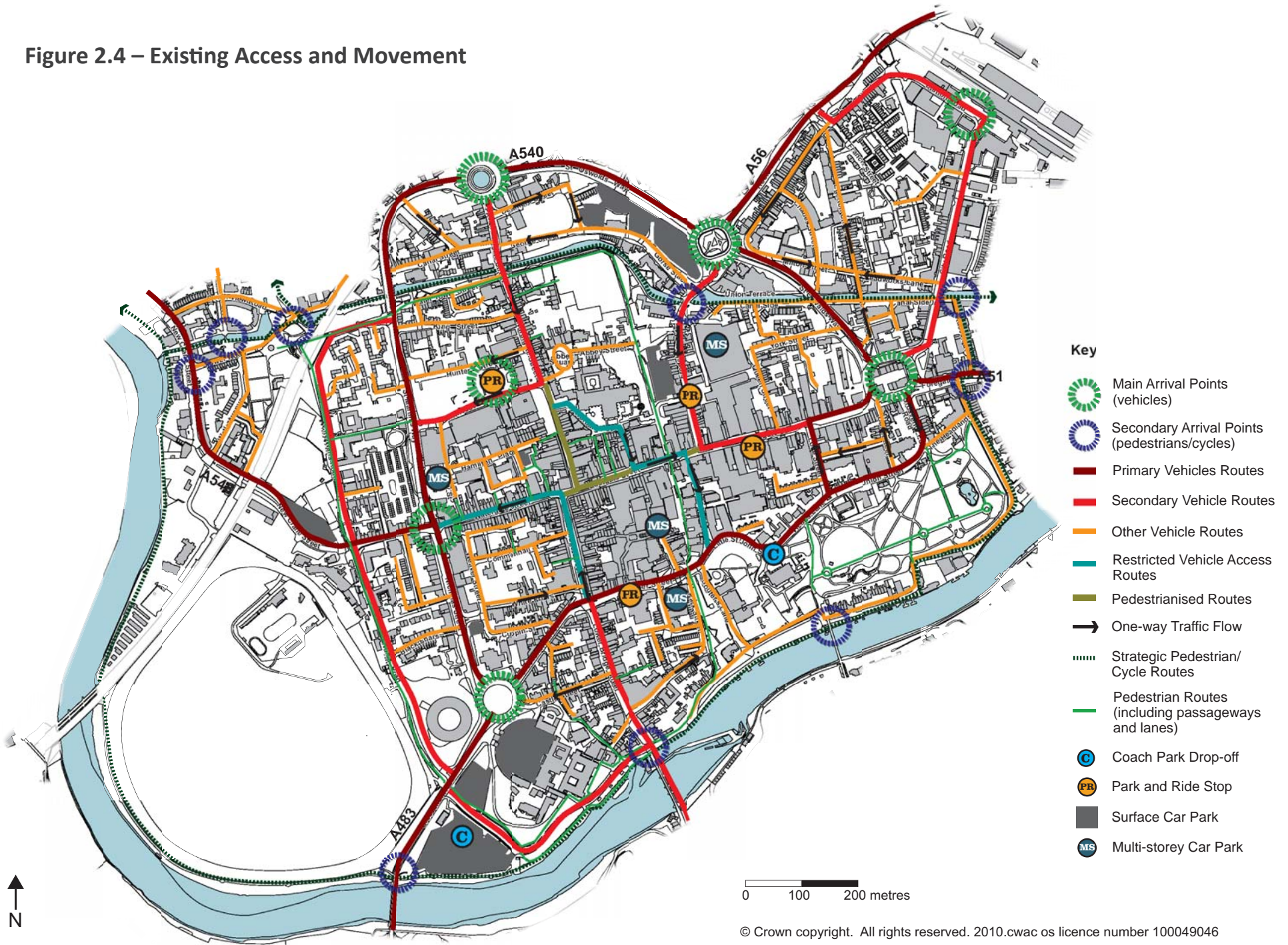


Figure 2.4 – Existing Access and Movement



- Key**
- Main Arrival Points (vehicles)
 - Secondary Arrival Points (pedestrians/cycles)
 - Primary Vehicles Routes
 - Secondary Vehicle Routes
 - Other Vehicle Routes
 - Restricted Vehicle Access Routes
 - Pedestrianised Routes
 - One-way Traffic Flow
 - Strategic Pedestrian/ Cycle Routes
 - Pedestrian Routes (including passageways and lanes)
 - Coach Park Drop-off
 - Park and Ride Stop
 - Surface Car Park
 - Multi-storey Car Park

0 100 200 metres

© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. 2010.cwac os licence number 100049046



Existing Public Realm Context

2.4 ~ Access and Movement

Access and movement in Chester can be considered in relation to:

- Motor vehicles
- Cyclists
- Pedestrians
- Public transport users
- Canal boaters

Primary Vehicle Routes:

Chester's inner ring road (A5268) is a mainly dual carriageway route that forms the primary vehicle circulation route around the city centre. The inner ring road is currently a busy, fast flowing and largely unattractive route. In the main, the width of the route and size of junctions represents a significant barrier to pedestrians and cyclists approaching the city from the railway station and also surrounding residential areas, with many people discouraged from using the subways beneath the Bars, Hoole Way and Fountains roundabouts.

The 'purpose built' sections of the ring road, namely St Oswalds Way and St Martin's Way, are particularly unattractive routes dominated by concrete barriers to the central reservation, pedestrian guard railings and traffic signage. In addition, the concrete elevated sections of these roads which cross the canal have a detrimental affect on the canal environment. The 'city streets' part of the ring road, namely Grosvenor Street, Pepper Street, Little St John Street, Vicar's Lane, Love Street and Union Street do not suffer from

these problems to the same extent, however there is still scope to reduce the dominance of vehicles in order to improve pedestrian movement and also enhance their overall appearance.

The primary vehicle approaches into Chester meet the ring road at key junctions and roundabouts. The primary vehicle approaches are:

- Eastern Approach: A51 (Foregate Street)
- Northeastern Approach: A56 (Hoole Way/Hoole Road)
- Northern Approach: A540/A5116 (Liverpool Road/Parkgate Road)
- Western Approach: A548 (Sealand Road/Crane Street)
- Southern Approach: A483 (Wrexham Road/Grosvenor Road)

The key junctions and roundabouts represent main arrival points into the city and like the ring road, the dominance of vehicles, barriers and signage, currently make these gateways unattractive. The ring road roundabouts that form part of the eastern, northeastern and northern approaches are particularly unpleasant for pedestrians who have a choice of either using the unappealing and dated subways or attempting to cross the busy roads above ground.

Other Vehicle Routes:

Within and outside the inner ring road a grid-like arrangement of attractive streets are found, which represent the legacy of Chester's historic street pattern. Many of these routes are designated one-way and represent a combination of:

- Secondary vehicle routes: routes off the primary network that provide key access to car parks, residences and businesses.
- Restricted vehicle access routes: provide access for disabled users, service vehicles, maintenance vehicles and some special permissions (i.e access to Grosvenor Hotel). The volume of pedestrian flow and the setted carriageways along these streets mean that they tend to function as informal pedestrian priority zones during the daytime. The natural stone materials used across the floorscape make these streets particularly attractive.
- Other vehicle routes: tertiary or minor streets that provide access to service areas or residential streets off the primary and secondary network.

Cyclists and Pedestrians:

In combination with restricted and one-way vehicle access routes in the city core, short sections of the street network at the heart of the retail and historic core have been fully pedestrianised. These areas are Eastgate Street, between the Cross and St Werburgh Street and Eastgate Clock and Frodsham Street, and Northgate Street, between St Werburgh Street and Eastgate Street. These areas experience very heavy pedestrian flows during the daytime.



Eastgate Street

The city walls route represents a circular pedestrian route around the historic core of the city. The walls route is not accessible to all due to the number of steps. Many of the crossing points over the primary and secondary vehicle network are made via the bridges at the gates, making the walls a useful means of navigating large parts of the city.

The fairly recently established riverside trail and canal towpath network serve as an outer pedestrian/cycle circular route. The canal and river on the eastern side of the circular route are connected via Russell Street and Grosvenor Park Road. In line with the aspirations for the Chester Cycle Demonstration City, the circular waterside route is seen as a key means of connecting Chester's wider strategic cycle network with the city, reducing the need for cyclists to use the ring road. Nine secondary arrival points have been identified for cyclists in Figure 2.4 linked to this circular route. These provide connections with the national cycle network as well as to the main A-road approaches into the city.



St Werburgh Street and the Cathedral

In addition, the Roman Gardens and Grosvenor Park offer key pedestrian links between the southern part of the ring road (Pepper Street, Little St John Street and Vicars Lane) and The Groves.

The historic grain of Chester city centre has resulted in the creation of a number of alleys, many of which are only accessible to pedestrians and, where wide enough, cyclists. These can represent enticing exploratory routes for visitors, as well as useful short-cuts.



Railway Station



Canalside Routes and Moorings



City Wall Routes

Public Transport:

The railway station and bus station have also been identified as main arrival points into the city. The railway station is not conveniently located in relation to the city as those arriving by train are required to walk the length of City Road or Brook Street before crossing the ring road to reach the city centre. The railway station forecourt and City Road have recently been subject to a new public realm scheme, which has done much to improve the station and its main approach route. Brook Street remains a less attractive and less obvious route from the station, although the street is currently subject to a programme of investment led by Chester Renaissance.

The existing bus station offers a poor quality arrival point into the city. This situation is due to be addressed through the building of a new bus station at an alternative location in the city. The Little Roodee accommodates coach parking and a coach drop-off is situated on Vicar's Lane (outside Chester Visitor Centre).

Chester's park and ride operates from four locations (Sealand Road, Upton, Wrexham Road and Boughton Heath) on the city's outskirts. These provide a total of 3170 parking spaces with buses running every 10 minutes into the city centre. The park and ride services drop passengers off on Frodsham Street, Foregate Street, Pepper Street and the bus station.

Car Parks:

As well as the park and ride service, a number of council owned surface car parks are found within the city centre. These tend to be small areas, with the Little Roodee and Gorse Stacks representing the largest provision. There are a number of private operators that provide multi-storey car parking in the city, either as a stand-alone service or as part of the shopping centres. There is a tendency for these structures and the access to and from them to detract from the public realm.

Canal Boaters:

As well as the importance of the canal towpath routes for pedestrians and cyclists, the navigable Shropshire Union Canal provides a more minor means of access and movement in the city for canal boaters. A number of city centre moorings are available within the study area.

Relevance to the PRDG

The following bullet points summarise the key points relating to access and movement which are to be addressed in the PRDG.

- Improve the appearance of the inner ring road and main approaches to the city, as well as improve the environment and crossing facilities for pedestrians.

- Overall dominance of vehicles in the city centre needs to be reduced and pedestrian-friendly environments extended from the city centre core streets outward. This could include a reduction in bus/coach access encroaching city centre streets whilst providing high quality bus stops/coach drop-offs in convenient locations.
- Improve access to the City Walls and their use by pedestrians as a means of navigating the city.
- Promote awareness and use of the circular waterside route, particularly for cyclists as an alternative to using the ring road.
- Strengthen pedestrian links outward from the city centre core. Encourage the use of alley routes to complete city centre shopping circuits and enhance links to the river and canal.
- Strengthen pedestrian links between the railway station and the city centre.
- Improve the appearance and approaches to public and private car parks.
- Improve the aesthetics of the canal, particularly at the inner ring road fly-overs.
- Provide an attractive, high quality bus station that is easy and convenient for pedestrians to access (through the design and construction of the new bus station).