

TO;

The Secretary,  
An Bord Pleanála,  
64 Marlborough Street,  
DUBLIN, 1.

24<sup>th</sup> of October 2022.

FROM; Tony Mooney, 16 Martin Savage Park, Ashtown, Dublin D15 CFF9 (tel. [REDACTED])

Re: Irish Rail Draft Railway Order, July 2022 - Dart+ West Electrified Heavy Railway Order 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

I want to make an observation concerning a section of the above proposal from Irish Rail's Plans for Ashtown level crossing.

As a long time resident of Martin Savage Park, I can see the serious impact this proposal would have on communities on both sides of the rail line and on the surrounding environment. The footprint of Irish Rail's proposals is enormous in relation to what they are trying to achieve - The closure of a rail crossing.

The preferred option is of serious concern for the following reasons:

- a) The imposition of a tunnel would sever the communities on either side of the railway line. It is unrealistic to think that people will negotiate a much longer walk, descending 8 metres into a 30 metre tunnel and reascending 8 metres on the other side OR traversing a high stairs/long walkway over the railway line. This is not practical nor is it safe.
- b) The plan also threatens existing long standing local amenities, particularly the riding stables, an industrial estate, several protected structures and a wetland to the west of the station.
- c) The proposed destruction of green space in Martin Savage Park, through the installation of a sub station, which will evidently extend beyond Irish Rail's existing property
- d) A convoluted set down point, detouring vehicles away from the main road and the station. In practice, nobody would be inclined to use this.

The most practical option is to lower the level of the rail line to go under Ashtown Road.

This will:

- a) Avoid division of communities on either side of the line.
- b) There would be no need for expenditure on tunnelling, new roads and walkway versus lowering the railway.
- c) The proposed sub station could be accommodated to the west of the crossing, which they have earmarked for a large steps and sloped foot crossing structure.
- d) This would allow Irish Rail to make the curve alignment correction between Ashtown and Phoenix Park Stations, which they will have to do eventually.
- e) Taking into account the long term maintenance costs of the extra roads, tunnel and footbridge, this option should be as cost effective as the preferred one(if not better).

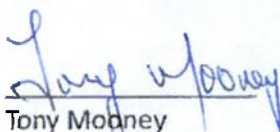
This is described in Irish Rail's Option Selection Report, July 2021 (8.3.3.2.9 Option 9 – Lowering of the Railway Vertical Alignment, page 112). [extract enclosed]

It seems to have been dismissed out of hand by Irish Rail without any fact based justification.

It appears that they are focused on the effect of disruption to their operations during construction, without any regard for long term maintenance costs or impact on the community

Before making any decision on Irish Rail's proposals, I would ask that an independent evaluation of this option be made, taking account of the long term advantages to community, environment and cost avoidance, when compared to Irish Rail's current proposal..

Yours sincerely,

  
Tony Mooney

(Cheque - €50.00 enclosed)

AN BORD PLEANÁLA	
LDG- 058502-22	
ABP- _____	
25 OCT 2022	
Fee: € 50	Type: (Cheque)
Time: _____	By: [Signature]

#### 8.3.3.2.9 Option 9 – Lowering of the Railway Vertical Alignment

This Option would entail lowering the track alignment for approximately 1 km east and west of Ashtown Station with a track gradient of maximum 1%. This would result in a 7 m clearance for overhead cables at the location of the existing level crossing. A road bridge would be required at the location of the existing level crossing to facilitate traffic movements. The proposed road bridge would tie in with the existing protected canal bridge.

The existing station, footbridge and building on the south western side of the crossing would need to be demolished to facilitate the works. The track lowering would extend to the Navan Road Parkway to the west. The station is in a deep retained cut. Option 9 would require reconstruction of the station platforms. Ashtown Station would be reconstructed at ground level with pedestrian access to the platform at track level. The platform would be approximately 200 m in length on both sides of the railway line. A new footbridge would be required for passengers to access the northern platform. On the eastern approach the rail line is bounded by playing fields and residential properties to the south and the Royal Canal and Ashtown town centre to the north. To facilitate the lowering of the rail line, retaining walls would be required on the north and southern side of the rail line. The height of the retaining walls would range from 2 m to 7 m. On the western approach the rail line is bounded by an industrial area with warehouses, stables and fields to the south and the Royal Canal, fields and Ashtown town centre on the northern side. The track vertical realignment will extend to the Navan Road Parkway Station. Alterations to the Parkway Station could be avoided by reducing the depth of the cut for lowering the railway and increasing the soffit level of the new road bridge at the level crossing.

This option would have significant impact on the Royal Canal channel and all of the associated heritage structures along the realigned section of railway. This includes the masonry arched bridge, the locks and the lock keeper's cottage.



Figure 8-11 Ashtown Option 9 - Lowering of the Railway Vertical Alignment (Copyright Ordnance Survey Ireland – 0039720)  
Zoom for Greater Detail