors.
  - Long-distance coaches and car-based access should not be concentrated in the city centre.
- Strong opposition to further spending in Inverness:

  - Respondents argue funding should be directed to rural areas, roads, hospitals or other infrastructure.
  - Inverness-focused investment is seen by some as excessive or unfair.
  - Some believe Highlands-wide benefits would be limited.
  - Stop spending money on Inverness and address more urgent needs elsewhere.
- Concern about public expenditure and value for money:
  - Opposition to what is seen as unnecessary or duplicative spending.
  - Calls to “fix what already exists” rather than relocate or rebuild.
  - Belief that the current bus station is functional and adequate.
  - Cost overruns.
  - Long construction disruption.
  - Loss of existing facilities during rebuilding.
- Preference for minimal change or status quo:
  - Leave the city centre and existing infrastructure as it is.
  - Avoid disruption from major redevelopment.
  - Focus on basic maintenance rather than transformation.
  - The bus station works.
  - The car park should be repaired, not replaced.
  - Change is unnecessary or even harmful.
- Distrust of governance and decision-making:
  - Allegations of corruption or inappropriate decision-making.
  - Belief that redevelopment benefits private interests rather than residents.
  - Opposition framed around lack of confidence rather than location specifics.
  - While not widespread, these views are strongly held by those expressing them.

Conclusion to bus station location

Those who disagreed with the proposed bus station location tend to fall into four main groups:

1. Those who feel no relocation is required.
2. Those who prefer an alternative site, often outside the city centre.
3. Those opposed on grounds of cost, fairness and spending priorities.
4. Those resistant to change or distrustful of the process.

Importantly, opposition is not primarily about poor integration or accessibility, which dominate support for relocation, but about whether relocation is justified at all, and

where major transport infrastructure should sit in a regional capital with a large rural catchment.

Common themes and reasons for disagreement to car park location

- Belief that a city-centre multi-storey is unnecessary:
  - Existing parking is under-used or sufficient.
  - Demand for city-centre parking is declining nationally.
  - Retaining, refurbishing or modestly expanding the existing car park would be preferable.
  - Some respondents argue that no replacement is required at all, particularly if car use is reduced over time.
- Preference for park-and-ride or edge-of-city solutions:
  - Relocating parking outside the city centre.
  - Developing park-and-ride facilities at key junctions (A9/A96).
  - Using buses or shuttles to reduce congestion and pollution.
  - This group generally supports:
    - Disabled parking and set-down in the centre.
    - Coach and service vehicle access.
    - Removing routine private car parking from civic spaces.
- Concern about public spending and fairness:
  - Relocating or rebuilding a car park is a poor use of public funds.
  - Money should be prioritised for roads, public transport, health infrastructure or wider Highland communities.
  - Inverness is perceived as receiving disproportionate investment.
  - These views mirror similar objections raised to the bus station but are more pronounced for car-parking provision.
- Desire to retain or improve the current location:
  - The current location is acceptable.
  - The structure should be repaired, refurbished, expanded or rebuilt on site.
  - Moving it further away would reduce convenience for shoppers and visitors.
  - This group generally opposes relocation rather than replacement.
- Objection to car parks within a civic square:
  - A multi-storey car park should not sit adjacent to or within that space.
  - Car parking undermines the purpose of a pedestrian-focused civic area.
  - The car park should be visually and physically separated from public realm improvements.
- Alternative design solutions preferred:
  - Underground parking, common in European cities.

  - Integrating parking into a combined rail/bus station structure.
  - Locating parking behind or beneath other uses rather than as a dominant structure.
  - These respondents are concerned primarily with visual impact and future-proofing.
- Opposition to private car use in the city centre:
  - A smaller but vocal group argues that:
    - Cars should be actively removed from the city centre.
    - Multi-storey car parks reinforce car dominance.
    - Investment should focus on walking, cycling and public transport instead.
  - This position often aligns with calls to demolish the existing car park entirely.

Conclusion to car park location

Disagreement with the proposed car-park location stems from fundamental differences in how respondents view the future role of private vehicles in Inverness, rather than disagreement about improving the city centre itself. Objections cluster around four main positions:

1. No new city-centre car park is needed.
2. Parking should be moved to park-and-ride or city-edge locations.
3. Repair or rebuild the car park where it is.
4. Do not compromise civic space with car infrastructure.

Unlike the bus station, where opposition focuses on necessity and spending, car-park objections reflect wider cultural, environmental and strategic debates about car dependency, public realm and the direction of travel for Inverness as a regional capital.

Design preference

Finally, respondents were asked to express their preferred site layout from the options presented:

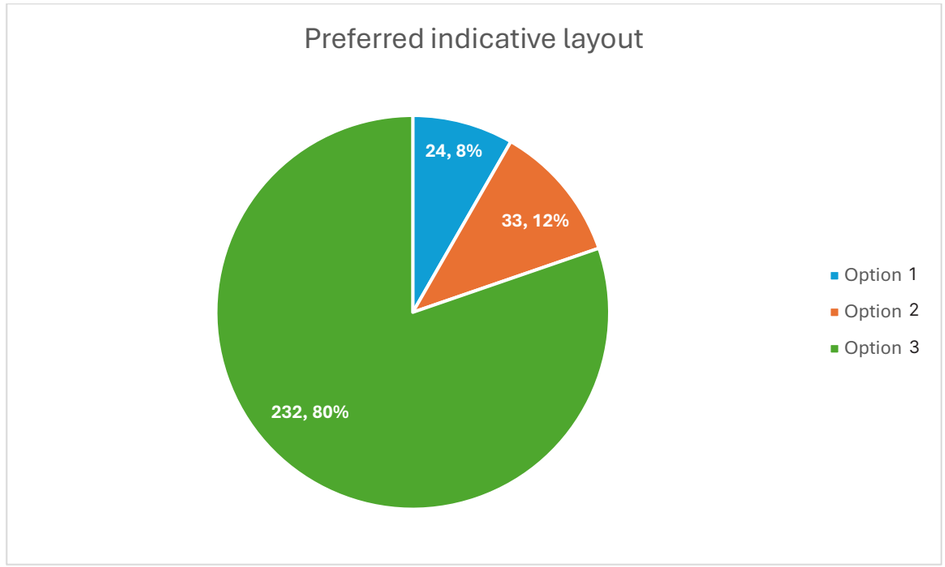
- Option **1**
- Option **2**
- Option **3**

This question was not codified and often resulted in long free text responses. Where the response was explicit or was readily discernible from the bulk of the text, the preference was recorded. Where the preference could be established with high confidence it was

likewise noted. Where the preference was not apparent or could not be determined with any degree of certainty it has been omitted from the results for the time being.

These responses are summarised in Figure 16: Preferred indicative layout.

Figure 16: Preferred indicative layout



This shows a clear preference for Option 3

Conclusion

The Inverness Interchange consultation provides a clear and compelling evidence base for change. Across quantitative survey results and extensive qualitative commentary, respondents consistently describe the existing Bus Station, Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park and surrounding area as outdated, unattractive, poorly connected and no longer fit for purpose as the principal transport gateway to the capital of the Highlands.

While views vary on the scale, location and configuration of future development, there is broad consensus that doing nothing is not an acceptable option. The strongest and most consistent concerns relate not only to the physical condition of the facilities, but to safety, accessibility, dignity, inclusivity and civic pride. In particular, respondents repeatedly highlight the poor first impressions created for residents, visitors and tourists and the mismatch between Inverness's regional importance and the quality of its transport interchange and public realm.

Inverness Interchange: Bus Station and Car Park Feasibility Study
Co-iomlaid Inbhir Nis: Sgrùdadh So-dhèantachd Stèisean Bhusaichean is Pàirc Chàraichean

The consultation demonstrates strong public support in principle for the redevelopment of the Station Quarter. A clear majority agree that a new bus and coach station is required, that the existing multi-storey car park should be replaced and that improved provision for active travel and public space should form a core part of any future scheme. There is especially strong support for closer integration between bus and rail facilities and for the creation of a traffic-free civic space that restores the setting of the listed library and improves the quality of the city centre environment.

However, **this support is explicitly conditional**. Respondents emphasise that success will depend on high-quality design, inclusive and step-free access, clear and sheltered connections between modes, adequate provision for car access reflecting Inverness's large rural catchment, and careful phasing that avoids loss of essential facilities during construction. There is also a strong expectation that redevelopment should be transport-led, people-focused and future-proofed, rather than driven by short-term or purely commercial considerations.

Where disagreement or caution exists, it relates primarily to perceptions of cost, fairness of public investment across the Highlands, the future role of private car use and confidence in long-term delivery and maintenance. These concerns underline the importance of continued engagement, transparent decision-making and clear justification as the project progresses.

Overall, the consultation reveals a powerful mandate for transformational but well-considered change. Respondents are not asking simply for new buildings, but for an integrated, accessible and welcoming transport hub and civic space that reflects Inverness's status as a regional capital and serves the diverse needs of Highland communities for decades to come. If delivered with care, ambition and inclusivity, the Station Quarter is widely seen as capable of becoming a gateway that Inverness can be proud of, rather than one it apologises for.



The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

INVERNESS INTERCHANGE FEASIBILITY STUDY
BUS STATION & MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK

HELLO!

**Get More Information,
Take the Survey,
Provide Feedback,
Until April 10th**

**Scan the QR code or visit:
https://consult.highland.gov.uk/kpse/**

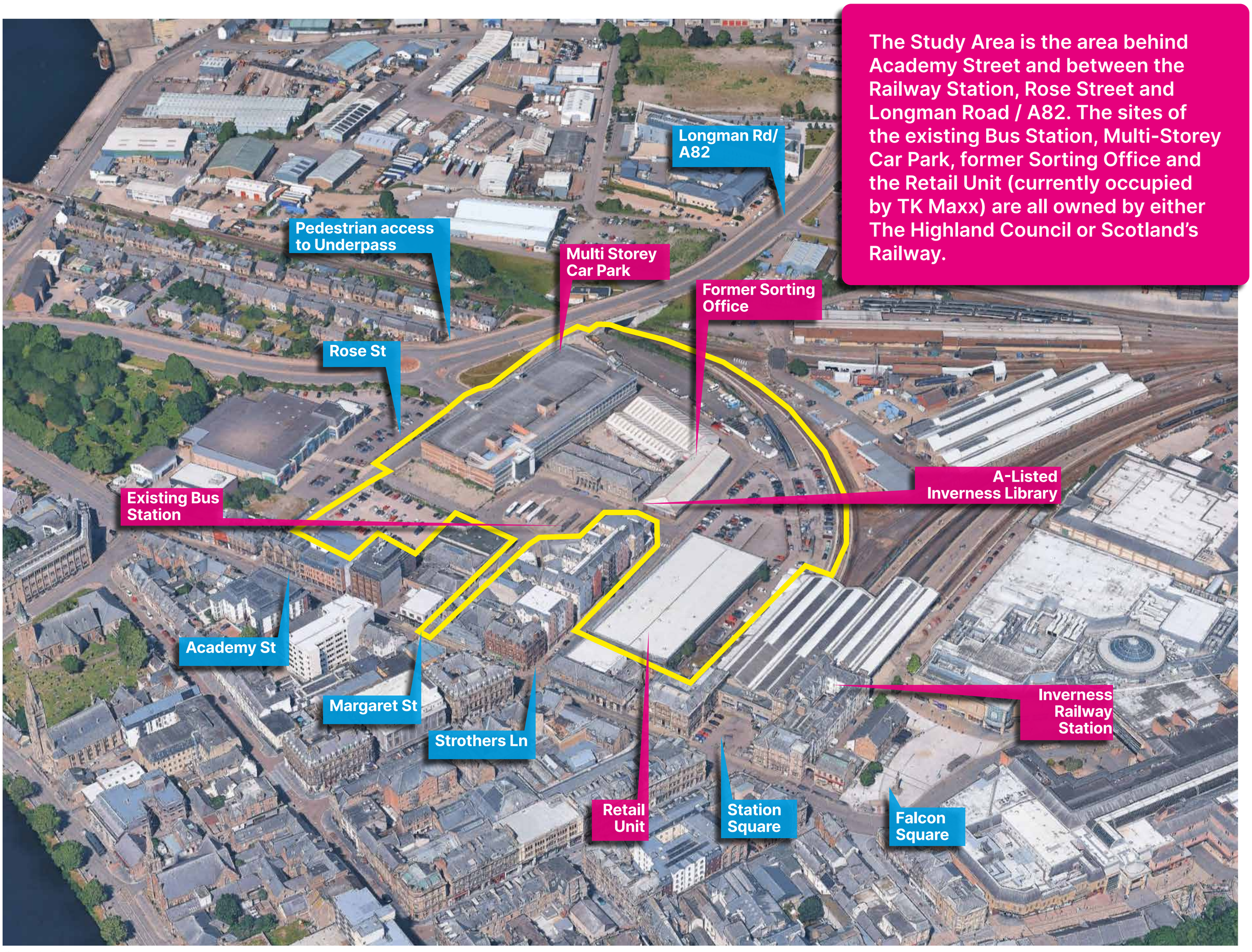
Project Background

HITRANS (the Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership), in partnership with The Highland Council and Network Rail / Scotland's Railway, has commissioned an Inverness Interchange Feasibility Study.

The Study explores the need and proposed options for a new Bus and Coach Station, Multi-Storey Car Park and Active Travel Hub adjacent to Inverness Railway Station. The Active Travel Hub would provide facilities to support more walking, wheeling and cycling to, in and around the City Centre.

The Feasibility Study has been progressed by **Austin-Smith:Lord** (masterplanners, architects, landscape architects), **SCP** (transport planners) and **Cameron & Ross** (engineers). The Study has been prepared in liaison with **HITRANS**, **The Highland Council** and **Scotland's Railway** as well as initial engagement with **ScotRail** and **Stagecoach** (who operate the existing Bus Station).

This work complements and is part of the Inverness Station Masterplan, being promoted by Scotland's Railway, and is in line with Recommendation 43 in **Transport Scotland**'s **Strategic Transport Projects Review 2** (STPR2).



The Study Area is the area behind Academy Street and between the Railway Station, Rose Street and Longman Road / A82. The sites of the existing Bus Station, Multi-Storey Car Park, former Sorting Office and the Retail Unit (currently occupied by TK Maxx) are all owned by either The Highland Council or Scotland's Railway.

Study Area

Austin·Smith:Lord SCP Cameron+Ross The Highland Council Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd SCOTLAND'S RAILWAY HITRANS

INVERNESS INTERCHANGE FEASIBILITY STUDY
BUS STATION & MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK

Purpose of this Public Engagement & Next Steps

Purpose of this Engagement

This initial phase of engagement activity seeks to;

- Raise awareness of the Inverness Interchange Feasibility Study and summarise its headline findings
- Invite feedback on initial proposals to;
  - **relocate / re-provide a new 14-16 stance Bus and Coach Station adjacent to the Railway Station with services connecting to A82 Longman Road and Academy Street,**
  - **relocate / re-provide a circa 850-space Multi-Storey Car Park behind the listed Library building with access from A82 Longman Road via Rose Street,**
  - **create a new civic space / square at Farraline Park**
  - **redevelop the wider 'Station Quarter' as a new mixed-use destination in the City Centre**
- Outline three potential options for a new Bus Station (showing different indicative layouts in locations nearer the Railway Station)

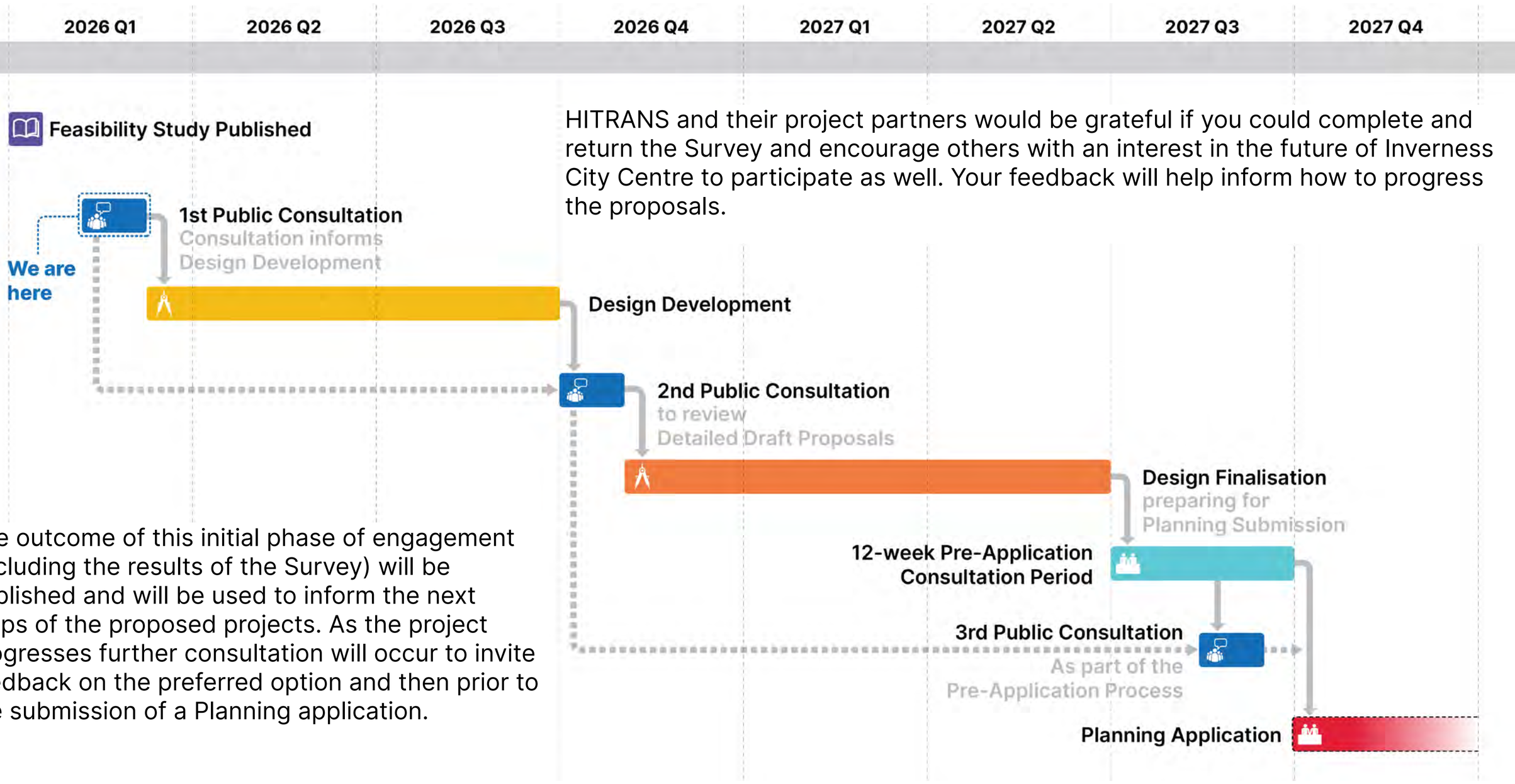
The findings of this initial phase of engagement activity will be collated and published and will inform how the project progresses.

Please complete the Survey

As part of an initial phase of public consultation you are invited to complete a Survey to provide comments on the proposals.

The Survey is available online https://consult.highland.gov.uk/kpse and in hard copy format (at Inverness Library) and runs until 10 April 2026.

Next Steps - Indicative Timeline



HITRANS and their project partners would be grateful if you could complete and return the Survey and encourage others with an interest in the future of Inverness City Centre to participate as well. Your feedback will help inform how to progress the proposals.

The outcome of this initial phase of engagement (including the results of the Survey) will be published and will be used to inform the next steps of the proposed projects. As the project progresses further consultation will occur to invite feedback on the preferred option and then prior to the submission of a Planning application.

Austin·Smith:Lord SCP Cameron+Ross The Highland Council Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd SCOTLAND'S RAILWAY HITRANS

INVERNESS INTERCHANGE FEASIBILITY STUDY
BUS STATION & MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK

The Feasibility Study : Recommendations

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this Feasibility Study is to support informed decision-making in the development of a strategic, integrated transport interchange in Inverness City Centre.

The Feasibility Study recommends that;

1. **the existing Bus Station and Multi-Storey Car Park need to be replaced.**
2. **there is sufficient space to accommodate a new Bus and Coach Station, MSCP and Active Travel Mobility Hub**
3. **that this new Interchange can be a key part of a wider mixed-use regeneration redevelopment of the 'Station Quarter' on land assembled by, and within the ownership of, The Highland Council and Scotland's Railway.**



Existing Bus Station on Farraline Park



Farraline Park, the Library & Multi-Storey Car Park

In addition the Feasibility Study recommends that;

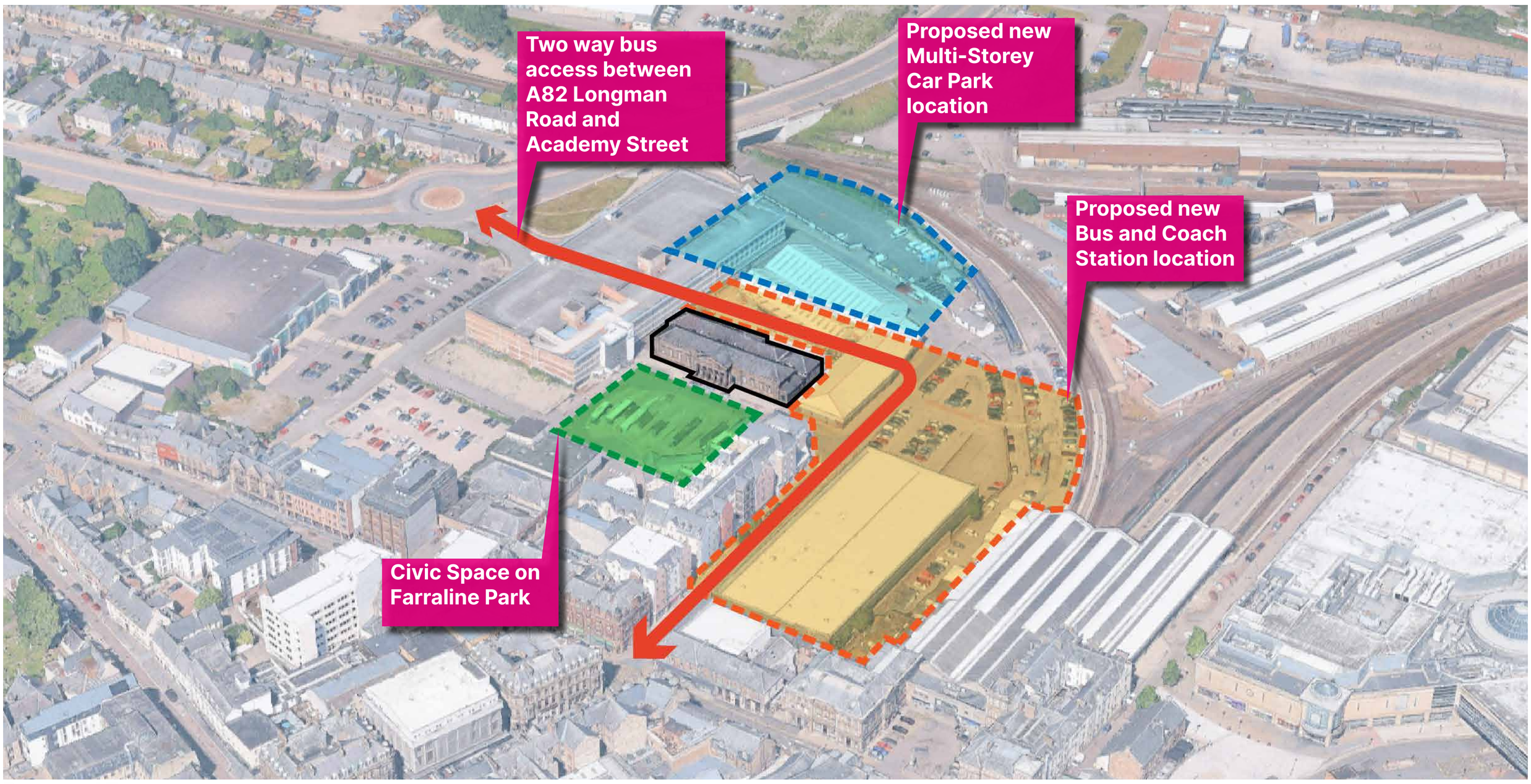
- the Bus and Coach Station be located to the north and/or east of the listed Library building to enable convenient passenger interchange between Bus, Coach and Railway services and well placed for pedestrian access as a Gateway to the City Centre,
- the Bus and Coach Station should retain two way bus access to / from A82 Longman Road and Academy Street (via Strothers Lane) to enable local and longer distances inter-urban routes. No through-access for other vehicles,
- the Multi-Storey Car Park should be located to the north / rear of the listed Library building with car access off the A82 Longman Road whilst providing good pedestrian access and connections to the Railway Station, Bus Station and the City Centre.

The Feasibility Study involved;

- analysis of the existing Bus Station and Multi-Storey Car Park (with reference to available information provided by the Project Partners),
- assessment of the recommended size of the Bus Station and Multi-Storey Car Park to meet projected future demand
- preparation of a longlist of a dozen options considering locating the Bus Station and Multi-Storey Car Park in locations south, west, north and east of the listed Library building that must be retained
- design workshops with Project Partners to assess and identify options that best meet the objectives (which are presented here).

Options Assessments considered a range of objectives including :

- **promoting sustainable travel options (safe, convenient, quality public transport; active travel facilities supporting walking, wheeling and cycling; EV charging)**
- **improving user experience, safety and accessibility for all including those with sensory and/or mobility impairments**
- **supporting City Centre regeneration goals**

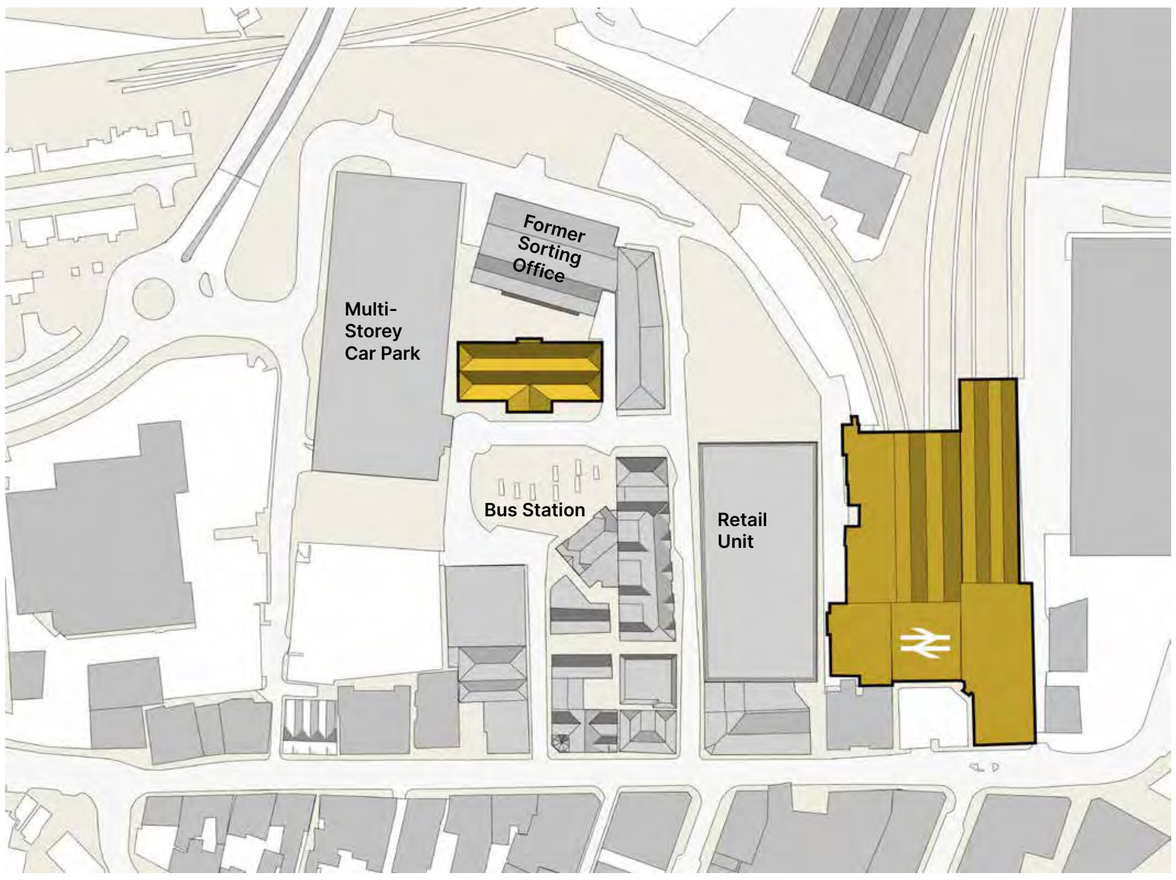


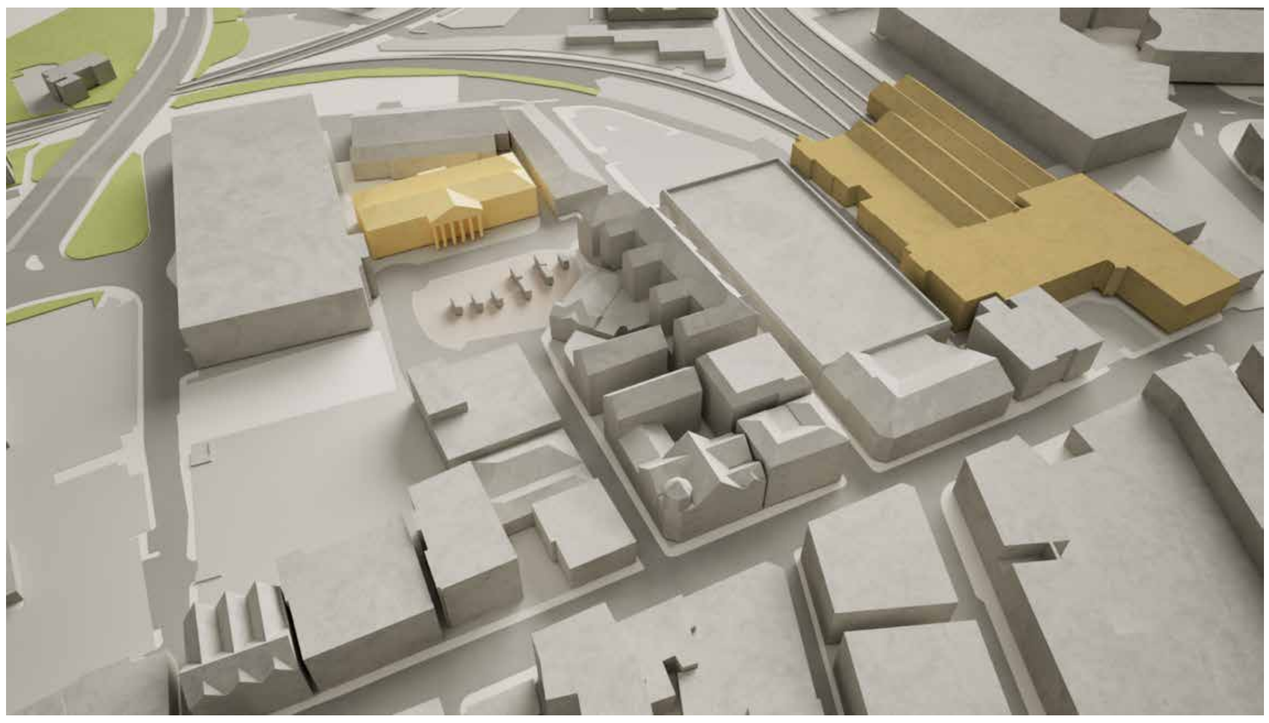
Proposed Zones

Austin·Smith:Lord SCP Cameron+Ross The Highland Council Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd SCOTLAND'S RAILWAY HITRANS

INVERNESS INTERCHANGE FEASIBILITY STUDY
BUS STATION & MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK

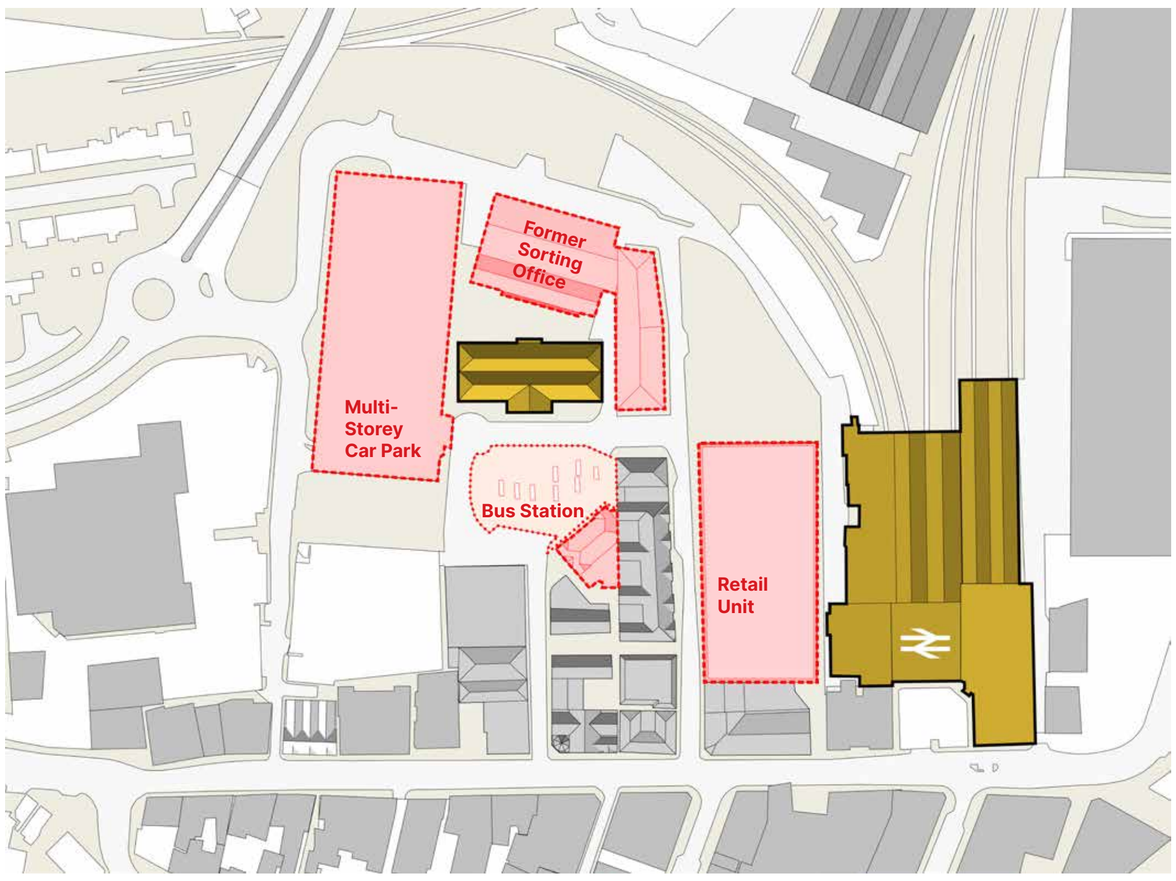
Proposal Summary

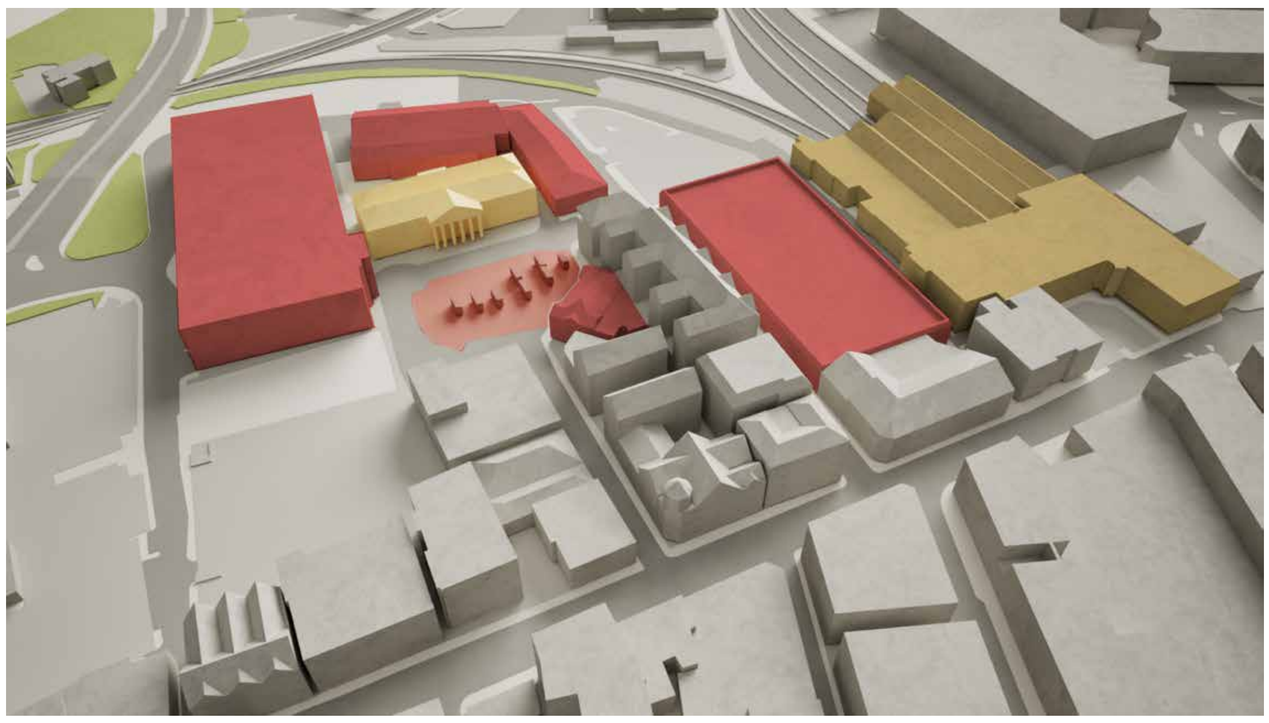




There are several historically important buildings in the area including;

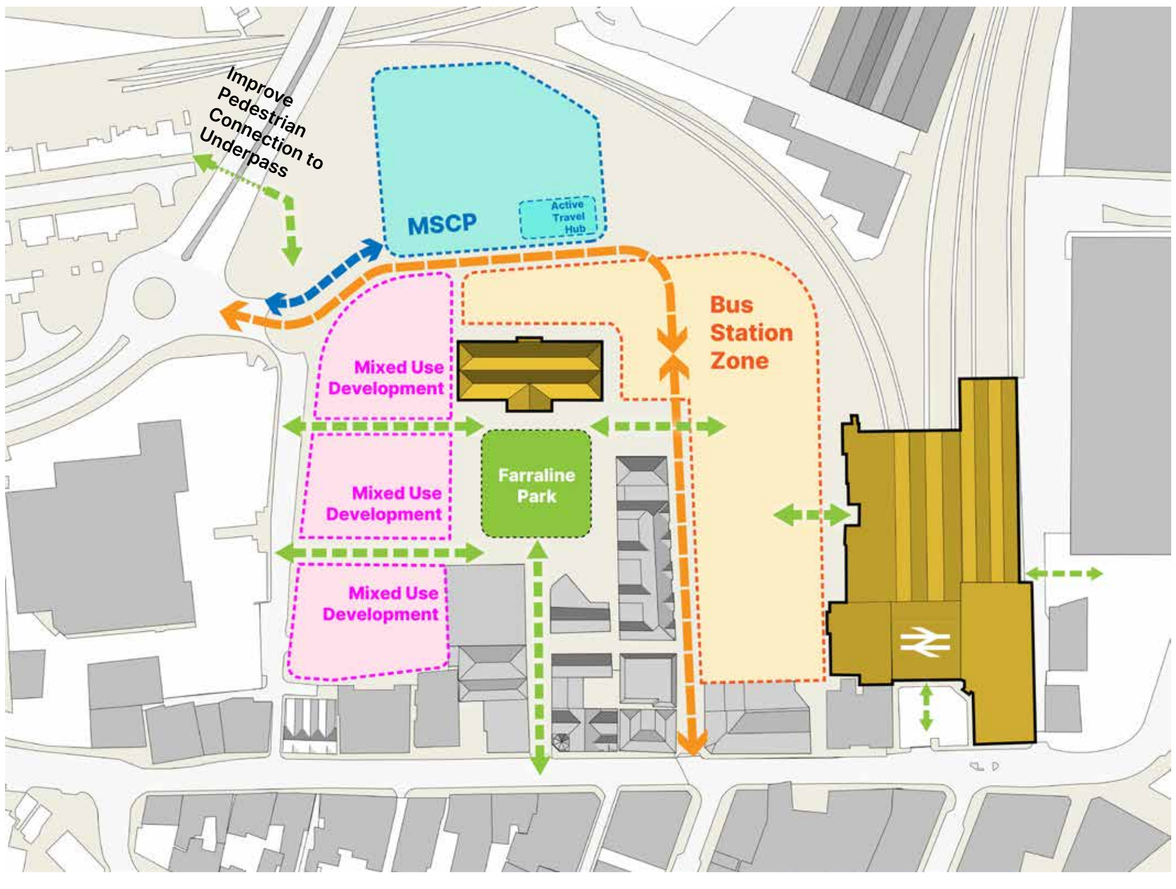
- the A-Listed Library Building
- the Station Building complex comprising two listed buildings, the A-Listed Highland Rail House and the B-Listed Royal Highland Hotel.

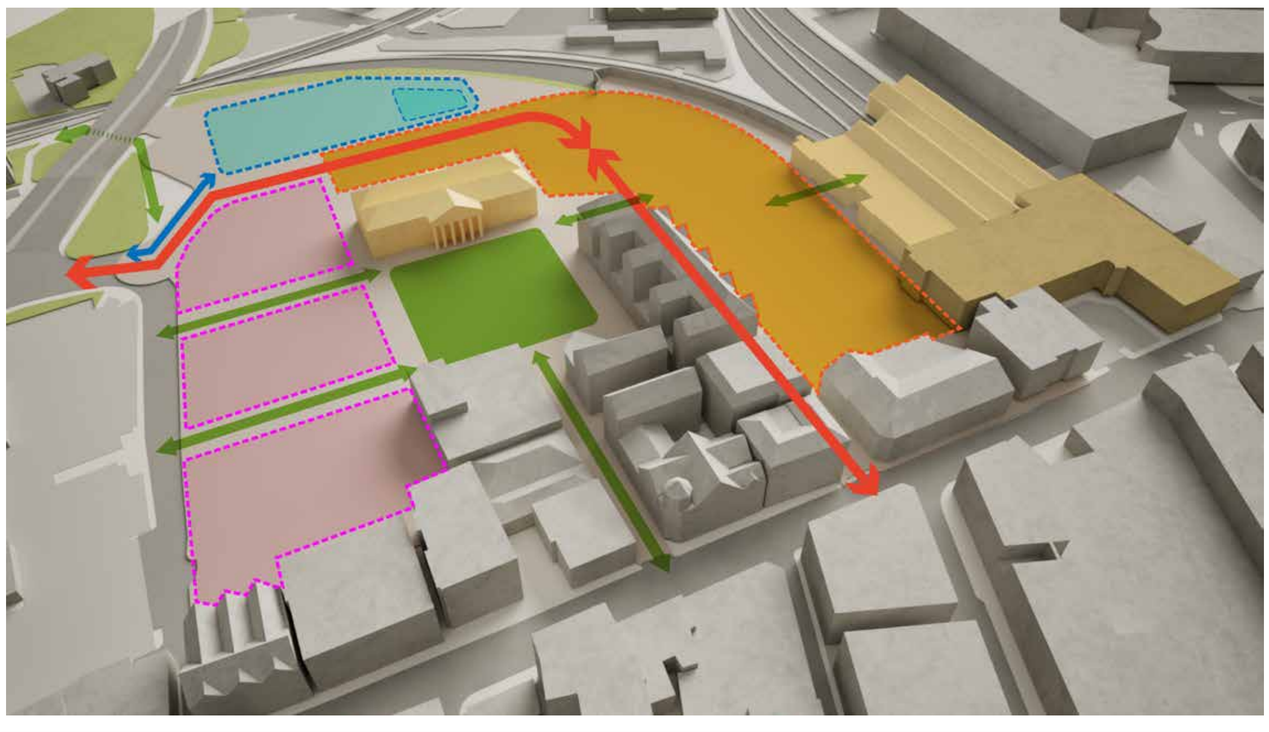




The Outline Proposals recommend the demolition of;

- the existing Rose Street Multi-Storey Car Park
- the existing Bus Station on Farraline Park
- the former Sorting Office
- the retail unit on Strothers Lane





The Outline Proposals suggest;

- **a new Bus & Coach Station north and/or east of Farraline Park**
- **a new Multi-Storey Car Park (MSCP) behind the Library building**
- **a new civic square at Farraline Park**
- **scope for mixed use redevelopment on available sites around Farraline Park**

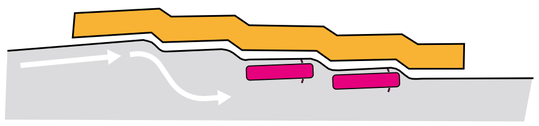
Austin·Smith:Lord SCP TRANSPORT PLANNING INFRASTRUCTURE DESIGN Cameron+Ross The Highland Council Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd SCOTLAND'S RAILWAY HITRANS THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

INVERNESS INTERCHANGE FEASIBILITY STUDY
BUS STATION & MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK

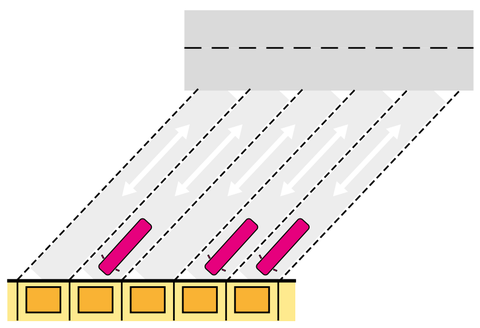
Indicative Option 1

This Indicative Option proposes;

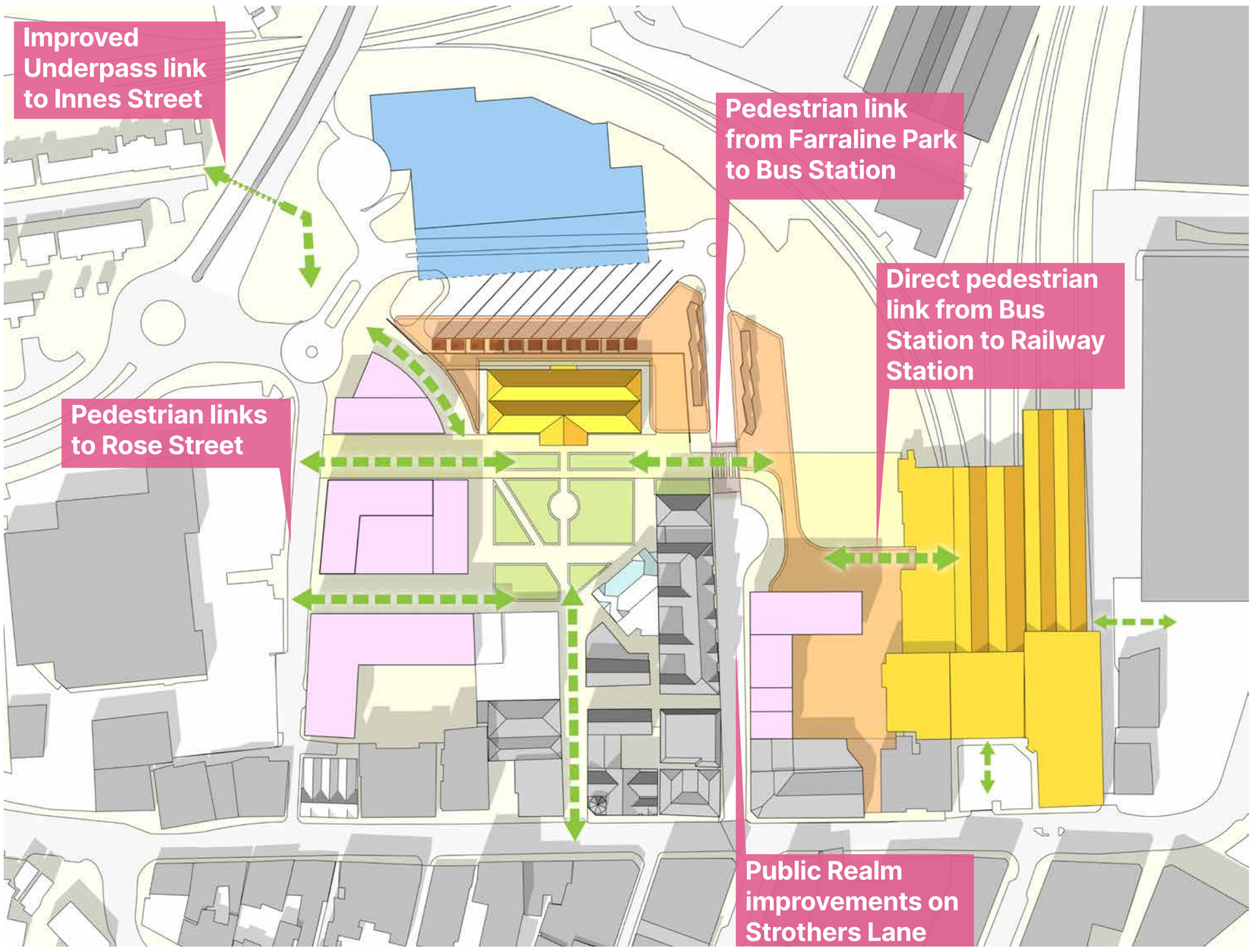
- a 16-stance Bus & Coach Station with 10 stances behind the Library and 6 stances on Strothers Lane (two-way linking to A82 Longman Road and Academy Street)
- a Multi-Storey Car Park behind the Library accessed from A82 Longman Road



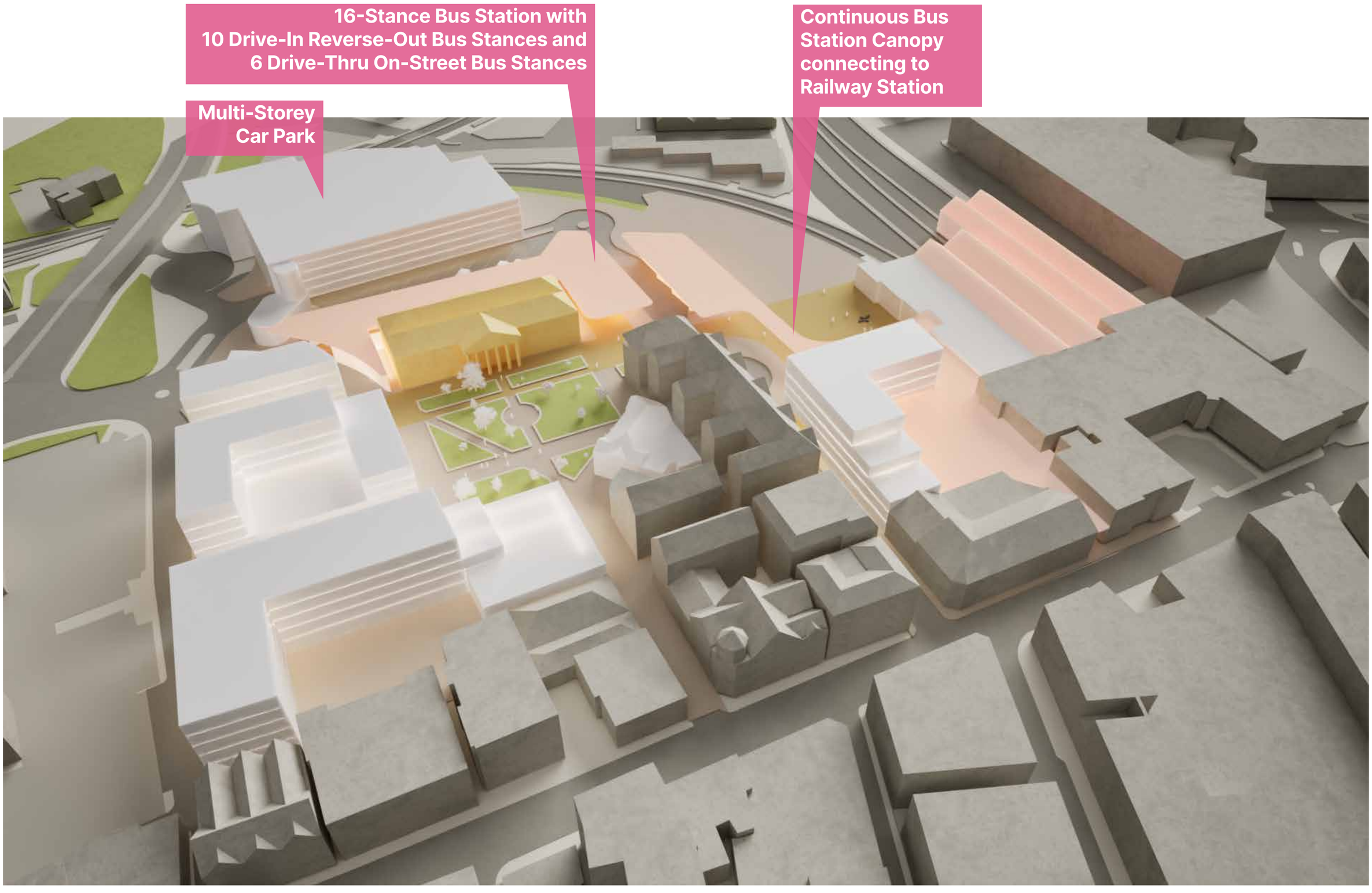
Drive-Thru
Bus Stance Configuration :
Buses drive up and stop parallel to the stance and drive straight out.



DIRO (drive-in, reverse-out) Bus Stance Configuration :
Buses drive in to the stance and reverse out.



Indicative Plan View



View from south-west

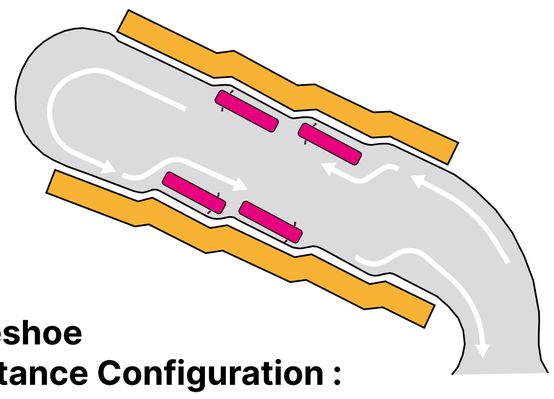
Austin·Smith:Lord SCP TRANSPORT PLANNING INFRASTRUCTURE DESIGN Cameron+Ross The Highland Council Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd SCOTLAND'S RAILWAY HITRANS THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

INVERNESS INTERCHANGE FEASIBILITY STUDY
BUS STATION & MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK

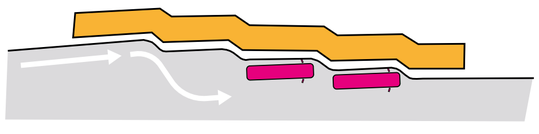
Indicative Option 2

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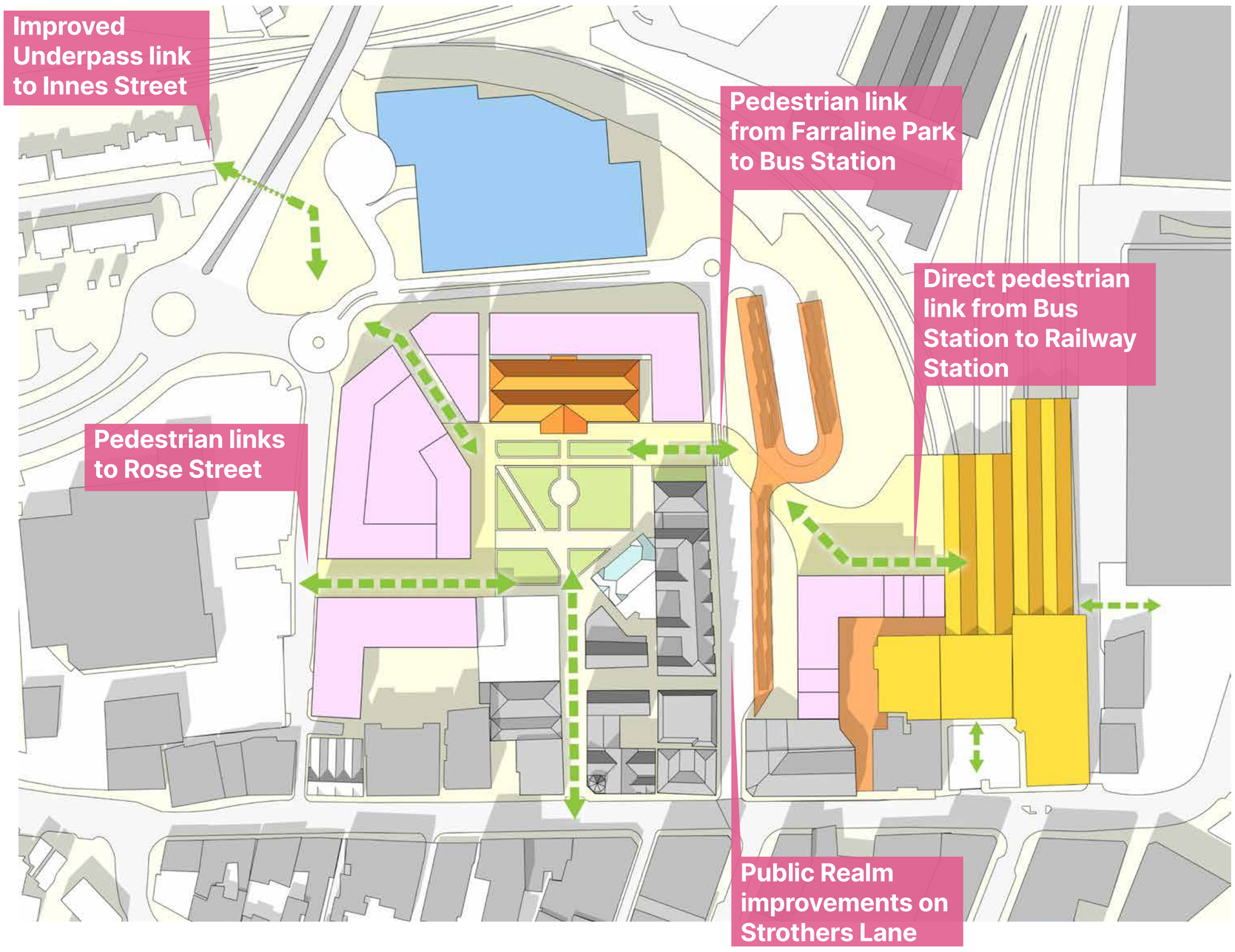
- a 15-stance Bus & Coach Station with 8 stances off-street and 7 stances on Strothers Lane (two-way linking to A82 Longman Road and Academy Street)
- a Multi-Storey Car Park behind the Library accessed from A82 Longman Road



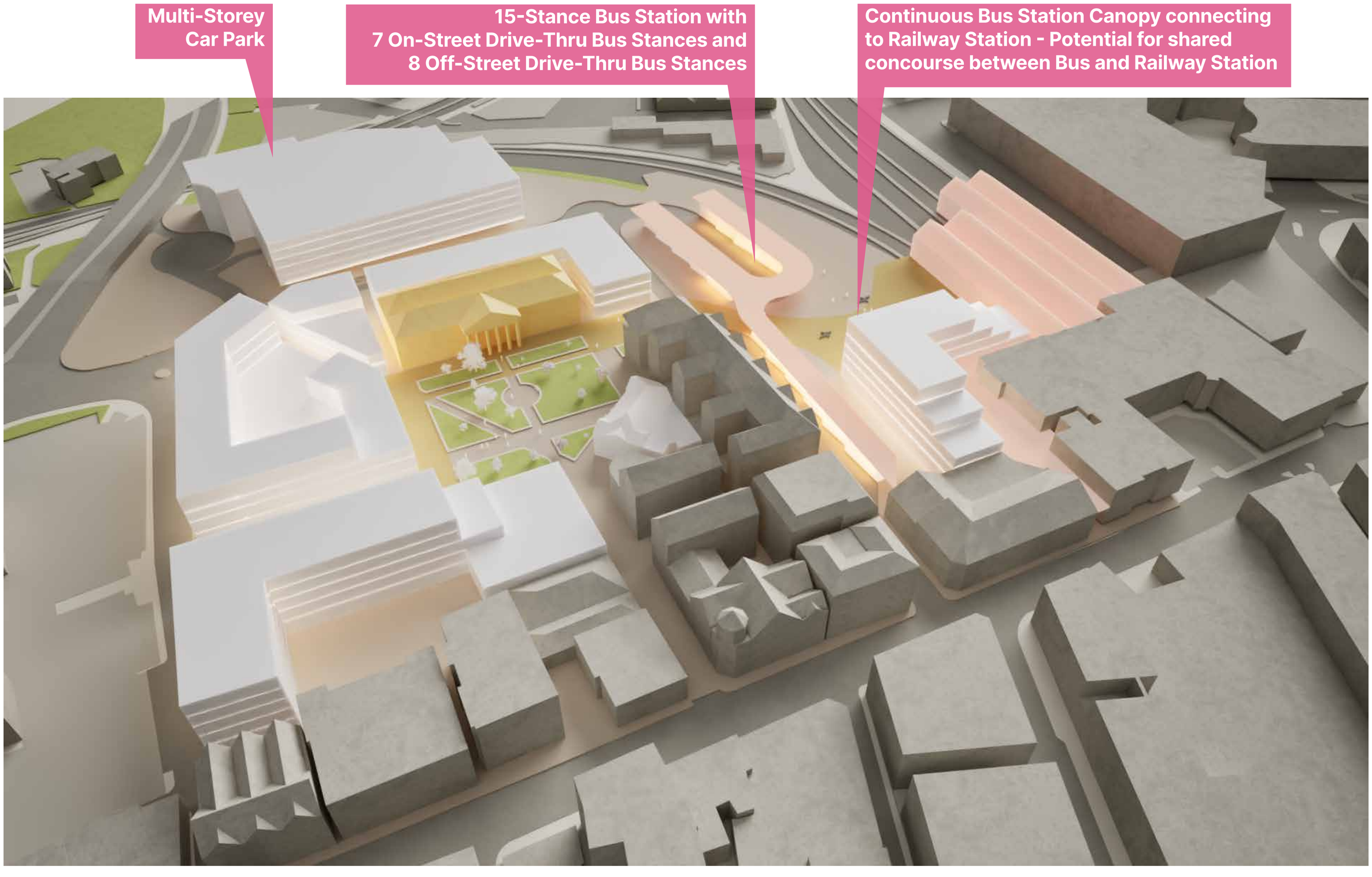
Horseshoe
Bus Stance Configuration :
Buses drive around in a horseshoe configuration, stop parallel to the stance and drive straight out.



Drive-Thru
Bus Stance Configuration :
Buses drive up and stop parallel to the stance and drive straight out.



Indicative Plan View



View from south-west

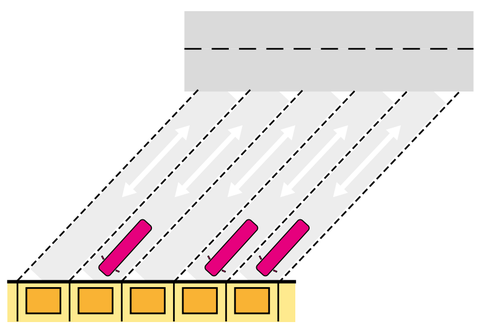
Austin·Smith:Lord SCP TRANSPORT PLANNING INFRASTRUCTURE DESIGN Cameron+Ross The Highland Council Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd SCOTLAND'S RAILWAY HITRANS THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

INVERNESS INTERCHANGE FEASIBILITY STUDY
BUS STATION & MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK

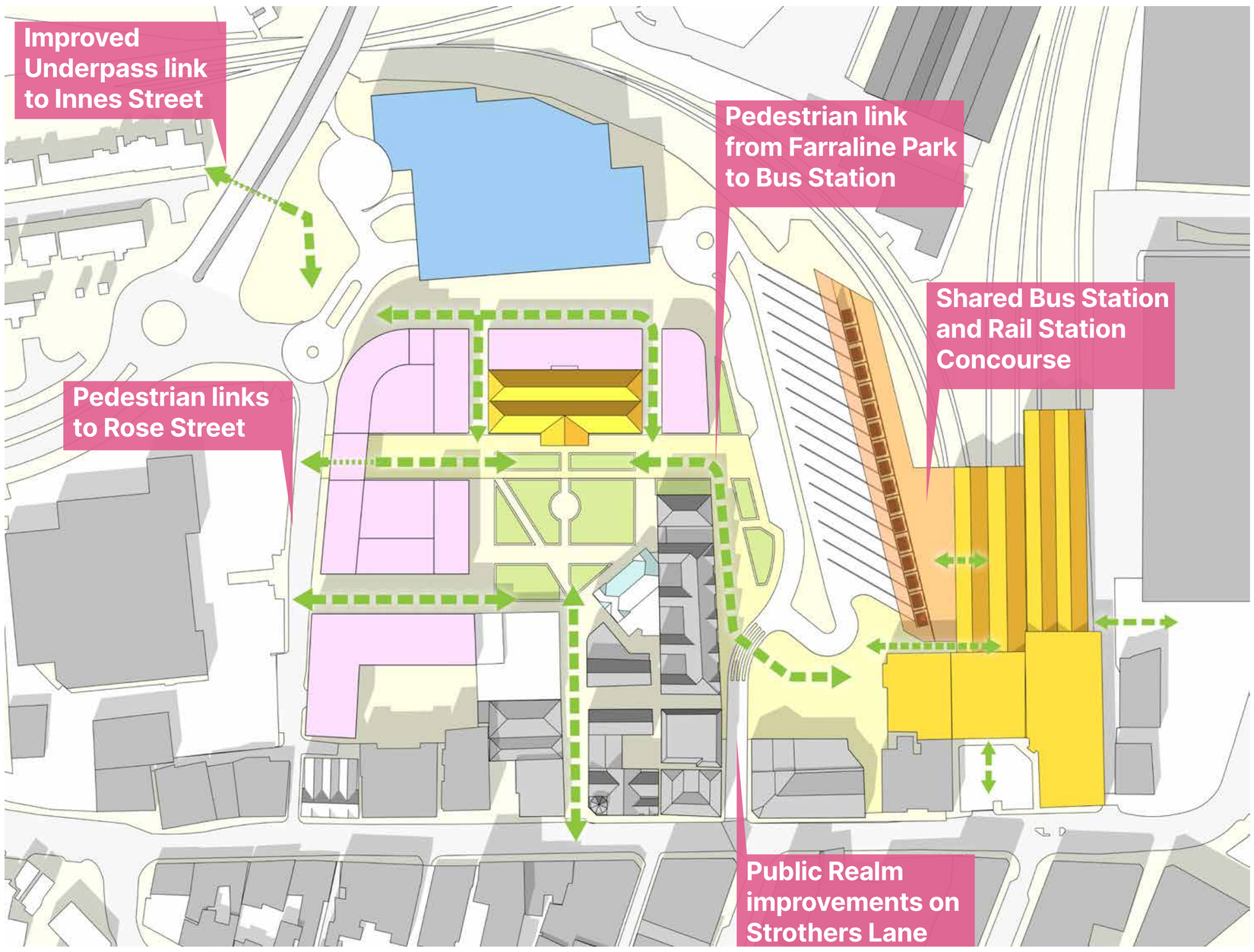
Indicative Option 3

This Indicative Option proposes;

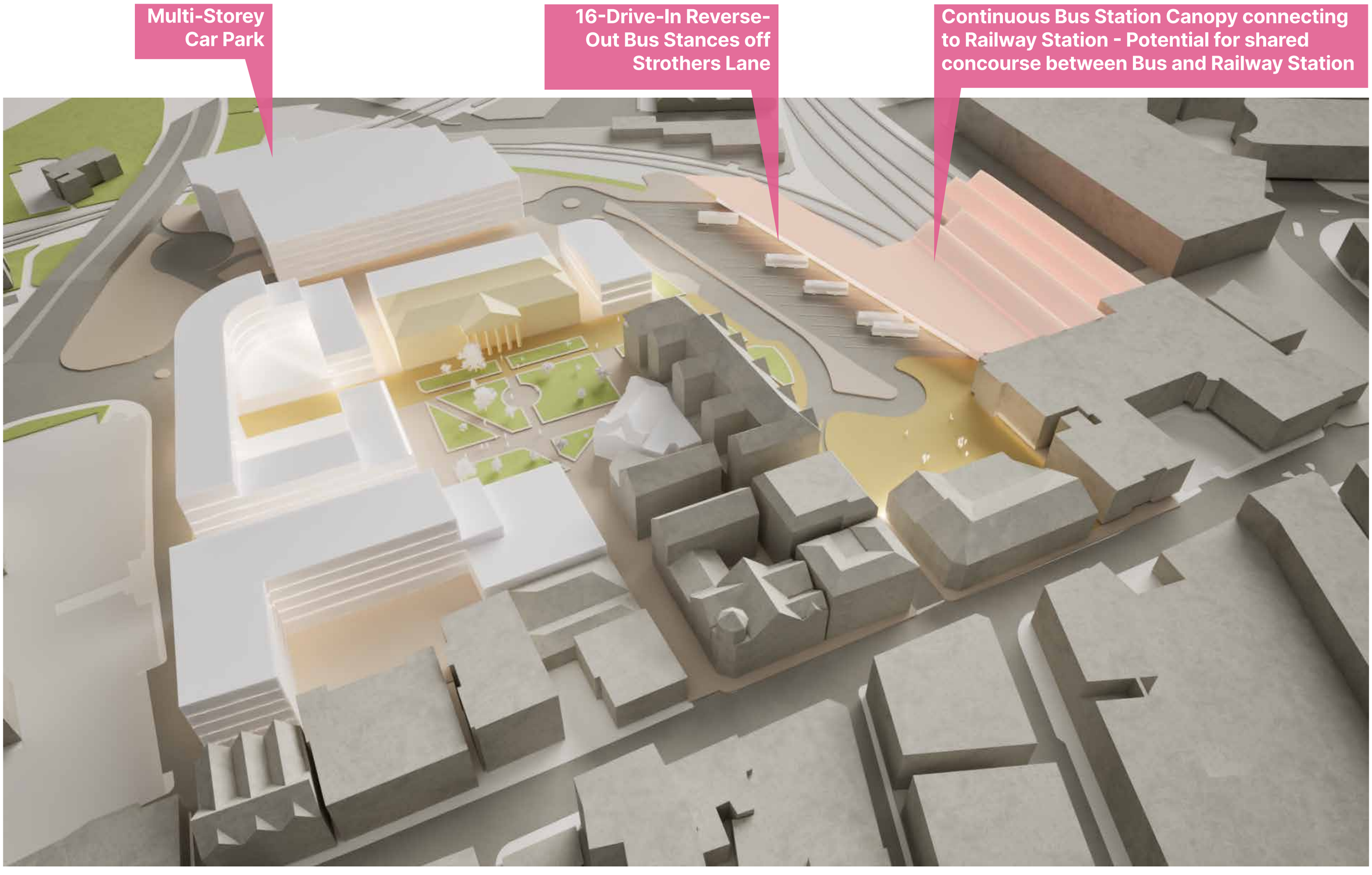
- a 16-stance Bus & Coach Station accessed off Strothers Lane (two-way linking to A82 Longman Road and Academy Street)
- a Multi-Storey Car Park behind the Library accessed from A82 Longman Road



DIRO (drive-in, reverse-out) Bus Stance Configuration :
Buses drive in to the stance and reverse out.



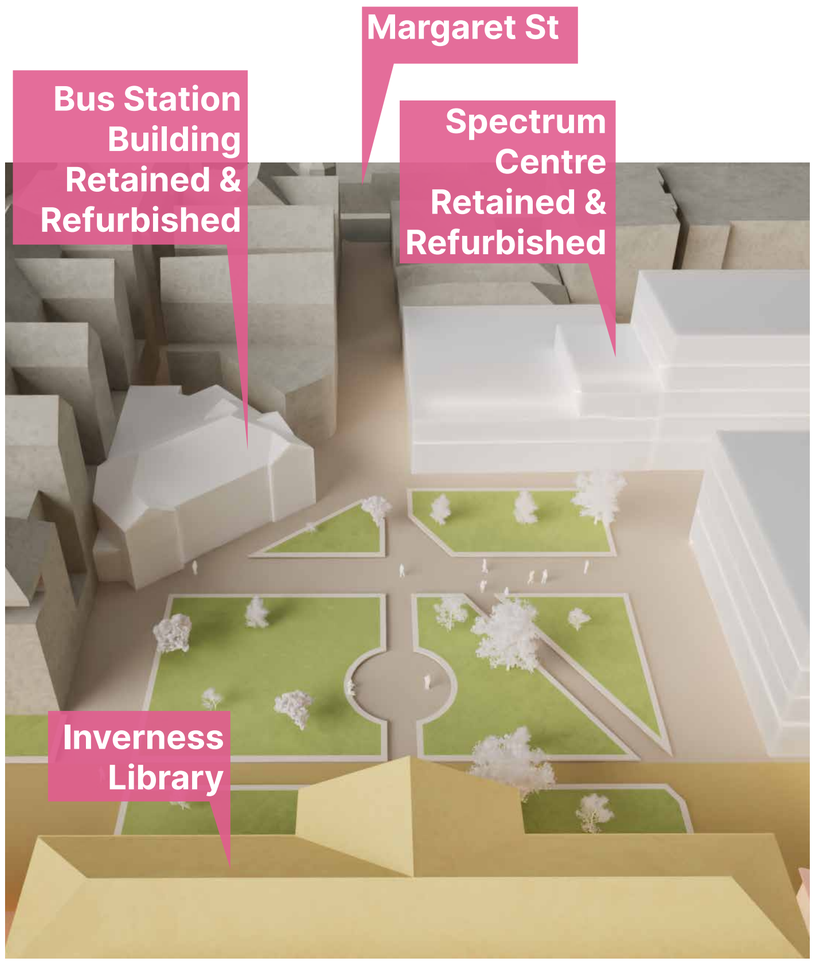
Indicative Plan View



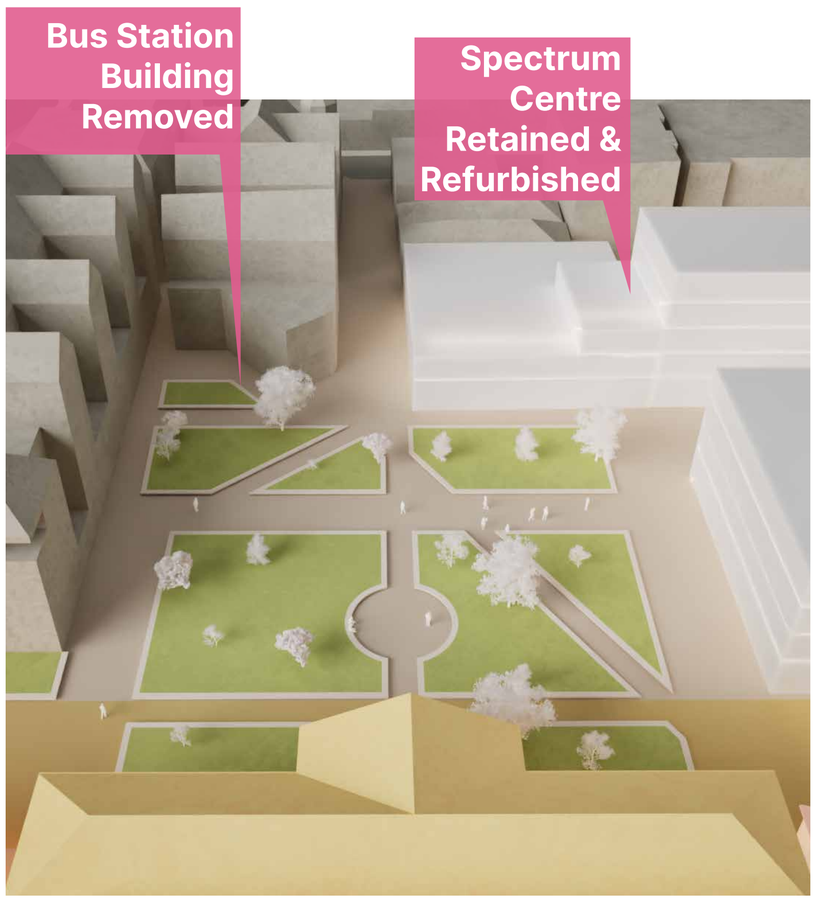
View from south-west

Austin·Smith:Lord SCP Cameron+Ross The Highland Council Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd SCOTLAND'S RAILWAY HITRANS

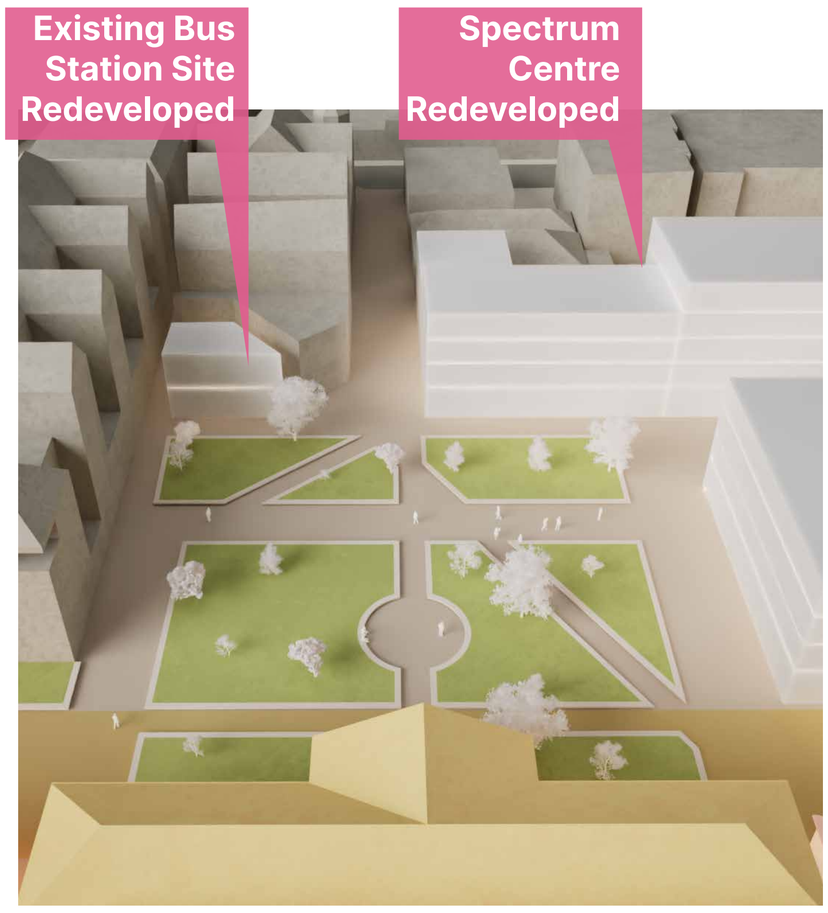
INVERNESS INTERCHANGE FEASIBILITY STUDY
BUS STATION & MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK



Option A : Existing Bus Station Building retained and refurbished for a new use. Spectrum Centre retained and refurbished.



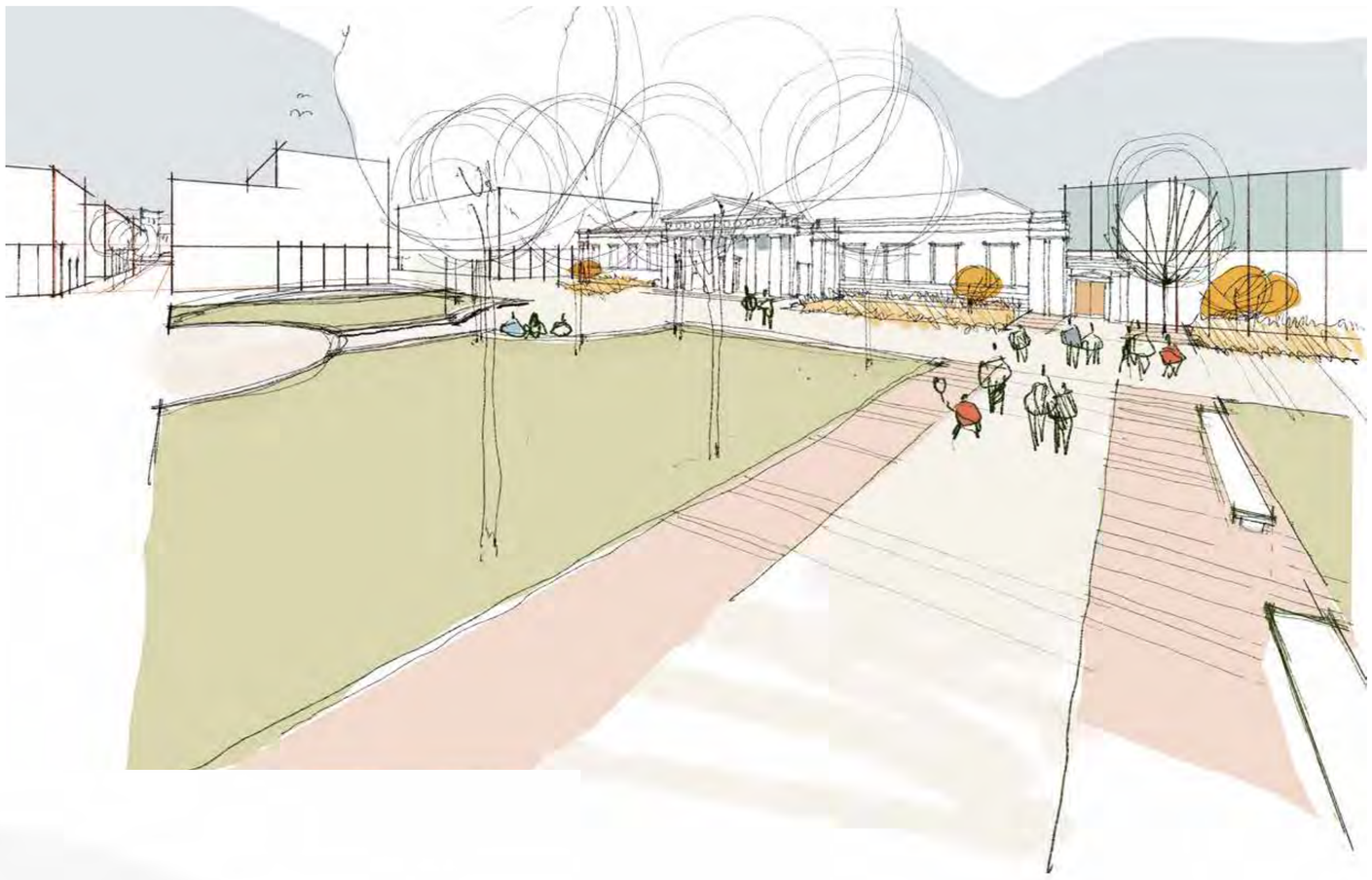
Option B : Existing Bus Station Building demolished. Spectrum Centre retained and refurbished.



Option C : Existing Bus Station Building and Spectrum Centre replaced with new development.

Improving public realm across the station quarter :
Establishing a new City Centre Urban Park at Farraline Park

The relocation of the Bus Station presents an opportunity for Farraline Park to become a traffic-free civic square in front of the Listed Library building.



Farraline Park Looking towards Inverness Library

The proposed new urban square on Farraline Park would directly link to the proposed Bus Station and to Inverness Railway Station.



View from Strothers Lane towards Farraline Park

Austin·Smith:Lord SCP TRANSPORT PLANNING INFRASTRUCTURE DESIGN Cameron+Ross

The Highland Council Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd SCOTLAND'S RAILWAY HITRANS THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

INVERNESS INTERCHANGE FEASIBILITY STUDY
BUS STATION & MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK

Frequently Asked Questions

How much will this cost?

The construction of a new Bus & Coach Station and Multi-Storey Car Park will be a significant multi-million pound investment. A priority task in the next phase of design work will be to establish a budget cost estimate for the design, development, construction and running costs for these facilities. This would inform a business case, alongside an assessment of the revenue income and wider benefits to the City and Region (socio-economic, environmental etc.)

How will it be funded?

A key part of the business case will be to establish how to fund the proposed redevelopment. The Initial feasibility work was funded by HITRANS, with the current work being funded by The Highland Council through the Bus Infrastructure Fund which is administered by Transport Scotland. A new funding application has been submitted by The Highland Council to Transport Scotland A funding application has been made by the Highland Council to Transport Scotland to secure funding to progress the next stage of project and design development (including preparing budget costs).

Delivering the construction of the new facilities will require a robust funding and investment case to be made. At this stage it could be anticipated that these proposals will probably be delivered over several phases and will require very close partnership working between public sector organisations. This could involve funding from national and local public sector organisations potentially including Transport Scotland, Scotland's Railway, HITRANS, The Highland Council and others. It may also involve realising land value from the sites within the 'Station Quarter' to cross fund the Bus & Coach Station and Multi-Storey Car Park.

A range of funding and investment models would be considered – drawing upon successful best practice from elsewhere in the UK – and this may also include identifying private sector investment and development partnerships to ensure effective delivery.

How long will it take?

Another priority task for the next phase of work is developing a project programme / timeline and assessing the best way to phase and deliver the project. This may require enabling works to provide temporary facilities, allow for periods for demolition and phased construction of new facilities. Equivalent projects take several years from start to finish and it will be essential to establish what the priorities are to ensure the first phases are progressed accordingly.

Who owns the land?

The Highland Council and Scotland's Railway own most of the land identified within the 'Station Quarter' being considered in this Feasibility Study. The sites being considered for a new Bus & Coach Station and Multi-Storey Car Park are all within the ownership of the Council or Scotland's Railway.

How does this work relate to the Railway Station and the Masterplan for it?

The proposed redevelopment and reconfiguration of the Bus & Coach Station and Multi-Storey Car Park have been developed to improve integration with, and access to, the Railway Station. These proposals are compatible with the Railway Station as it is today, but also would fit with the future ambitions for the Railway Station Masterplan.

Access to the Railway Station from Strothers Lane would be retained and significantly enhanced by the proposals outlined here. The proposals look to improve accessibility and interchange with the Railway Station via convenient connections with the Bus & Coach Station and the Multi-Storey Car Park.

The redevelopment of the Bus & Coach Station and Multi-Storey Car Park is not reliant on the redevelopment of the Railway Station, and vice versa. However, through careful coordination, there is the possibility and intention to maximise the benefits for a very well-integrated passenger experience connecting all modes of public transport, which could include a shared concourse (subject to further design development).

What happens with the A-listed Library building?

The listed building currently used for the Library is one of the finest buildings in Inverness, but the existing bus station and the vacant sorting sheds blight its setting. The proposals outlined here seek to significantly improve the setting of the listed building to ensure that it fulfils its role as a landmark building at the gateway to the City Centre.

The proposals outlined here anticipate that the listed building continues as a significant publicly accessible building.

What happens with the Spectrum Centre?

The proposals outlined here would enable the Spectrum Centre to remain in its current location and be refurbished, subject to funding. Equally there would be the opportunity to reprovide and relocate the Spectrum Centre activities within a purpose-designed facility on or near Farraline Park as part of the wider illustrative 'Station Quarter' Masterplan outlined here.

What's happening with the existing Multi-Storey Car Park on Rose Street?

The existing Multi-Storey Car Park does not meet current standards compatible with the size and weight of contemporary vehicles. It is near to the end of its lifespan and, despite remedial repair works and ongoing maintenance, has restrictions imposed which have incrementally reduced parking capacity. These repairs and restrictions have been imposed to ensure health and safety of users and extend the operational lifespan of the concrete structure of the existing Multi-Storey Car Park.

What size would a new Multi-Storey Car Park need to be?

Initial analysis by SCP, transport planning consultants for this Study, recommends at this stage the reprovision of circa 850 spaces in a new, purpose-built replacement Multi-Storey Car Park. This recommendation is based upon available and historic Council parking surveys (which show surplus spaces and over-provision over a prolonged period), traffic count trends, the impact of incrementally reduced capacity due to increasing restrictions and a tally of nearby surface car parks.

The recommended circa 850 spaces includes consolidating the surface car parks of the retail unit on Strothers Lane and the Railway Station into a new Multi-Storey Car Park, designed to contemporary standards and allowing for future demand projections, including best-practice provision of EV charging points, motorcycles and disabled parking bays. These initial findings and demand projections would need to be refined through further survey, analysis and design work in the next phase.

Why does the Bus Station need replacement or upgrading?

The existing Bus Station does not meet current standard or future demands in terms of capacity or layout. Nor does it meet the quality of passenger experience expected in modern facilities serving a City Centre. Whilst there are ongoing improvements to the Bus Station to improve the passenger experience further, more extensive upgrades are required.

The existing 7 island stances operate 'double-stacked' providing an equivalent to 14 stances. However, initial assessment suggests that up to 16 stances are required in a layout that accommodates the modern Bus and Coach dimensions, reduces passenger / vehicular conflict and has the passenger and staff facilities expected of a City Centre Interchange.

Is there taxi and drop-off provision serving the Bus and Railway Stations in the proposals?

Yes. In the options outlined here there is scope for a taxi rank and drop-off on Strothers Lane serving the public transport interchange.

Would the proposed Bus and Coach Station accommodate tourist coaches?

The Feasibility Study indicates that it is not advisable to provide tourist coach drop-off and pick-up within the proposed Bus and Coach Station and these should continue to be provided 'off site' (at Ardross Street, as currently). This avoids compromising the timetabled public transport services serving the Interchange.

Would rail replacement bus services be accommodated in the proposed new Bus and Coach Station?

Yes. This would provide a better option than the current arrangements provided at the rear of the Eastgate Shopping Centre.

Austin·Smith:Lord · SCP Transport Planning Infrastructure Design · Cameron+Ross · The Highland Council Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd · Scotland's Railway · HITRANS The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership

Austin·Smith:Lord

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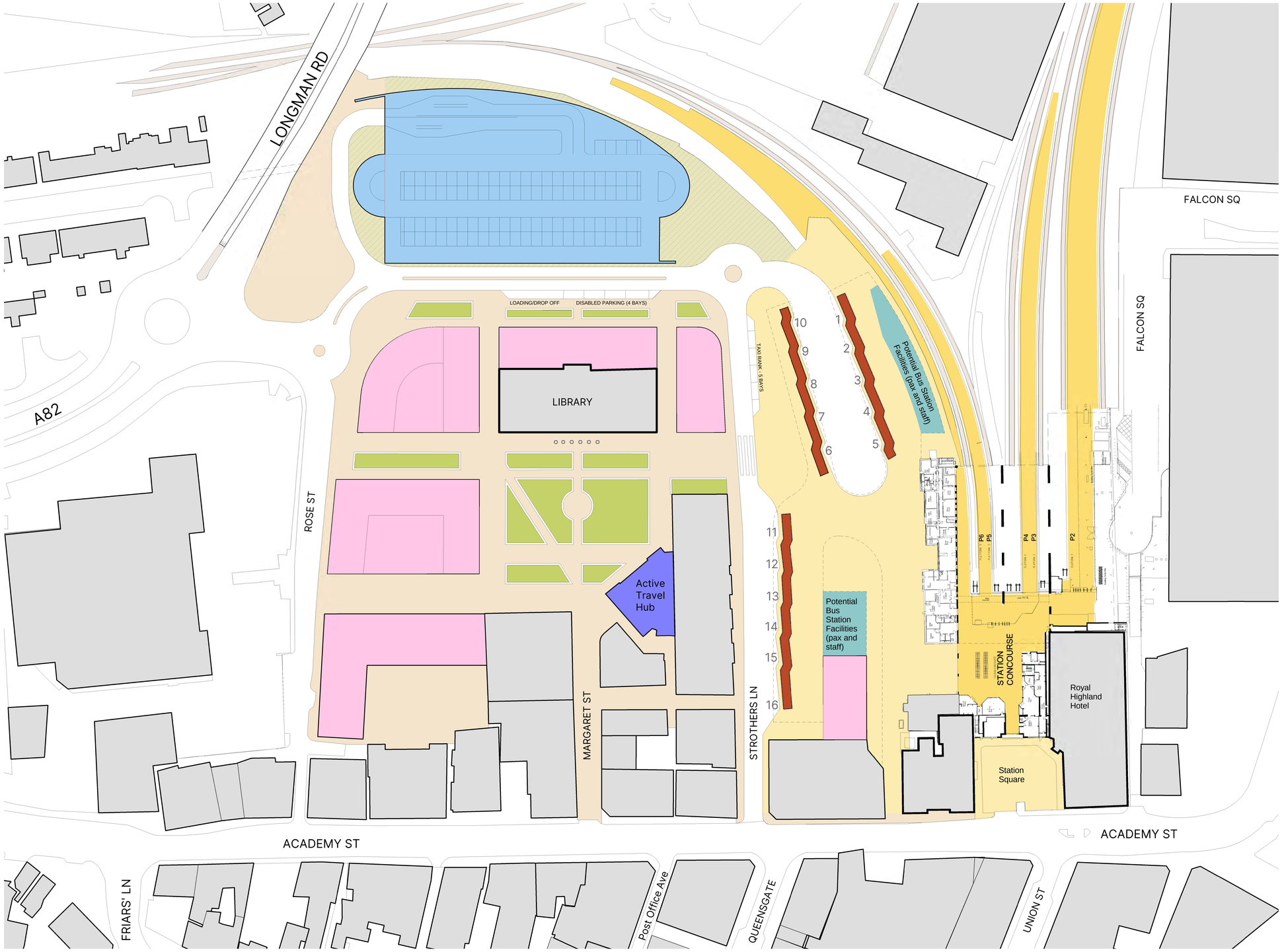
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OPTION 2



Railway station concourse
Bus station concourse
Bus station facilities
MSCP
Urban realm
Landscape areas
New development
Active travel hub
Bus stance seating

Bus routes
Private car routes
Taxi routes
Service access
Pedestrian routes
Cycle paths
Security line

0m 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m

VISUAL SCALE 1:500 @ A1

1 Plan View - Option J GF Plan
1 : 500

Rev	Description	Drawn	Checked	Date Issued
P1	Initial Issue	JW		03.05.2018

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Drawn	Author
Date	April 26
Scale @ A0	As indicated
Status	S0

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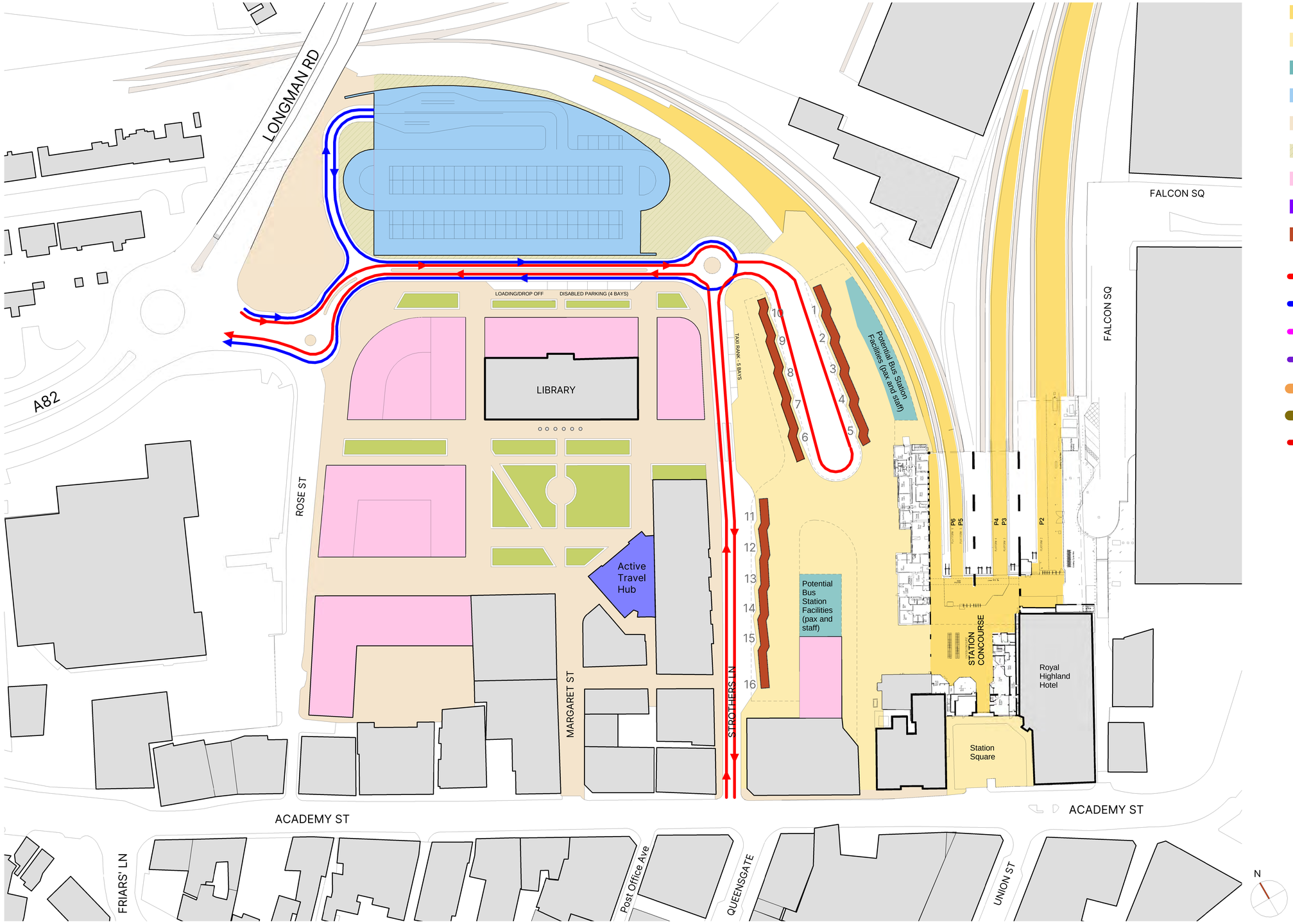
Project Project Name

Description GFP Option J 1-500

Job No. | Drawing No. | Revision P1

Project Number 224069-ASL-XX-00-DR-A-00110

OPTION 2



- Railway station concourse
- Bus station concourse
- Bus station facilities
- MSCP
- Urban realm
- Landscape areas
- New development
- Active travel hub
- Bus stance seating
- Bus routes
- Private car routes
- Taxi routes
- Service access
- Pedestrian routes
- Cycle paths
- Security line

0m 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m

VISUAL SCALE 1:500 @ A1

1 Plan View - Option J GF Plan bus + car route
1 : 500

Rev	Description	Drawn	Checked	Date Issued
P1	Initial Issue	AW		02-03-2026

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Date	April 26
Scale @ A0	As indicated
Status	S0

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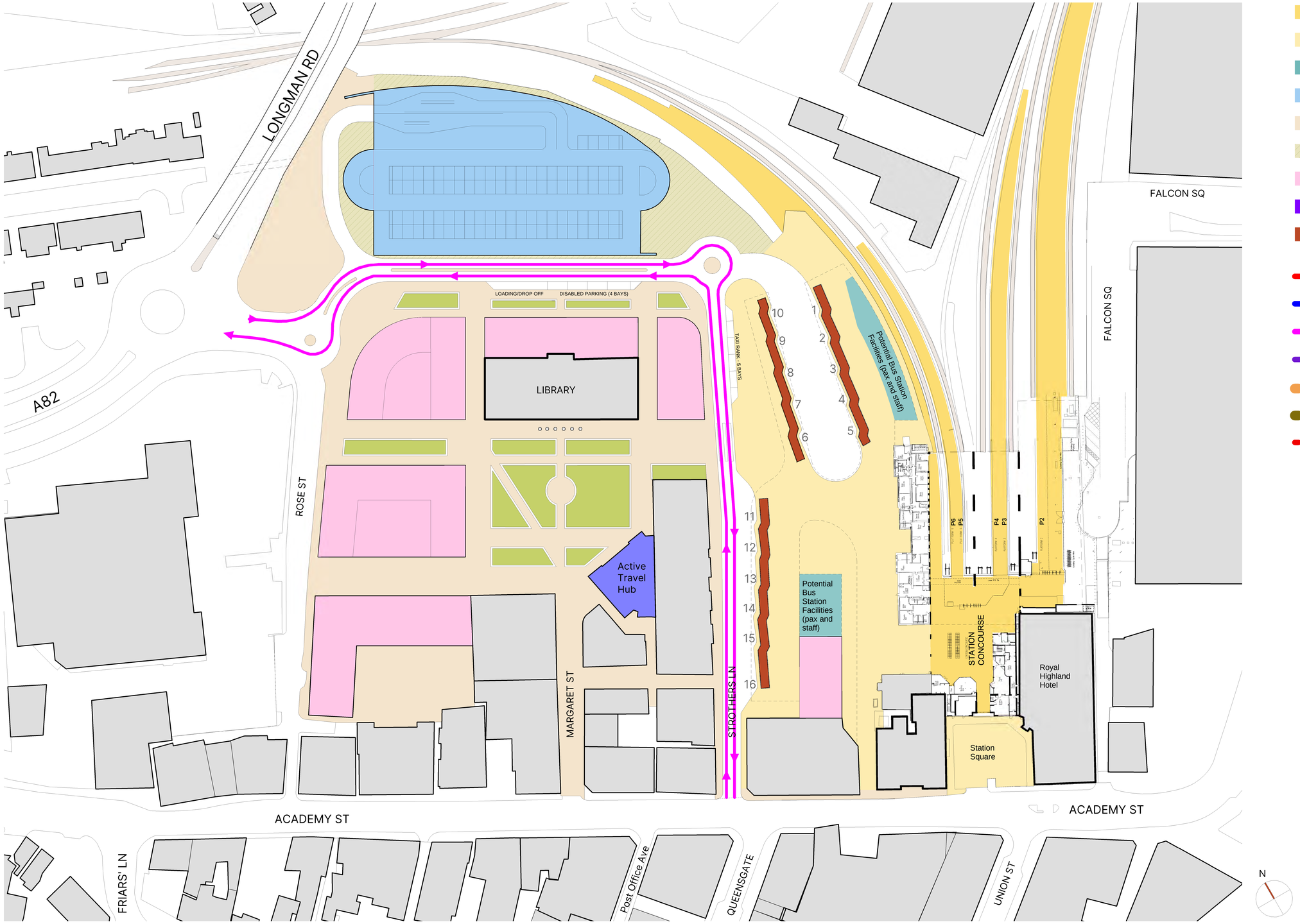
Project Project Name

Description GPP Option J 1-500 Bus + car routes

Job No. Drawing No. Revision P1

Project Number 224069-ASL-XX-00-DR-A-00111

OPTION 2



- Railway station concourse
- Bus station concourse
- Bus station facilities
- MSCP
- Urban realm
- Landscape areas
- New development
- Active travel hub
- Bus stance seating

- Bus routes
- Private car routes
- Taxi routes
- Service access
- Pedestrian routes
- Cycle paths
- Security line

0m 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m

VISUAL SCALE 1:500 @ A1

1 Plan View - Option J GF Plan Taxi route

1 : 500

Rev	Description	Drawn	Checked	Date Issued
P1	Initial Issue	AW		02-03-2026

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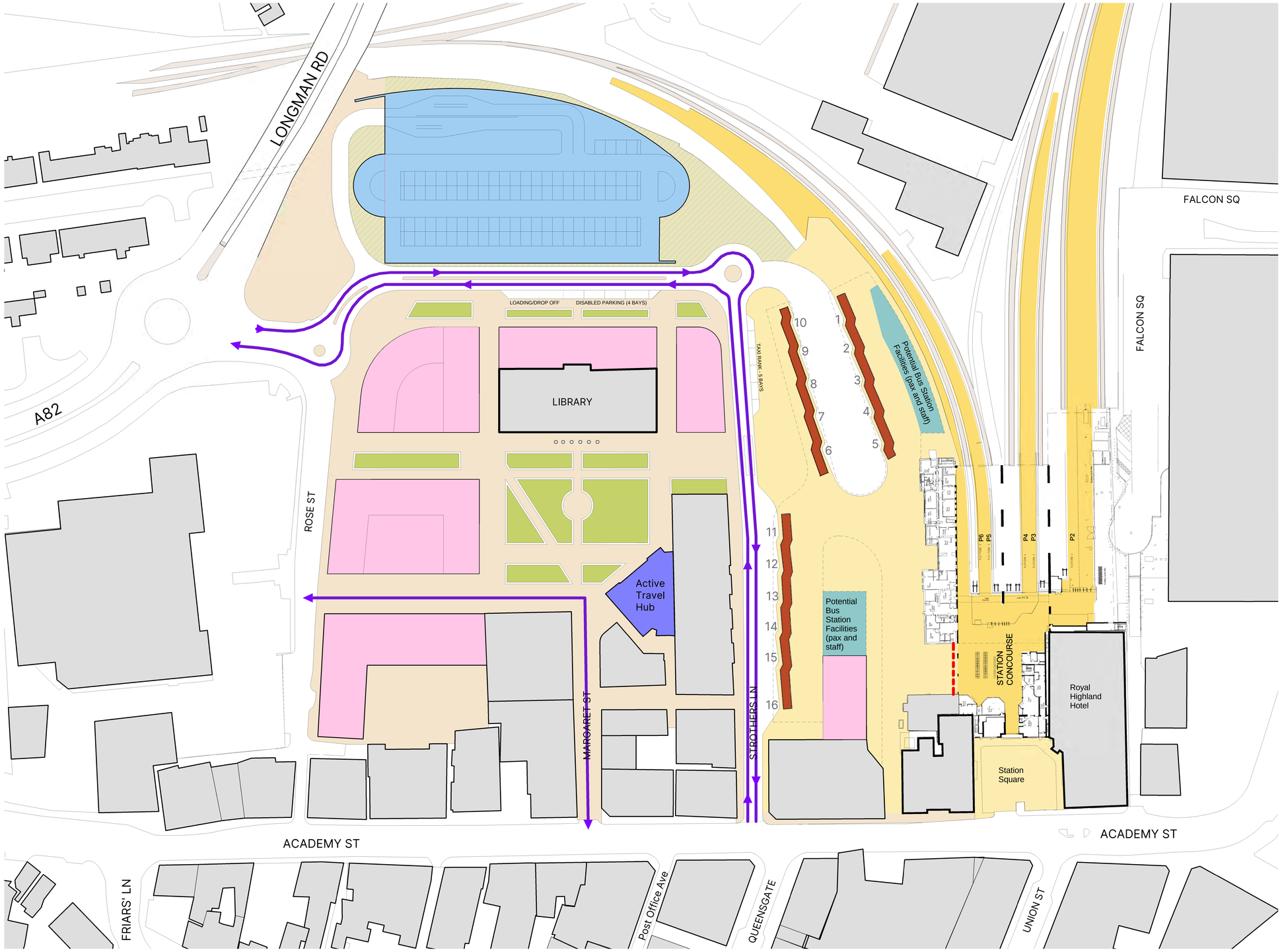
Project Project Name

Description GPP Option J 1-500 Taxi routes

Job No. Drawing No. Revision P1

Project Number 224069-ASL-XX-00-DR-A-00112

OPTION 2



- Railway station concourse
- Bus station concourse
- Bus station facilities
- MSCP
- Urban realm
- Landscape areas
- New development
- Active travel hub
- Bus stance seating

- Bus routes
- Private car routes
- Taxi routes
- Service access
- Pedestrian routes
- Cycle paths
- Security line

0m 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m

VISUAL SCALE 1:500 @ A1

1 Plan View - Option J GF Plan Service routes
1 : 500

Rev	Description	Drawn	Checked	Date Issued
P1	Initial Issue	JW		03.03.2016

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Drawn	Author
Date	April 26
Scale @ A0	As indicated
Status	S0

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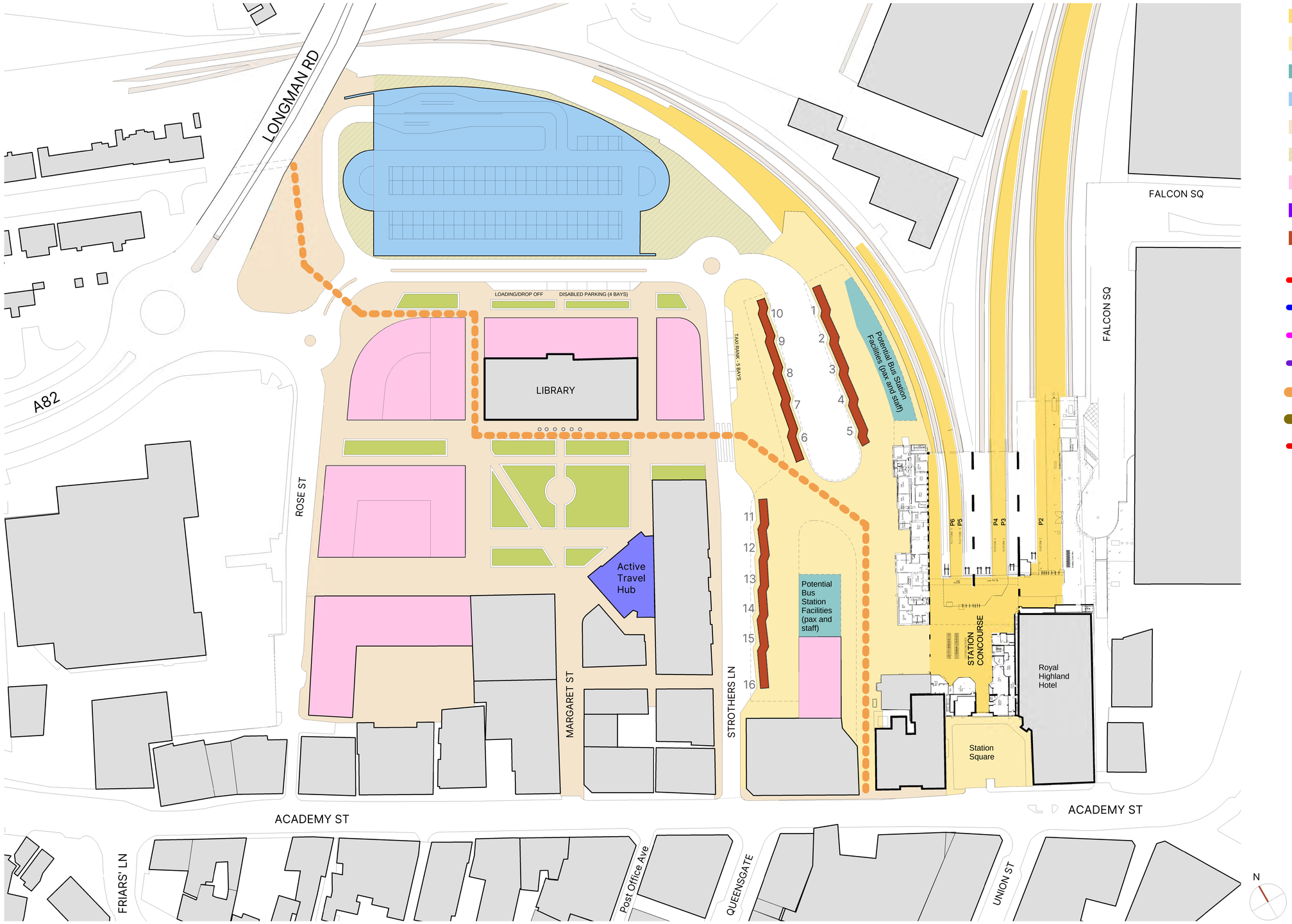
Austin·Smith:Lord

Project Project Name

Description GFP Option J 1-500 Service routes

Job No.	Drawing No.	Revision
Project Number	224069-ASL-XX-00-DR-A-00113	P1

OPTION 2



Railway station concourse
Bus station concourse
Bus station facilities
MSCP
Urban realm
Landscape areas
New development
Active travel hub
Bus stance seating

Bus routes
Private car routes
Taxi routes
Service access
Pedestrian routes
Cycle paths
Security line

0m 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m

VISUAL SCALE 1:500 @ A1

1 Plan View - Option J GF Plan Active travel route
1 : 500

Rev.	Description	Drawn	Checked	Date Issued
P1	Initial Issue	JW		22.01.2026

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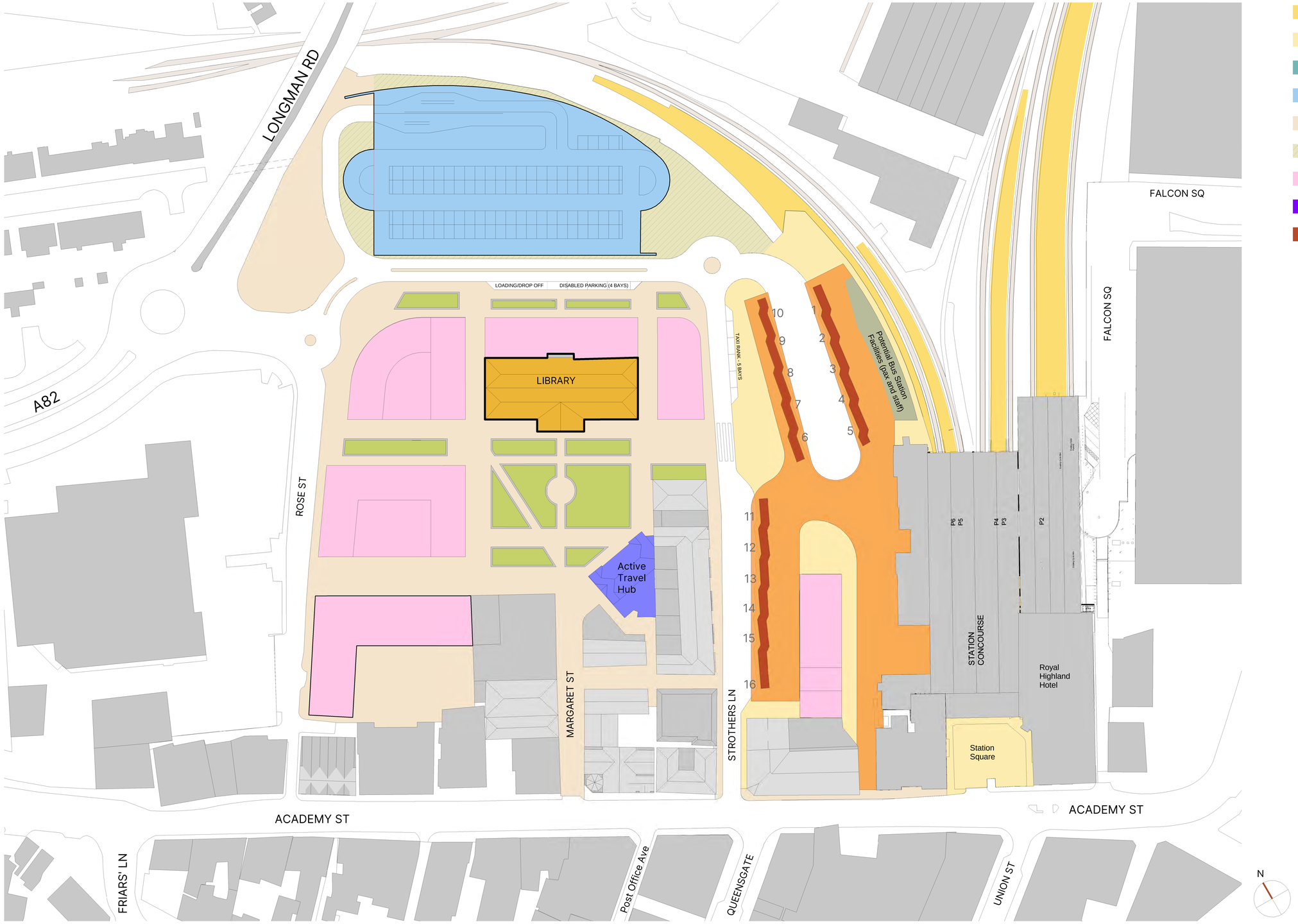
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Project Project Name

Description GFP Option J 1-500 Active Travel routes

Job No.	Drawing No.	Revision
Project Number	224069-ASL-XX-00-DR-A-00114	P1

OPTION 2



0m 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m

VISUAL SCALE 1:500 @ A1

1 Plan View - Option J Roof plan
1 : 500

Rev	Description	Drawn	Checked	Date Issued
P1	Initial Issue	AW		02-03-2026

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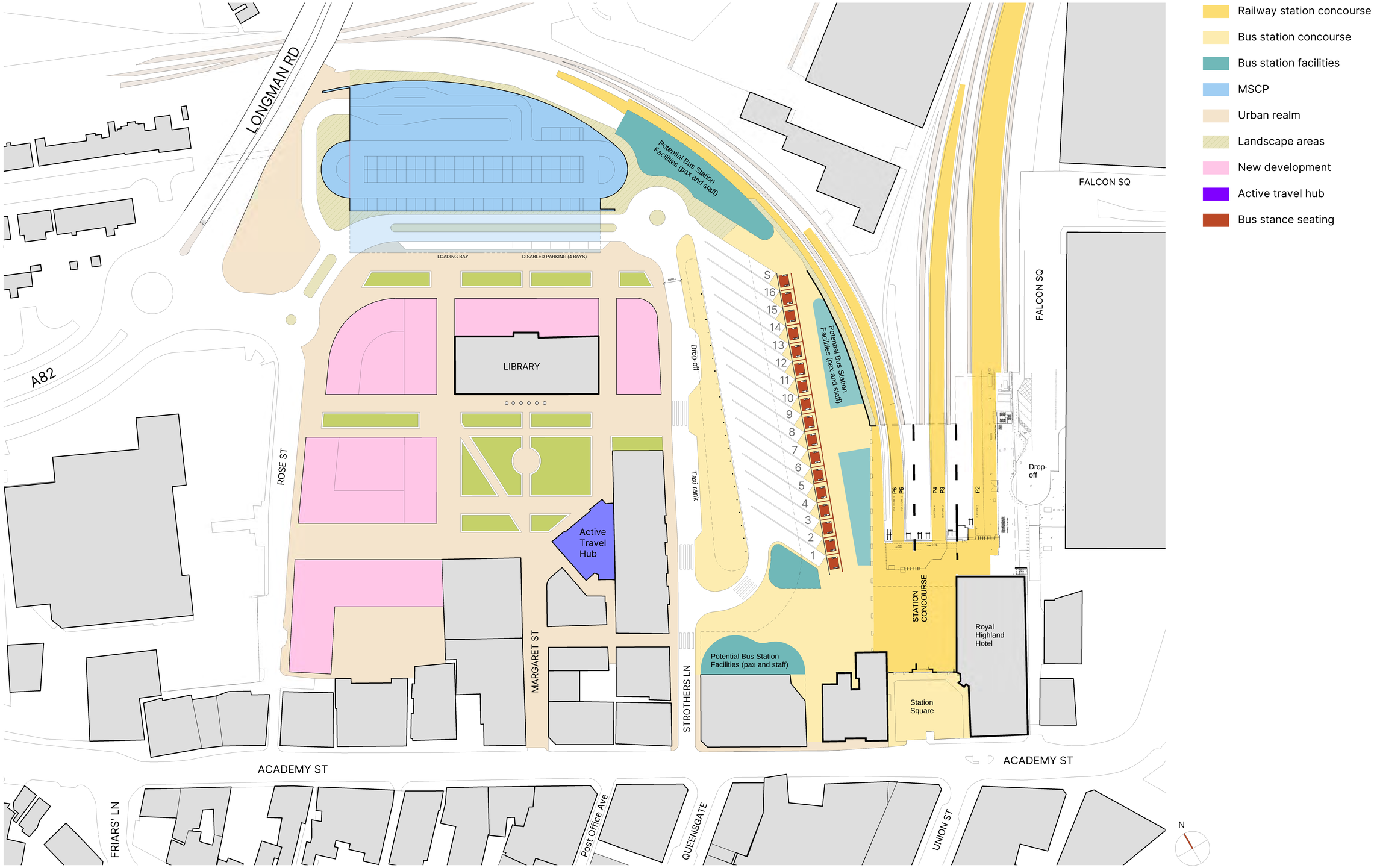
Project Project Name

Description Roof Plan Option J 1-500

Job No. Drawing No. Revision P1

Project Number 224069-ASL-XX-00-DR-A-00115

OPTION 3



- Railway station concourse
- Bus station concourse
- Bus station facilities
- MSCP
- Urban realm
- Landscape areas
- New development
- Active travel hub
- Bus stance seating

0m 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m

VISUAL SCALE 1:500 @ A1

1 Plan View - Option L GF Plan
1 : 500

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P1	Initial Issue	JW		22.03.2026

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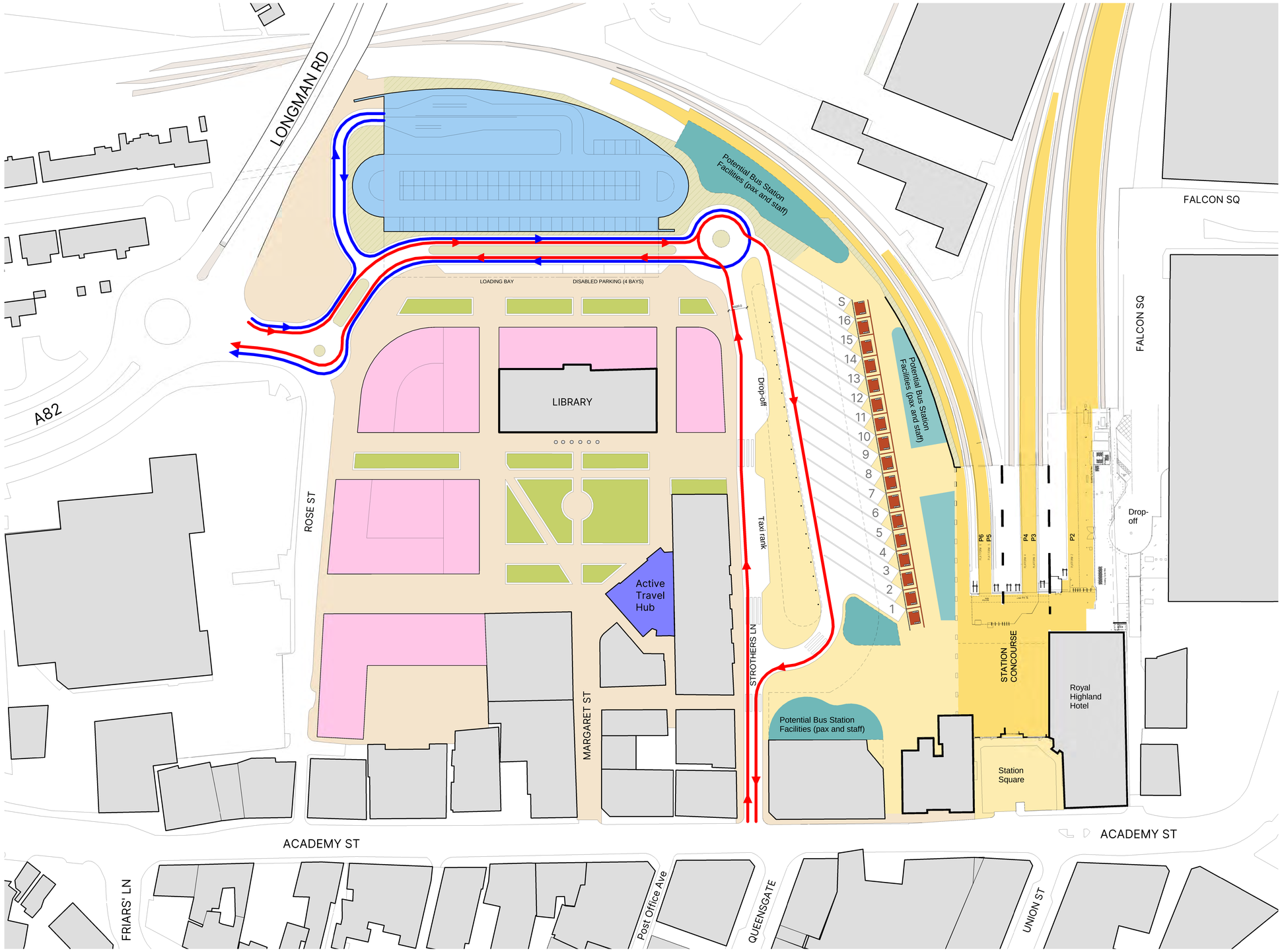
Project Project Name

Description GFP Option L 1-500

Job No. | Drawing No. | Revision P1

Project Number 224069-ASL-XX-00-DR-A-00120

OPTION 3



- Railway station concourse
- Bus station concourse
- Bus station facilities
- MSCP
- Urban realm
- Landscape areas
- New development
- Active travel hub
- Bus stance seating
- Bus routes
- Private car routes
- Taxi routes
- Service access
- Pedestrian routes
- Cycle paths
- Security line

0m 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m

VISUAL SCALE 1:500 @ A1

1 Plan View - Option L GF Plan Bus + Car route

1 : 500

Rev	Description	Drawn	Checked	Date issued
P1	Initial issue	AN		02.03.2026

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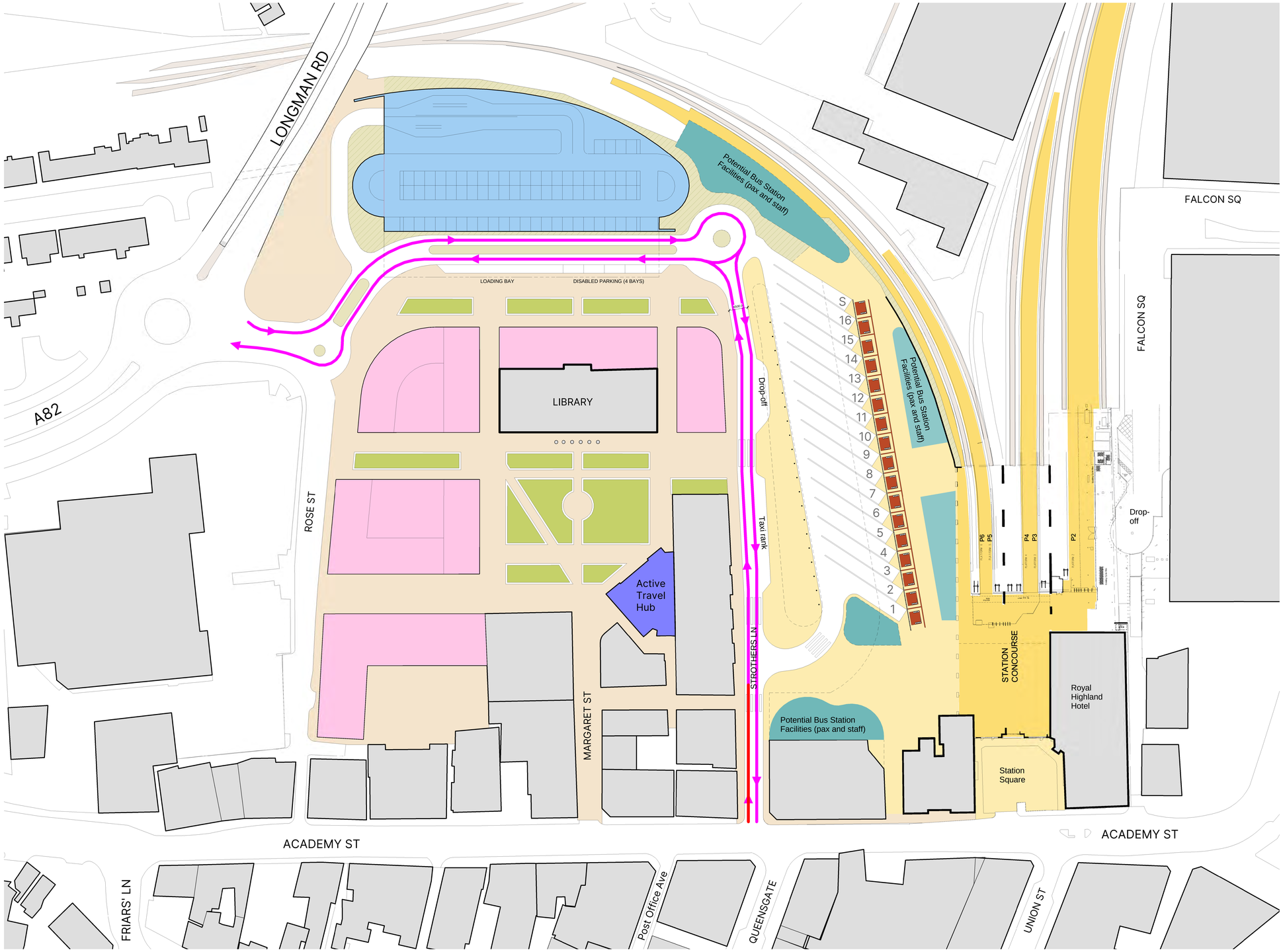
Project Project Name

Description GFP Option L 1-500 Bus + Car routes

Job No. Drawing No. Revision P1

Project Number 224069-ASL-XX-00-DR-A-00121

OPTION 3



- Railway station concourse
- Bus station concourse
- Bus station facilities
- MSCP
- Urban realm
- Landscape areas
- New development
- Active travel hub
- Bus stance seating
- Bus routes
- Private car routes
- Taxi routes
- Service access
- Pedestrian routes
- Cycle paths
- Security line

0m 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m

VISUAL SCALE 1:500 @ A1

1 Plan View - Option L GF Plan Taxi routes
1 : 500

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P1	Initial Issue	JAU		02.02.2026

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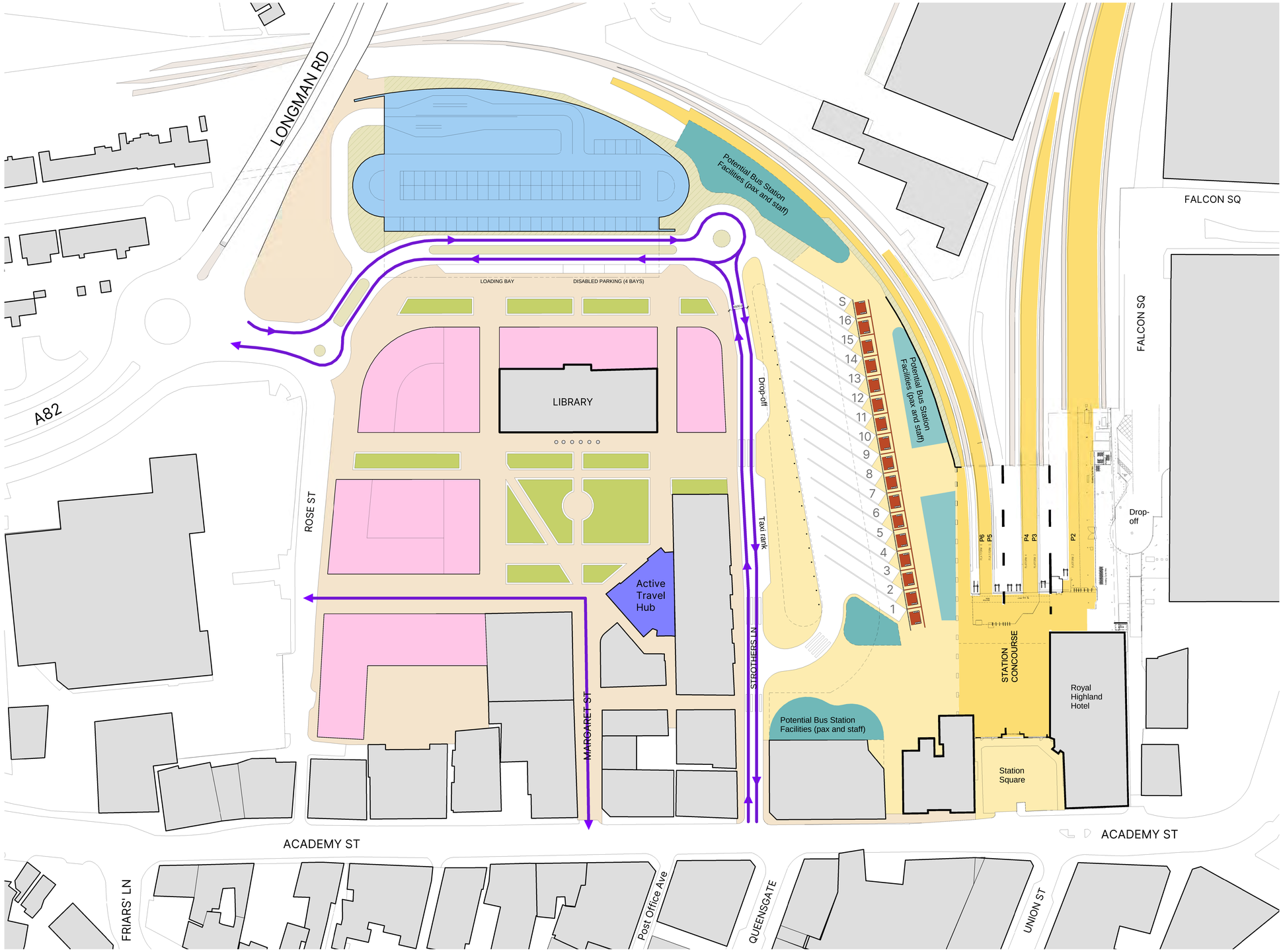
Austin·Smith:Lord

Project Project Name

Description GFP Option L 1-500 Taxi Routes

Job No.	Drawing No.	Revision
Project Number	224069-ASL-XX-00-DR-A-00122	P1

OPTION 3



- Railway station concourse
- Bus station concourse
- Bus station facilities
- MSCP
- Urban realm
- Landscape areas
- New development
- Active travel hub
- Bus stance seating
- Bus routes
- Private car routes
- Taxi routes
- Service access
- Pedestrian routes
- Cycle paths
- Security line

0m 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m

VISUAL SCALE 1:500 @ A1

1 Plan View - Option L GF Plan Service routes
1 : 500

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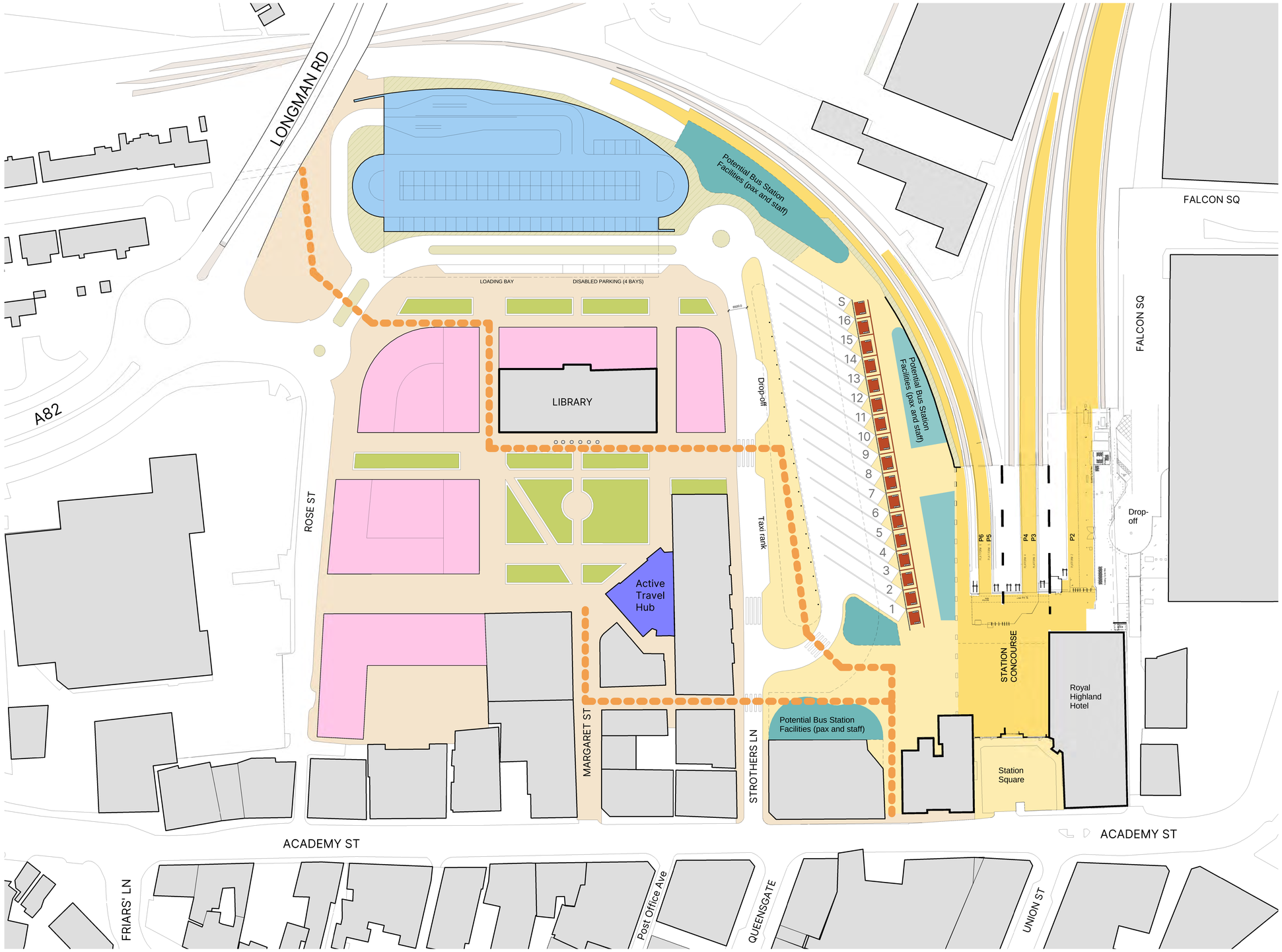
Project Project Name

Description GFP Option L 1-500 Service Routes

Job No. | Drawing No. | Revision P1

Project Number 224069-ASL-XX-00-DR-A-00123

OPTION 3



- Railway station concourse
- Bus station concourse
- Bus station facilities
- MSCP
- Urban realm
- Landscape areas
- New development
- Active travel hub
- Bus stance seating
- Bus routes
- Private car routes
- Taxi routes
- Service access
- Pedestrian routes
- Cycle paths
- Security line

0m 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m

VISUAL SCALE 1:500 @ A1

1 Plan View - Option L GF Plan Active travel routes
1 : 500

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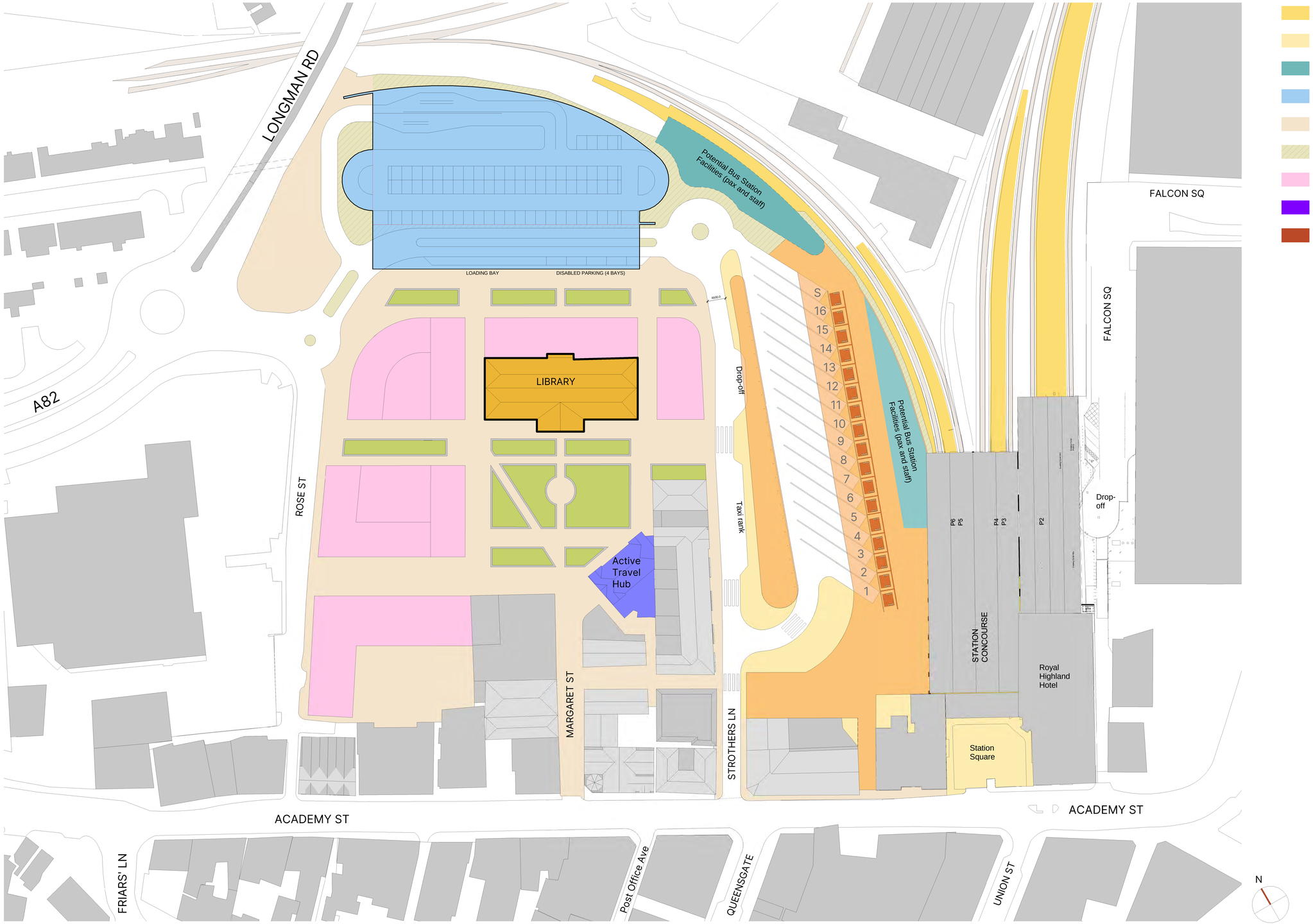
Project Project Name

Description GFP Option L 1-500 Active Travel Routes

Job No. Drawing No. Revision P1

Project Number 224069-ASL-XX-00-DR-A-00124

OPTION 3



- Railway station concourse
- Bus station concourse
- Bus station facilities
- MSCP
- Urban realm
- Landscape areas
- New development
- Active travel hub
- Bus stance seating

0m 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m

VISUAL SCALE 1:500 @ A1

1 Plan View - Option L Roof plan
1 : 500

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Project Project Name

Description Roof Plan Option L 1-500

Job No. Drawing No. Revision P1

Project Number 224069-ASL-XX-00-DR-A-00125

RIBA Plan of Work

Stages 0–7 | A simple guide

APPENDIX 4

0 Strategic Definition
Identify the need and decide whether a project is the best solution.

1 Preparation and Briefing
Agree the project brief, budget and site requirements.

2 Concept Design — PROPOSED NEXT STAGE
Develop design options, outline engineering proposals and an initial cost plan.

3 Spatial Coordination
Coordinate the design so the layout, structure and services work together.

4 Technical Design
Prepare the detailed drawings and specifications needed for construction.

5 Manufacturing and Construction
Manufacture components, carry out construction and check quality.

6 Handover
Hand over the completed project, address defects and provide aftercare.

7 Use
Operate and maintain the asset, and review its performance.

Stage 2 highlighted for the Inverness Interchange proposal.

Simplified sequence: stages may overlap, depending on the project.

Source: RIBA Plan of Work 2020. Descriptions summarised for clarity.