



Maynooth Community Council
6 Griffin Rath Manor,
Maynooth,
Co. Kildare
W23 K5H2

28th October 2022

Re: Planning Submission on behalf of Maynooth Community Council

Ref: DART+ West Electrified Railway Order 2022

Dear Sir or Madam,

Maynooth Community Council is a voluntary group representing over 40 community groups in Maynooth. It focuses on matters of general local interest including planning. It is composed of representatives of Residents Associations, and social, cultural, artistic, sporting and other local organisations. Our members express ideas and opinions to improve Maynooth and we endeavour to represent them in this submission.

General Comment

People in Maynooth are overwhelmingly in favour of DART+ West. We will benefit hugely from the ease of commuting into Dublin and all points in between. High frequency trains will give great flexibility and should resolve the challenges with over-crowding currently experienced.

Jackson's Bridge

Firstly, we welcome that this protected structure, Jackson's bridge has been preserved and while it can no longer function as a road bridge, it is at least continuing as a cycle and pedestrian one. It is a beautiful example of a railway + canal bridge and is quite unique. The canal and greenway are an important amenity in Maynooth, and the bridges give it such a unique character. The views are reasonably well preserved as per the photomontage:



Apart from its beauty, Jackson's bridge plays an important role in traffic flow for the area. The L5041 is used as a relief road for journeys to Maynooth University and the schools on the Moyglare road. This is largely as a result of the traffic congestion on Parson's Street at peak times. Closing Jackson's Bridge to vehicular traffic and diverting the L5041 over the new bridge at the depot will increase journey times significantly and compound the misery for those commuting from west of the town.

New Canal+Railway crossing

The Kildare County Development Plan (CDP) outlines plans for a new ring road west of the town. The new bridge for DART+ and the bridge for the proposed ring road are very close together along the canal and serve essentially the same purpose. With Jackson's bridge still in place, this gives 3 bridges very close to each other. We feel that with more coordination between the authorities a better and more cost-effective solution could be found.

Depot traffic

The proposed road layout will force depot traffic to travel through Maynooth or Kilcock. It would make much more sense to have a new M4 interchange to give direct access to the motorway, thus avoiding the need to go through either town.

Native Planting

The before and after pictures around the depot show a stark transformation from a rural aspect to a very industrial one. We would ask that where trees and vegetation have to be removed, that new planting with native species would replace them. The canal greenway is a picturesque walk that is heavily used and should be preserved as much as possible.

Before:



After:

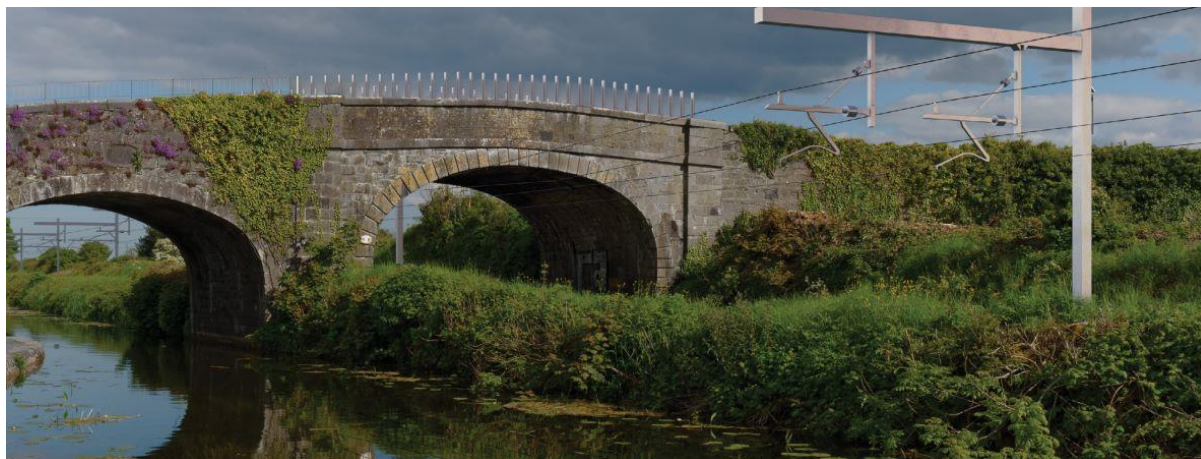


Accessibility

The current pedestrian bridge at Maynooth station is not accessible for wheelchair users. We would ask that the station be made fully accessible including the bridge and all other access points.

Pike Bridge

In the earlier public consultation, we asked for “sympathetic treatment” in raising the parapet on this bridge. Pike bridge is a protected structure and much loved by the community. The initial reaction to this photomontage was not positive. The pylons for the overhead wires are very close to the bridge and impinge on the view and general look of it. The parapet is considered too industrial and doesn’t fit in with a bridge of this age. We would ask for a railing more in keeping.



Kilcock

Kilcock is a growing town with a large commuting population that would benefit greatly from DART+, it is inexplicable that the double track cannot extend past the depot to Kilcock. From a Maynooth point of view, if the DART+ is not extended to Kilcock more commuters will drive to Maynooth to join the train. This will increase the pressure on parking and further exacerbate the traffic situation in an already seriously congested town.

Blakestown Cross

Closing Blakestown cross for vehicular traffic can be justified by the low traffic volumes using it but closing it for pedestrians and cyclists is against all the principles of active travel. People who could walk to the bus stops at Intel are now forced into car journeys. Walkers and joggers from the south side of the track cannot access the greenway. The latest draft of the Kildare CDP includes:

TM O26 Liaise with Irish Rail with respect to identifying and developing a new pedestrian crossing over the Rail line (separate to DART+) from Kilmacreddock to Intel/Greenway in order to promote "Active Travel" permeability links to the Strategic Employment Lands at Collinstown.

We would ask that Irish Rail and KCC combine to resolve this issue in a satisfactory manner.

Park and Ride

The latest draft of the Kildare CDP refers to a park and ride facility "sited to the west of Maynooth" (TM O46). We feel that DART+ will attract more out-of-town commuters (including those from Kilcock) to drive to Maynooth and take the train from here. This will cause further traffic congestion in the town and overload the parking even more. The park and ride facility needs to be provided in conjunction with DART+

Your faithfully,
Una Phillips
Maynooth Community Council