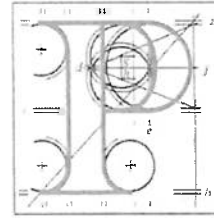


Our Case Number: ABP-316272-23



**An
Bord
Pleanála**

Brendan Heneghan
88 Parkmore Drive
Terenure
Dublin 6W

Date: 24 April 2024

Re: Bus Connects Templeogue/Rathfarnham to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Scheme
Templeogue/Rathfarnham to City Centre

Dear Sir / Madam,

An Bord Pleanála has received your recent submission in relation to the above-mentioned proposed road development and will take it into consideration in its determination of the matter.

Please note that the proposed road development shall not be carried out unless the Board has approved it or approved it with modifications.

If you have any queries in the mean time, please contact the undersigned officer of the Board at laps@pleanala.ie

Please quote the above mentioned An Bord Pleanála reference number in any correspondence or telephone contact with the Board.

Yours faithfully,

Eimear Reilly
Executive Officer
Direct Line: 01-8737184

HA02

Teil	Tel	(01) 858 8100
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64 Sráid Maoilbhríde	64 Marlborough Street
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Kevin McGettigan

From: Eimear Reilly
Sent: Friday 5 April 2024 13:13
To: Kevin McGettigan
Subject: FW: 316272-23 Please confirm receipt

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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From: LAPS <laps@pleanala.ie>
Sent: Thursday, March 28, 2024 9:43 AM
To: Eimear Reilly <e.reilly@pleanala.ie>
Subject: FW: 316272-23 Please confirm receipt

From: Brendan Heneghan [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 4:55 PM
To: LAPS <laps@pleanala.ie>
Subject: 316272-23 Please confirm receipt

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To An Bord Pleanála

your reference ABP -316272-23
Templeogue Rathfarnham to City Centre

I refer to your letter of 23 February 2024 inviting me to make a further submission on this case. I want to deal with three points
the NTA submission
modifications I ask you to make to the scheme
some further observations

The NTA Submission

I have studied the submission dated 20 December 2023 made by National Transport Authority. (**NTA Submission**) Two points stand out.
There is not a single point that has been made by any of the almost 300 observers that is accepted by NTA. This is quite astonishing. How can the public be so wrong? What about the repeated assertion by NTA in the poor quality consultation that changes would be made at the statutory stage?
There are numerous points made by observers that are simply not dealt with at all. A list of random such points are set out in the schedule. It is my view that if they are unable to re-but a point, the point is correct and I believe the Bórd should proceed on this basis.

My suggested modifications

I believe the core feature that makes the scheme work is the Rathmines bus gate (and what happens beyond it towards the city) and the one way system on Rathgar Road. I believe many other features are incidental, so changing them does not do any violence to the effectiveness of the scheme.

I believe the following modifications at least, should be made to the common part of the corridor (from Terenure Cross to City Centre), to the Rathfarnham Branch and to the Templeogue Branch.

Common corridor

I believe you should omit the road widening and the outbound bus lane on the section of Terenure Road East from about number 57 Terenure Road East to St Joseph's Church. This would avoid the destruction of a treescape, which is very important to Terenure village.

I should say that the photomontages of before and after at pages 174 and 175 of the NTA Submission are misleading. The "after" photo does not represent something which will be in place immediately after the existing trees are destroyed, but rather what it might look like after quite a number of years. More importantly I believe the large and very old tree (at Beaumont House) appearing above the pedestrian in orange at p175 will be so damaged by the project, that there is little confidence it will survive.

Since the public submissions were made, it is becoming increasingly apparent to me (as I pass there a lot) that the existing traffic management lights at Terenure Road East are being "tweaked" and are working much better in allowing the bus "escape" into the narrow stretch of roadway ahead of traffic. These are lights previously confirmed by City Council to be working well.

All that NTA are proposing are major destructive works, widely opposed, leading to another bus priority light a few metres closer to Terenure. This seems overkill.

The likelihood of tailbacks in Terenure Road East heading west is drastically scaled back by the removal of the current major source of traffic, Rathgar Road.(see Appendix 16 my submission Traffic movements). It is evident from Bus Connects own traffic flow data that this traffic is all gone and there is little extra traffic emanating from either Highfield Road or Orwell Road, which will end up in Terenure Road East. This much reduced traffic can easily be held at the existing bus priority light.

I would therefore say there is no justification ventured whatever for not maintaining the current arrangement, although the bus priority light should work 24/7 once there is a build back in the Terenure Village section. Bus priority lights are a huge feature of the overall scheme, for example in the Tallaght scheme 316828-23.- if they work on Crumlin Road, they will work on Terenure Road East.

I am very sceptical indeed that a bus or other heavy vehicle will be able to turn left at Terenure Cross from Rathfarnham Road if you permit the silly idea of removing the slip road see my Appendix 15. The now introduced 74 bus struggles to negotiate a less acute turn at Kildare Road/Bangor Road in Dublin 12. I also re-iterate my view that taxis should not be allowed use the new right turn from Rathfarnham Road.

Rathfarnham Branch

I was not particularly aware when making my original submission that the land take from Rathfarnham Castle proposed the destruction of a facility used by autistic children. I think this is wholly unacceptable and that the land take at Rathfarnham Castle between the junction with Butterfield Avenue and the Nutgrove Avenue junction should be omitted. I note that in Clongriffin corridor (your reference 313182) a very large section was dropped by NTA immediately before the planning application was made, so there is precedent for dropping the end of a corridor.

I should note that the three buses which are to use the Rathfarnham Castle section, the A2 following Grange Road and the A4 and S6 following Nutgrove Avenue are frequently delayed there outbound (and indeed inbound) in their current guise, so there is little point to the section I am challenging.

I am also not convinced that any road widening is necessary on the section of Rathfarnham Road between Pearse Bridge and Rathdown Park. All this seems to achieve above what is there today is a bicycle lane. However the outbound lane is on a very steep downward slope, where even a poor cyclist can freewheel at a speed and is so unlikely to obstruct traffic.

Templeogue Branch

Having read the explanation as to why the traffic priority light (concealed from the Bórd in the application) will not suffice and a "very lengthy hour" inbound bus gate is necessary, I am even less convinced. I ask the Bord to read the waffle on page 60 of the NTA Submission in this regard.

The inbound bus gate has many very bad effects including extra traffic on Wellington Lane

the potential use of areas adjacent to Templeogue Road as a park and ride

the use of Greenlea Road as a work around

no clear access option for freight

all of which have a very negative impact on residential areas.

Indeed Professor Austin Smyth, an eminent transport expert has said on page 80 of his report (observation reference 268) that

"the analysis indicates no or little change in roads that potentially offer an alternative route for private vehicles and freight traffic currently making use of the Templeogue/Rathfarnham -Dublin City Centre Corridor to reach their destinations.....It is my opinion that there is a significant risk that a substantial volume of traffic will divert from the corridor either at Spawell roundabout, which is the first opportunity inside the M50 or at the Templeogue Road, Fortfield Road junction, the last opportunity to avoid the bus gate".

I would ask that the bus gate at Templeogue Road inbound be omitted, given its very bad effects on local residential areas. Personally I could live with a bus gate operating Monday to Friday only 6am to 10am; that would be problematic during those hours, but there tend to be issues in local residential areas at those times anyhow. I would also request that turn restrictions from Fortfield Road be omitted, or at least mirror the arrangements on Templeogue Road.

I also think two minor changes should be made

leave existing bus stops 1158 (Springfield Road) and 1159 (Terenure College) as they are and not permit their consolidation at a place where the road persistently floods. The general criteria used for the placement of bus stops quoted in the NTA Submission omits a criterion that they should not be placed where flooding occurs. They have ignored their own exit side criterion in removing 1159. The existing arrangement separates out pupils for the two schools adjacent to the Templeogue/Fortfield junction so that Our Lady pupils alight at 1158 and Terenure College pupils alight at 1159 (with no road to cross). I note that the first judicial review of a decision of yours on these corridors revolves around bus stops and I would suggest that the prudent approach is to leave bus stops alone in the few cases where there is controversy and a reasonable retention case is made.

Omit any paving of the informal path in the woodlands adjacent to Rathdown Drive. See paragraph 3 of my Appendix 22.

Further observations

Access issues

As I said in my submission, I am supportive of the principle of the Lower Rathmines bus gate. However it (and other bus gates) causes a massive number of issues, exemplified by the maps on pages 72 and 74 (affecting Terenure) and on pages 202/203 and 216 of the NTA Submission showing local access difficulties for Grove Park and Ashfield Road. There

is I understand massive controversy in Ranelagh about bans of which they were wholly unaware, due to NTA communication failures. I think there is a strong case that these constitute **material new information**.

I believe there are much better solutions to these problems. I believe you should not permit any left or right turn bans. Indeed it is my legal understanding that they are solely the preserve of the council. Instead you should make it a specific condition of the permission that all of those bans and if necessary the hours of operation of the Lower Rathmines bus gate be referred to an independent body consisting of an equal number of resident representatives and the City Council with an independent chair acceptable to both interests to try and reach satisfactory arrangements. The expenses of the independent chair and the cost of convening meetings should be met by NTA.

CONDITION No turn ban proposed in the application is hereby permitted. Turn bans shall be the subject of consultation led by a group consisting of local residents (2), Dublin City Council officials (2) and an independent chair who shall reach a conclusion by majority. Its conclusion shall be submitted to the Bord for approval. The expenses of the chair and the consultation process shall be met by NTA

It is my belief anyhow that turn bans are usually dealt with by Councils in accordance with their normal processes, which includes consultation..

Further if there were no inbound bus gate at Lower Rathmines Road, traffic there could only turn left at Portobello Bridge as the road straight ahead is one way outbound and a right turn towards Leeson St is prohibited.

There are also numerous changes proposed in the east of the City Centre since this application was submitted that have an effect on this area.

I believe the changes proposed in this plan and in particular the intent that all traffic be routed to the Harolds Cross Road will result in a situation like Streatham in South London. There a traffic management scheme was introduced in October 2023. It caused so much gridlock that in March 2024 it was abandoned. Even its greatest promoters conceded it needed to be abandoned. I fear a Streatham situation if you don't refer turn bans back for proper consideration to an organized consultation process.

Modelling

As is abundantly clear from my own submission, I do not think that any future traffic predictions by NTA are reliable. There are numerous examples in the maps they have furnished of errors with blue lines and red lines or no lines in exactly the same roads. They have made the south side traffic counts (now way out of date) impossible to decipher and have ignored the clear recommendation of the Information Commissioner (my Appendix 3) to provide proper numbers. I believe any proper exercise would show lots of extra cars in residential roads adjacent to these corridors, as feared by Professor Smyth.

Professor Smyth

The local community via our environmental company Terenure & Templeogue SCA CLG has contracted Professor Smyth, an eminent transport professional to report on our behalf and has had to do significant fundraising in this regard. They are very unhappy that Professor Smyth who was heavily engaged in an exercise with the Bord related to Metrolink until this week has been refused an extension, in circumstances where the Bord had no problem giving NTA time for its response and indeed indulging NTA for its failures to advertise properly. We think this stance is unfair and unreasonable.

Professor Smyth has raised "bespoke" issues not raised by others. Professor Smyth is also obstructed from responding in an effective way, because NTA have simply failed to respond to most of the issues he raised. It is notable that in the NTA Submission Professor Smyth merits just over a page in response at page 750. In section 2.6 six "favoured" bodies are accorded the respect of over 130 pages of a response to their bespoke concerns.

It is clear to me from the Metrolink oral hearing that answers to difficult questions are best teased out and obtained in such a hearing. NTA failed to respond to questions in the consultation phase, have largely failed to do so in the NTA Response and can now escape scrutiny in the absence of an oral hearing. I think the premise of deciding against an oral hearing is that the written correspondence has the arguments for and against. The abject failure of NTA to respond to

the bulk of points fatally undermines this pillar. It is my belief that you should reconsider the decision not to hold an oral hearing.

Demand suppression versus supply

I have commented in my submission about my surprise that on the one hand NTA are introducing lots of bus gates and turn bans (I think this is technically known as demand suppression) but on the other hand are reducing bus services, most notably in the case of the Templeogue Road where buses reduce at peak hour from 23 to 10. I ask the Bord to read the NTA Submission response to this important point at page 77; it is pure waffle. I do not think you should permit any of the demand suppression measures in Templeogue Road until extra buses are in place. There is a pressing need in the south city for more people to use the bus and less people to use the car. But this simply won't work without the supply side.

NTA continually plead that we'll supply more buses. We have numerous examples in this country of things being closed, but adequate replacement not being provided. The Limerick Hospital fiasco is a good example. The whole scheme has a lot of examples of traffic suppression, but it is abundantly clear that the provision of buses for the persons displaced from cars is not happening. Six years ago we were promised 12 spines/orbital routes but as yet none of the cross city ones A, B, D, E and F or the orbital O have happened. Their track record in delivery is very poor. The plans for this corridor (A buses) do not provide extra buses. See my Appendix 25

Time for this letter

I feel that the time given for observers to respond is inadequate. NTA were given three months to prepare their response including an extension; the public are given four and a half weeks (as days were lost in the postal system). This is blatantly unfair.

I remain of the view that the level of procedural error by NTA in this case is so great that it should be refused.

SCHEDULE

Sample of issues not addressed

Why remove Spawell Roundabout and not Walkinstown roundabout?

Whether the Spawell roundabout is affected by other badly thought out roundabout modifications?

Why not provide road traffic counts in easily accessible form as clearly suggested by the Information Commissioner?

Why mess with median between Templeogue Road and Rathdown Drive?

Why did they conceal priority lights on either side of Terenure Cross from the board?

Why did they introduce so many turn bans for the first time when they sought planning?

SWhy do they not apply the "exit" criteria and retain stop 1159?

Why not deal with the extraordinary increases of patronage as outlined in the submission Terenure & Templeogue CLG?

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