

Mar Fitzpatrick

Fianna Fáil Dublin Central



MetroLink Consultations,
Transport Infrastructure Ireland,
Parkgate Business Centre,
Parkgate Street,
Dublin 8, D08 DK10

Re: Metrolink Public Consultation, Registration of Concerns and Observations

May 11, 2018

Dear Sir/Madam,

The objective of the new Metro North project as defined by the NTA is to “To provide a safe, high frequency, high capacity, fast, efficient, fully segregated and sustainable public transport light rail service from the city centre to Dublin Airport and Swords.”

This is a welcome objective for our capital city and one worthy of broad public support. Despite significant public expenditure the proposed new Metro Link fails to enjoy broad public support due to a small number of very significant elements.

I submit the following constructive observations in the hope of achieving an optimum outcome for my local community and our capital city:

PUBLIC CONSULTATION:

The public consultations in relation to this project were marketing presentations, not consultations, with little or no detailed information provided at the consultations.

It is unacceptable that the NTA/TII failed to provide the public with answers to basic questions or access to sufficient information to allow them to make detailed and constructive suggestions.

Following is an example of questions which went unanswered by TII:

- What impact will there be on the existing streetscape at each of the proposed metro station locations?
- Which existing properties are likely to be compulsorily purchased, demolished or retained at each location
- What compensation arrangements will be made for affected parties
- Will stations be over or underground at each location?
- Where the stations are underground please indicate whether the ground surface area will be maintained by DCC or NTA/TII
- Where will the entrances to the stations be located?
- Where will emergency access to the stations be provided
- What ventilation facilities will be required for the stations
- What will be the hours of operation of the stations

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- What security arrangements will apply at each station
- What parking arrangements will apply on the streets around these stations
- How much has been spent to date on developing MetroLink?

Members of the public who attended the public consultations were given conflicting information, were left with many questions unanswered and a lack of clarity.

The public consultation process made no distinction between those residents/property owners who are directly affected and those indirectly affected.

Time-period for the public consultation was extremely short for ordinary citizens potentially interested in or affected by this proposal. It took the NTA and TII years to develop this proposal with experts and significant budget, yet the public was given just weeks to wade through dense documents/reports/map/statistics etc. without any expertise, advice or funding.

The process has placed an intolerable burden on homeowners and the public to engage constructively.

One of the most concerning features of this consultation is that the approach is completely 'project driven', seeking to minimise stakeholder engagement and frustrate meaningful contribution to public consultation by denying the public facts and information in relation to the project.

The public has been significantly disadvantaged to respond to this proposal.

The Government must immediately appoint an independent expert to support residents and community groups to participate fully in the next stages of the process.

TII must fully respond to address the concerns of all individual residents, clubs and organisations along the proposed route including BLEND Residents Association, GADRA, IDRA, Prospect Square ACA.

PROPOSED ROUTE:

It is inevitable that any new route will cause disruption and the NTA on their website state that they undertook three studies to determine the optimum route:

1. Alignment Option Study to determine the optimum route for MetroLink from Dublin City Centre to Swords
2. Green Line Tie-in Study to identify the optimum locations to join Metrolink to the Luas Green Line
3. Green Line Metro Upgrade study to determine the feasibility of upgrading the existing Green Line Luas to Metro Standard between Charlemont and Sandyford ONLY.

It is unexplained why the study to determine the feasibility of upgrading the existing Green Luas Line was limited to the southside of the city from Charlemont to Sandyford only.

The current Metro Link proposal provides the southside of the city with an upgraded Luas Green Line from Charlemont to Sandyford and over ground stations while the northside of the city will lose 100s of private homes, two schools, one of country's largest GAA Clubs and Soccer clubs, affect a unique Architectural Conservation Area, iconic historical buildings and important community infrastructure. Very few homes, if any on the southside will be affected by the current proposal.

To minimise disruption and build on existing infrastructure and investment the NTA/TII should undertake a study to determine the feasibility of upgrading the existing Green Luas line from Sandyford to Broombridge and extending from Broombridge to the Airport.

An upgrade and extension of the Luas Green Line could build on existing infrastructure/investment, cause minimum disruption and meet the New Metro North objectives published as follows:

- Cater for existing and future public transport travel demand along this corridor;
- Be modern, attractive and accessible to all users;
- Be designed to integrate appropriately into the existing public realm;
- Be segregated from other transport modes between Dublin Airport and the City Centre;
- Contribute to a reduction in urban congestion and the enhancement of the environmental sustainability of the region;
- Support the continued economic development of the Dublin area and the wider State.
- Deliver a high-quality service with journey-time reliability along the corridor;
- Be planned, constructed and operated in an environmentally sustainable manner;
- Support public transport network integration by providing high quality passenger interchange points, which facilitate convenient transfer between public transport services at key locations;
- Facilitate connection to key trip attractors;
- Support the strategy for a strategic Park & Ride

IMPACT ON RESIDENTIAL HOMES

It is impossible to determine from the information provided by TII the exact number of homes which will be impacted by the proposed route. It is estimated that hundreds of homes will be affected some in a minor way, but some are at direct risk of being compulsorily purchased and demolished.

The impact this potential threat hangs over homeowners is hard to express but it has placed enormous stress and burden that should and could have been avoided with proper consultation.

Residents in Dalcassian Court are fearful of losing their homes and being made homeless.

Residents have not been contacted or reassured that structural surveys will be undertaken prior to, during or post this project.

No information has been provided regarding compensation (should this prove necessary) or the timeframe in which to pursue this.

Apart from immediately impacting on the security of these residents, the proposal presents a threat to the residential amenity of these homes.

The proposal also raises concerns about the likely increase in home insurance premiums or make insurance unfordable/unavailable or result of exclusions.

Homes in the area date from the 1800s through to modern built structures. Homeowners are fearful the impact deep tunnel boring will have on their homes.

Residents are concerned that deep tunnelling works proposed would disturb the ground with disastrous results.

No details are given of the impact this proposal will have on the Prospect ACA, its buildings, public spaces and its residents.

Many ACA properties date from 1833 to 1905, have no foundations, being built on soil and rubble. There is no precedent in Ireland for tunnelling under properties such as these and the potential structural damage to these properties must be addressed.

TII must immediately identify the homes and properties which will be potentially impacted including the historical buildings, such as the Brian Boru Pub, and the protected railings of St. Vincent's Orphanage and engage with them directly.

PROPOSED TUNNEL BORING SITE:

The proposal is shockingly ignorant of the negative impact it will have on the surrounding urban community and wider city traffic.

The public find it hard to understand how this proposal attracted €millions of public funding and government approval without anyone recognising or highlighting the blindingly obvious downsides to using the St Mobhi Road site as the only tunnel boring station.

The proposal to locate the boring site on St Mobhi Road demonstrates total ignorance of the residential, educational, sporting, cultural, health and community value of this site which is home to Clg Na Fianna, Homefarm FC, Scoil Mobhí, Scoil Catriona and Tír na Nóg preschool and is directly surrounded by hundreds of private homes.

Under this proposal the site on St Mobhi road to be used as the tunnel boring station would be the first site opened in the project and the last site closed. This means there will be maximum negative impact on the local community and wider city traffic.

The proposed placement of the tunnel boring machine launch site, construction site works and metro station at CLG Na Fianna/Homefarm FC appear to be made purely based on engineering convenience.

Na Fianna is the heartbeat of the local community. Na Fianna and Homefarm FC bring together people of all ages, hosts 23 non-sporting activities occur each week with circa 3,000 volunteer hours expended each week. Na Fianna fields 166 teams with players ranging in age from 8 to over 50. Keeping these players physically active and socially engaged with associated physical and mental health benefits. The Na Fianna Nursery caters every weekend for 350 to 400 children between the ages of 4 to 7.

Friendships that last a lifetime are forged at Clg Na Fianna, Homefarm FC, Scoil Mobhi and Scoil Catriona. The proposal to use this site for the tunnel boring station directly undermines this vital community hub.

EDUCATION

The schools and creche educate and nourish hundreds of children and families. The negative impact of this proposal is already affecting the school's enrolments. There is no evidence of a full cost/benefit analysis having been completed on the potential impact of having to relocate the schools or clubs. There is no indication that the Department of Education will support or fund any relocation of the schools.

TRAFFIC

St Mobhi Road is an already heavily congested, relatively narrow, tree lined, single lane road with a steep gradient. The site is poorly suited to the level of anticipated truck movements that would be required to remove soil from the tunnel boring station. Trucks would have to make a right-turn onto a tree-lined steep hill with poor visibility on exit. They would need to cross a footpath, cycle lane,

bus lane and a lane of contra-flow traffic. The potential for a serious accident involving a pedestrian or cyclist would be very high.

The proposal would create gridlock throughout the extended neighbourhood and impact hugely on the cities commuters for the duration of the project.

The proposal fails to mention any spatial or interconnected proposals with “BusConnect”.

HEALTH

The unavoidable creation of significant levels of dust and diesel emissions on the boring site is a major concern for respiratory health. The location of the boring station in the heart of a residential area surrounded by schools would put those underlying respiratory disease such as asthma or cystic fibrosis at significant risk.

The noise and vibration generated from the works will also have a detrimental health impact on children and adults living in the area with hypersensitivity disorders.

Concerns also arise regarding the local wildlife, which is plentiful due to the National Botanic Gardens and Glasnevin Cemetery, including foxes, badgers, squirrels and many species of birds.

The implications regarding under surface water, due to canals and rivers in the area can have a very negative impact on property foundations, once disturbed. No detail has been provided on how these assessments have been made, or if indeed, they have been made.

The NTA/TII must scrap the proposal to use the St Mobhi Road site as the tunnel boring station and spell out how they are going to guarantee the future of the homes, schools and clubs and compensate them for the interim disruption.

The NTA/TII must ensure that if the project proceeds with the current alignment that residents along the route will not suffer the negative impacts of shafts without the benefit of access to the metro via a station.

TII must confirm that the St Mobhi Road site will not be used for the location of an unsightly shaft which would have all the associated downsides of noise, disruption and pollution impacting on residents, schools and clubs.

NAMING & LOCATION OF STATIONS

Proposed Mater Station on the park at Berkeley road puts at risk a high quality, valuable public space while making no use of the previously prepared metro station on Eccles Street.

TII must demonstrate how they will ensure the future of this valuable public green space.

TII must address the concerns of the Berkeley Road/Blessington Street/ Mountjoy area before proceeding with this proposal.

Proposed Glasnevin Station should be called Cross Guns or Phibsborough. The impact of a major train station at Cross Guns on the existing residential area has not been addressed whatsoever.

The Whitworth/Glasnevin station appears to be a large-scale station from the Royal Canal to Dalcassian court. The proposal includes the compulsory purchase of residential homes, the iconic Brian Boru pub and other properties.

TII must immediately engage with property owners and clarify the likely or potential impact of the proposal and address their concerns.

Proposed Griffith Park Station should be called Glasnevin.

Residents and Property owners must be provided with independent advice and support to engage in the process.

The impact of these train stations will require a socio-economic impact analysis for each location and plan devised for mitigation of any negative impacts.

Conclusion

It is clear, for all the reasons stated above, that elements of the current proposal must be revisited.

Valuable energies are being expended by residents, community volunteers, workers, employers and others attempting to respond to this proposal. Their efforts are greatly frustrated by the lack of available detailed information or access to independent expert advice.

Before any further expenditure is incurred these issues and all issues outlined above must be addressed.

Is mise le meas,

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