

Submission No.			272		
Organisation Name or Name of Submitter			Sadhbh O Neill - 18 Convent Hill Terrace		
Item No.	Section Ref.	Page No.	Observation Statement	TII Response	
RE: Observation re Railway (Metrolink - Estuary to Charlemont via Dublin Airport) Order 2022					
1	Letter	1	I write simply to emphasize the vital importance of this project going ahead as quickly as possible. Ireland now has a legal obligation to reduce greenhouse gas emission to net-zero by 2050 at the latest. This will require an economy-wide effort to transform current infrastructure and behaviour so that the production and consumption of services, along with related supply chains, is done with much higher levels of energy efficiency and with renewables in the first instance with a view to eliminating our reliance on fossil fuels for most sectors well before mid-century.	<p>TII wish to thank you for taking the time to make this submission and your support for the MetroLink project, noting as per your observation, that one of the key objectives and benefits of the project is a reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. TII as the Government Agency responsible for delivering MetroLink are committed to expediting the delivery of this transformative project on receipt of an Enforceable Railway Order and in accordance with Government direction.</p> <p>EIAR Chapter 3, Background to the MetroLink Project details the need for the Project, and how MetroLink will address challenges including climate change and the production of CO2 emissions. As noted, private vehicles are a significant contributor to Ireland's GHG emissions, and providing an alternative to private vehicle-based journeys is a key benefit of the proposed Project. The proposed Project will aim to be a fully sustainable and carbon neutral public transport alternative (by the Design Year of 2050), and therefore the way in which people access Dublin Airport, and other parts of the city, will be in a much more sustainable way than at present. The proposed Project, as a sustainable mobility option, will have a direct and long-lasting impact on Ireland's transition to a low carbon economy. The proposed Project will be fully electrified, and will be able to reduce its emissions footprint as Ireland moves increasingly to green energy production.</p> <p>Further, EIAR Chapter 17 Climate, shows that based on modelling undertaken it is estimated that the modal shift resulting from the provision of MetroLink will result in a reduction in GHG emissions of between 9kt and 11kt in the opening year, with the reduction expected to increase to 45kt by 2050 (Design Year). EIAT Chapter 4, Description of the MetroLink Project outlines the implementation of sustainability policy areas in the Project's design to deliver an efficient, low carbon and climate-resilient metro system.</p>	
2	Letter	1	For the transport sector, which contributes 15% of total annual GHGs, major improvements will be required in infrastructure planning and spending to reduce car dependency and offer sustainable mobility solutions. The recently published Climate Action Plan 2023 notes: "Travel preferences are deeply embedded through settlement patterns, policies, and mindsets, which favour private car usage over more sustainable transport modes." The Plan promotes a new approach based on a recent OECD report commissioned by the Climate Change Advisory Council, which prioritises transport policymaking along an Avoid-Shift-Improve framework. The "Shift" part of the framework necessitates dramatic improvements to Ireland's public transport network so it can offer seamless, integrated mobility services and offer a realistic alternative to private motorised vehicles	<p>As noted by response (1) above, the MetroLink project will make a significant contribution to the Climate Action Plan 2023 and the achievement of climate change goals for Ireland, not only as a standalone project, but as part of a wider and integrated transport network that also includes for BusConnects and DART+ which are all included under Project Ireland 2040. Together, these projects will result in a reliable, sustainable, affordable, integrated public transport network that will support the economy, and help Ireland meet its climate change targets in line with the Climate Action Plan.</p> <p>EIAR Chapter 3, Background to the MetroLink Project shows that demand modelling suggests a diversion of 6.8million private vehicle journeys per annum in the early years of MetroLink operation, and approximately 360 million car trips diverted by 2055. Accordingly, the Project will support the reduction of GHG emissions which are critical to improving sustainability and transitioning to a low carbon society. The Project has been designed to ensure maximum interchange with other modes of transport, particularly more sustainable modes such as public transport, walking and cycling, to facilitate a reduction in reliance on private vehicles. EIAR Chapter 9, Traffic and Transportation presents details of the predicted modal shift along the alignment. Across the full alignment, there is a reduction in Car mode share, with a corresponding increase in Public Transport mode share, as well as increases in the use of active modes, demonstrating the Project's contribution to a shift towards sustainable modes.</p>	
3	Letter	1	The case for fast, frequent and high-capacity public transport between Dublin Airport and the city centre has been well made and it is nothing short of scandalous that it has taken this long to develop proposals for a rail/ light rail/ metro service. For this reason I am fully supportive of the Metrolink project and would urge you to approve it as quickly as possible.	As noted above, TII as the Government Agency responsible for delivering MetroLink, are committed to expediting the delivery of this transformative project on receipt of an Enforceable Railway Order in accordance with Government direction.	

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4	Letter	1	<p>Linking the Metrolink line to the Luas network makes sense however I would argue that extending the proposed line to Charlemont out to UCD should be considered.</p> <p>The campus generates over 7 million annual commuting trips but is poorly catered for by public transport and bus services that mostly service the Stillorgan dual carriageway. At peak times, bus capacity is not sufficient to meet demand and many staff and students drive because it is so much more quick and less complicated. I would urge the board to reconsider the possibility of extending the Metrolink past Charlemont out towards Stillorgan through the UCD campus.</p>	<p>As explained by EIAR Chapter 7, Consideration of Alternatives, section 7.5 Assessment of Alternative Route Options, the assessment of alternatives to identify a preferred route for the proposed Project has been undertaken based on the assessment of a number of route options and station locations, including consideration of whether it is appropriate at this time to extend MetroLink beyond Charlemont.</p> <p>The proposed MetroLink alignment has not been extended south of Charlemont for the reasons set out by the GDA strategy, section 12.3.10, "The challenges associated with the upgrading of the Luas Green Line to a metro standard of service have led to the emergence of an alternative proposal which seeks to meet travel demand from south of Sandyford along a new light rail corridor which serves UCD post-2042. As such, the upgrading of the Green Line to metro standard is not being pursued as part of this strategy. Instead, for this strategy period, the capacity and frequency on the current Green Line from Sandyford northwards to the city centre will be incrementally increased through the provision of additional tram fleet and services and associated turnback arrangements to meet forecast passenger demand."</p> <p>Further information on the challenges associated with connecting to the existing Luas Green Line can be found in the TII published report: "Constructability Report - Green Line Closure, April 2019, ref https://www.metrolink.ie/media/ox0p3cjb/constructabilityreportgreenlineclosure.pdf". This showed that construction works to connect the metro from Charlemont to the Green Line would incur line closures over a period of up to 3-4 years, depending on construction methodology.</p> <p>For this reason it has been necessary to determine the most appropriate interchange and termination location for MetroLink. As noted by the GDA Transport Strategy 2022-2042, section 12.3.2, "Charlemont offers the optimal location for the primary interchange with the Green Line in response to growing demand in the longer term and is an appropriate location to facilitate any potential future metro extensions to serve the south west, south or south east of the city region should sufficient demand arise.' This is also reflected by EIAR Chapter 7, section 7.7.8 MetroLink Southern Terminus Location that explains the rationale for selecting Charlemont as the optimum location for interchange with the Green Line.</p> <p>As noted by the GDA Strategy the selection of Charlemont does not preclude any future connections to the west or south of the city.</p> <p>The GDA Transport Strategy 2022-2042 (published in January 2023), section 12.3.8 Additional Luas Lines Post-2042, further states that the analysis undertaken for the Transport Strategy indicates that a number of corridors in the GDA will, in the longer term, generate travel demand above that which can be catered for by higher capacity bus systems and are likely to require upgrading to light rail in the period after 2042. The planning and design work associated with this longer term framework can commence during the strategy period. The Green Line Reconfiguration is proposed to provide a city centre line to Bray via UCD and Sandyford, however this is subject to the detailed appraisal, planning and design by the NTA.</p>