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A9

Dualling Programme

Pass of Birnam to Tay Crossing
The Preferred Route Brochure

December 2023 / January 2024

Introduction

The A9 is regarded by many as the spine of the Scottish road network providing a vital strategic link in Scotland and carrying over 40,000 vehicles per day (over 65,000 people) along the Perth to Inverness section. The A9 Dualling Programme will upgrade approximately 129 kilometres of road from single to dual carriageway. The Pass of Birnam to Tay Crossing section forms 8.4 kilometres of the overall A9 Dualling Programme. Transport Scotland's programme is designed to deliver economic growth through improved road safety and quicker and more reliable journey times, as well as providing better links to public transport and active travel facilities.

Transport Scotland's A9 Dualling Programme objectives are to:

- Improve the operational performance of the A9 by:
  - Reducing journey times; and
  - Improving journey time reliability.

- Improve safety for motorised and non-motorised users by:
  - Reducing accident severity; and
  - Reducing driver stress.

- Facilitate active travel within the corridor; and
- Improve integration with public transport facilities.

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A9 Co-Creative Process

Transport Scotland, in partnership with the Birnam to Ballinluig A9 Community Group, undertook an A9 Co-Creative Process in 2018. This involved the community suggesting ideas for the A9 Dualling for the Pass of Birnam to Tay Crossing project and concluded with the identification of the Community's Preferred Route Option (CRPO). The process was open to everyone, and the Birnam to Ballinluig A9 Community Group has been involved in each stage of the process.

The Birnam to Ballinluig A9 Community Group identified the following community objectives for this section of the A9 Dualling Programme:

- Reduce current levels of noise and pollution in the villages of Dunkeld, Birnam and Inver to protect human health, and well-being of residents and visitors and to enable them to peacefully enjoy their properties and amenity spaces;
- Protect and enhance the scenic beauty and natural heritage of the area and its distinctive character and quality;
- Provide better, safer access on and off the A9 from both sides of the road ensuring easy, safe movement of vehicular traffic and non-motorised users through the villages, helping to reduce stress and anxiety and support the local economy;
- Promote long term and sustainable economic growth within Dunkeld and Birnam and the surrounding communities;
- Examine and identify opportunities to enhance the levels of wheeling, cycling and walking for transport and leisure, including the improvement of existing footpaths and cycle ways, to promote positive mental health and well-being;
- Ensure that all local bus, intercity bus services and train services are maintained and improved; and
- Preserve and enhance the integrity of the unique and rich historical and cultural features of the Dunkeld, Birnam and Inver communities, thereby supporting well-being and the local economy.

The A9 Co-creative Process culminated in the identification of the CPRO which was announced in August 2018 and presented at a public consultation in March 2019 along with the outcome of initial assessment work. That assessment work identified a number of challenges, many of which are difficult to mitigate. As well as the CRPO, we assessed three Additional Whole Route Options to ensure that the ultimate decision on the Preferred Route was robust and fully considered all options available. As part of the design of the A9 Co-Creative Process, it was agreed with the Birnam to Ballinluig A9 Community Group that the CPRO and any additional comparator options would be subject to our usual assessment process.

The Assessment Process

We are following the normal trunk road scheme development process and progressing the scheme in accordance with guidance in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB).

This is a three-stage assessment process which covers engineering, environment (which includes climate change, communities and human health), traffic and economic considerations.

DMRB Process

DMRB Stage 1

A9 Preliminary Engineering Study and Strategic Environmental Assessment - identification of broad improvement strategies

DMRB Stage 2

Route option assessment and identification of preferred option

Co-Creative Process

Identification of the community's preferred option

Stage Complete

DMRB Stage 3

Development and assessment of preferred option

Statutory Process

Publication of draft Road Orders, Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) and Environmental Impact Assessment
Public Local Inquiry (if required)

Procurement

Construction

In total, four Whole Route Options were comparatively assessed at DMRB Stage 2 in order to identify the Preferred Route. A full copy of the DMRB Stage 2 report is available on our Story Map, which can be accessed by scanning the QR code overleaf.

The Preferred Route

Based on the findings of the DMRB Stage 2 route options comparative assessment, and considering feedback from the public and other stakeholders, the Preferred Route for the Pass of Birnam to Tay Crossing section of the A9 Dualling Programme is **Additional Whole Route Option 3, Option ST2D**.

SCAN HERE for the Story Map, where you can find more information on the Preferred Route

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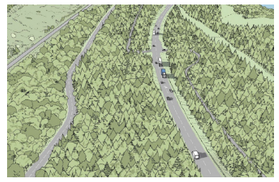
The key features of the Preferred Route:

- The A9 route is generally at-grade (same level as existing) and stays at the current surface level past Dunkeld & Birnam Railway Station;
- The railway station will be accessible from Birnam via Station Road. The new replacement car park will have provision for both public transport and active travel facilities. A new pedestrian underpass, incorporating stairs and a lift, will provide a link for pedestrians from the car park to the railway station building and platform;
- National speed limit (70mph) throughout;
- Underbridge connecting the existing private access to Murthly Castle to the B867;
- Grade-separated Birnam Junction just south of the existing B867 and Perth Road junctions with northbound entry and exit slips and southbound entry only slip;
- A roundabout at Dunkeld Junction close to the current surface level (at-grade) providing connections between the A9, A923, A822 and the road to Inver;
- Improved at-grade junction layout providing access to The Hermitage; and
- Grade-separated Dalguise Junction just south of the existing junction with the B898 with entry and exit slip roads in all directions.

A9 DUALLING
PERTH TO INVERNESS
Pass of Birnam to Tay Crossing



Murthly Castle Estate Access

An underbridge connects the existing private access to Murthly Castle to the B867.

Dunkeld & Birnam Railway Station

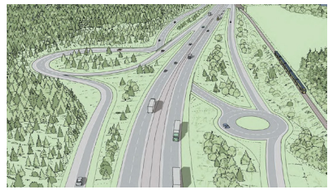
The A9 route is generally at-grade (same level as existing) and stays at the current surface level past Dunkeld & Birnam Railway Station.

The railway station will be accessible from Birnam via Station Road. The new replacement car park will have provision for both public transport and active travel facilities.

A new pedestrian underpass, incorporating stairs and a lift, will provide a link for pedestrians from the car park to the railway station building and platform.

The Hermitage

Left-in left-out junction on the northbound carriageway.

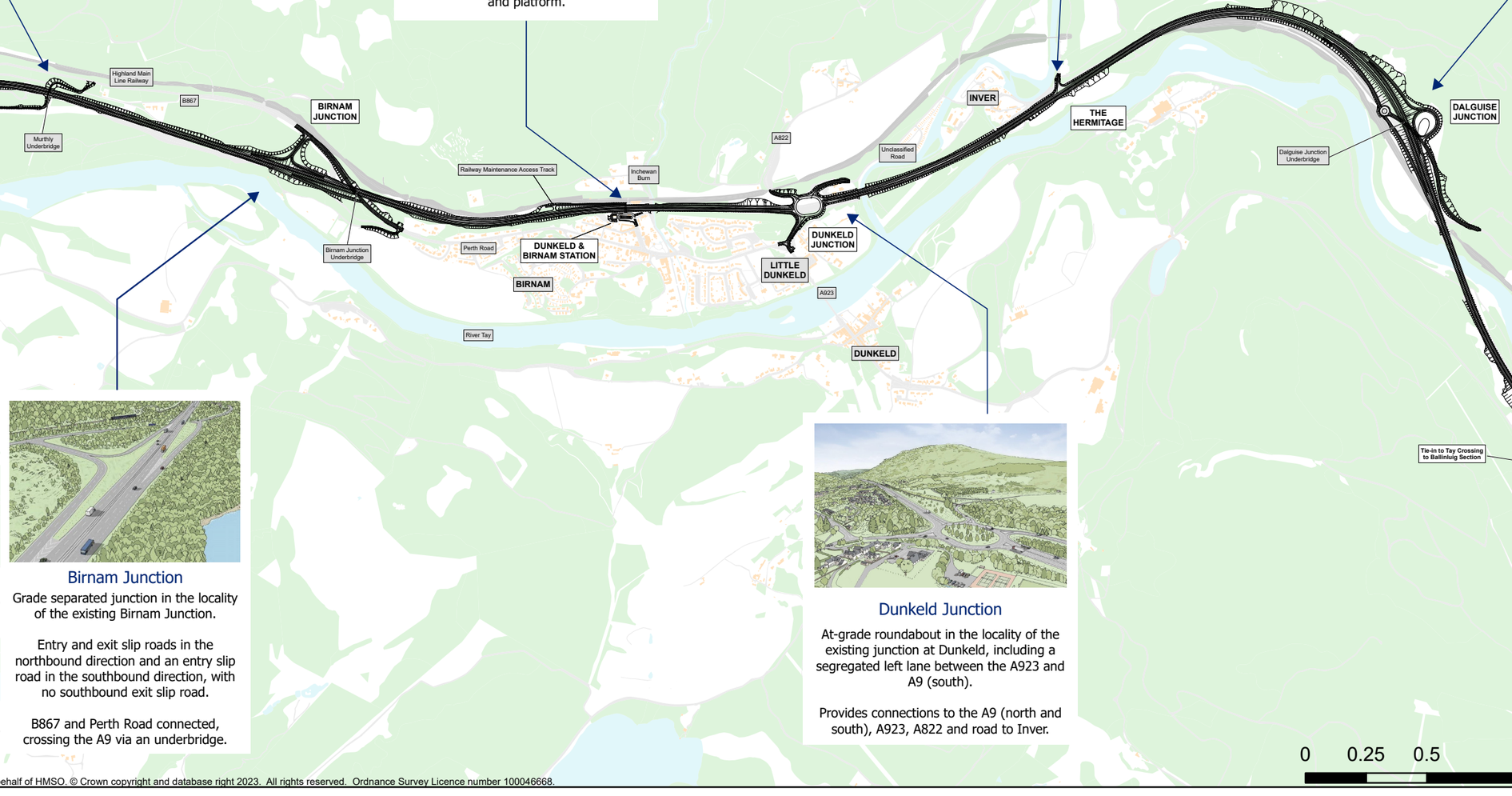


Dalguise Junction

Grade separated junction south of the existing junction with the B898.

Entry and exit slip roads in the northbound direction and entry and exit slip roads in the southbound direction, facilitating all vehicle movements.

Realigned B898 crosses the A9 on an underbridge, connecting to a roundabout on the east of the A9, which also connects to the southbound slip roads.



Birnam Junction

Grade separated junction in the locality of the existing Birnam Junction.

Entry and exit slip roads in the northbound direction and an entry slip road in the southbound direction, with no southbound exit slip road.

B867 and Perth Road connected, crossing the A9 via an underbridge.

Dunkeld Junction

At-grade roundabout in the locality of the existing junction at Dunkeld, including a segregated left lane between the A923 and A9 (south).

Provides connections to the A9 (north and south), A923, A822 and road to Inver.

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0 0.25 0.5 1 Kilometres

Benefits of the Preferred Route

The Preferred Route meets the A9 Dualling Programme objectives as well as contributing towards the Birnam to Ballinluig A9 Community Group's objectives. We will continue to take into consideration these objectives throughout the DMRB Stage 3 design and environmental assessment. The reasons for the selected Preferred Route include:

Constructability:
Less construction complexity avoiding the need for significant piling works adjacent to residential properties and the Category A listed building Dunkeld & Birnam Railway Station.

Shortest expected construction duration of approximately 2 ½ to 3 years reducing direct and indirect construction impacts and effects on businesses and community assets.

Less excavation and import of material required, therefore less construction vehicle movements and less expensive to construct.

Inchewan Burn:
Maintains the existing integrity of Inchewan Burn, allowing continued fish passage and habitat connectivity.

Biodiversity:
Lowest overall loss of habitat identified on the ancient woodland inventory.

Landscape:
Generally at-grade and closely aligned to the existing A9 retaining the existing landscape character

Lowest overall effect on the River Tay (Dunkeld), National Scenic Area (NSA), and its Special Qualities (e.g 'Gateway to the Highlands').

Lowest overall effect on visual amenity and views from adjacent visual receptors unchanged.

Climate Change:
Lowest overall effect on material assets, waste and the climate as significantly less concrete and construction vehicle movements are required.

Public Transport and Active Travel:
Improves accessibility to Dunkeld & Birnam Railway Station.

How the A9 Co-Creative Process informed the Preferred Route

The Preferred Route includes a number of key design characteristics voted through the A9 Co-Creative Process and also comprises several elements of the Community's Preferred Route Option (CPRO). A summary of this is provided below:

- The grade separated junction at Birnam was based on the community's close second choice junction option. In order to minimise the impact on Perth Road, due to increased volume of traffic, a northbound merge slip road has been incorporated within the Birnam Junction design;
- The at-grade roundabout at Dunkeld was the community's first choice junction option;
- The left-in left-out junction at the Hermitage was the community's first choice junction option;
- The grade separated junction at Dalguise was the community's first choice junction option; and
- One of the key aspirations through the A9 Co-Creative Process was to improve connectivity to the Dunkeld & Birnam Railway Station. The railway station will be accessible from Birnam via Station Road. A new replacement car park will have provision for both public transport and active travel facilities. A new pedestrian underpass, incorporating stairs and a lift, will provide a link for pedestrians from the car park to the railway station building and platform.

Artist impression of Dunkeld & Birnam Railway Station

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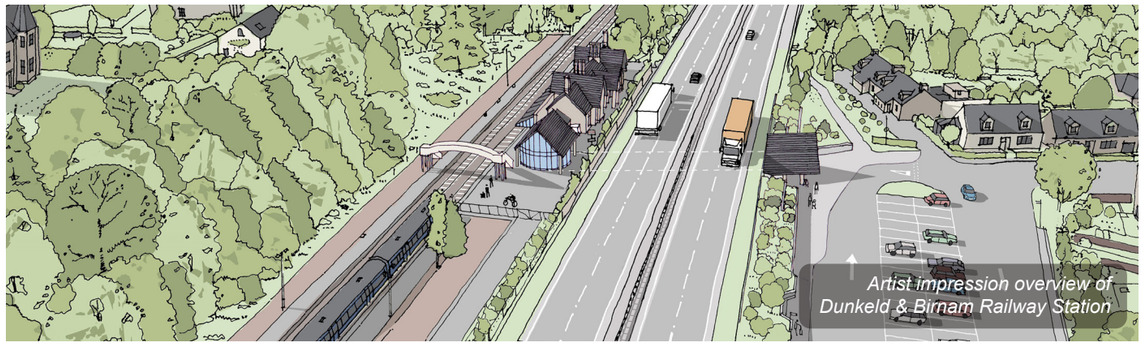
Dunkeld & Birnam Railway Station

From feedback gathered through the A9 Co-Creative Process and public consultation, reconnecting the railway station with Station Road and improving accessibility, are very important to the community.

The Preferred Route provides car parking facilities at the top of Station Road, with access to the railway station via a pedestrian underpass. The underpass design can be further developed to capture as much natural light as possible, providing a welcoming entrance to the railway station. The angle and position of the underpass and entrance can also be developed to align and integrate with Station Road and the Category A listed building Dunkeld & Birnam Railway Station, with views of the entrance on approach from Station Road. A lift will also be included within the underpass to improve platform accessibility. Station proposals will continue to develop, in consultation with key stakeholders, including Network Rail and the community, as part of the next stage of assessment.



Artist impression overview of Dunkeld & Birnam Railway Station

Next Steps

Our technical advisors, Jacobs, will take forward the development and assessment of the Preferred Route as part of the DMRB Stage 3 assessment.

As we look to refine, develop and further assess the design of the Preferred Route, further consultation is planned during the DMRB Stage 3 assessment. We will keep you updated through a range of direct communications and consultations.

We will also be considering:

- Provision of private means of access;
- Proposals for lay-bys;
- Proposals for active travel facilities;
- The location and layout of road drainage infrastructure, including detention basins and treatment ponds; and
- Environmental mitigation measures such as mammal underpasses, landscape planting and noise barriers.

Any additional ground investigation, ecology and other environmental surveys required to help inform the design will be carried out. This will lead to the development and publication of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report. The draft Road Orders will define the line of the developed Preferred Route. The draft Compulsory Purchase Order will define the extent of land needed to deliver the project.

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Your Views Matter to Us

We welcome your comments on the Preferred Route for the A9 Dualling: Pass of Birnam to Tay Crossing project and will use this to help inform its design and development.

Scan the QR code above or visit bit.ly/a9p2storymap to complete the online feedback form. If you would prefer to take your time, you can also download a digital version of the feedback survey which can be submitted by emailing A9dualling@jacobs.com or by writing to Jacobs, A9 Dualling Team, 95 Bothwell Street, Glasgow, G2 7HX.

Alternatively, hard copies of the feedback form are currently located at Birnam Arts & Conference Centre, Station Rd, PH8 0DS, and these can be posted in the onsite feedback box.

You can also submit your feedback at our in-person Public Exhibition which will be taking place at Birnam Arts & Conference Centre between 11am and 8pm on Monday, 29th and between 10am and 6pm on Tuesday, 30th January 2024. **We would be grateful if you could take the time to provide any feedback by midnight on Sunday, 17th March 2024.**

Feedback is being collected by our technical advisors (Jacobs UK Limited) and will be shared with us throughout the consultation period and through a consultation report which we will publish. We may also use your feedback to inform future reports or public documents related to this activity. If you choose to provide contact details with your feedback, your personal data will be deleted on completion of this project. If you have any enquiries about how we are processing your personal data, please contact us at A9Dualling@jacobs.com, or alternatively please visit: www.transport.gov.scot/website-privacy-policy/.

We will be happy to assist you with any queries you may have in relation to the scheme and you can get in touch through the ‘Contact Us’ section of our Story Map.

You can also follow us on social media for updates on how the scheme is progressing:

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