

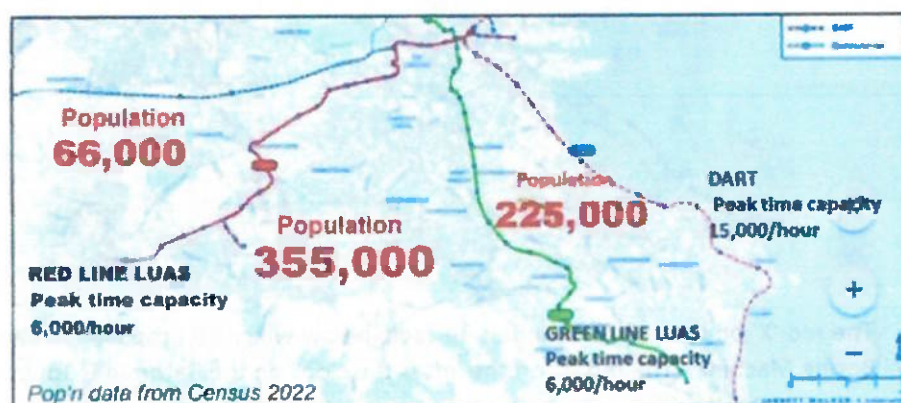
Metro South West

Input from MSWG to An Bord Pleanála (Module 1) on 5 March 2024

1 The Metro South West Group represents over 40 residents' associations between the Red and Green Luas lines with a population of 355,000. We welcome the opportunity to make a brief presentation today to An Bord Pleanála about the southern part of *MetroLink*.

Metro South West

The need for sustainable public transport in SW Dublin



Narrow streets on bus corridors in SW Dublin: only metro can deliver capacity and speed

2 We wish to make two points.

Point One is that extending *MetroLink* to Charlemont and Manders Terrace prejudices the proper provision of public transport to the South City and County. In response to many submissions, TII asserted that, and I quote: *"The location of the interchange at Charlemont does not preclude onward extension south."*

But, if we look at the map...



3 The red 'X' on the right is Manders Terrace, below which TII proposes to park the Tunnel Boring Machine. The red 'X' on the left is the clock on the Rathmines Town Hall, in the middle of Rathmines.

4 If *MetroLink* goes to Charlemont and the Tunnel Boring Machine is entombed under Manders Terrace, it would be possible in a Phase 2 project, for example, to continue *MetroLink* to Terenure and beyond. However, it would not be possible in the future to 'double back' and serve Portobello and Rathmines.

5 Why is this Important? Because Portobello and Rathmines are densely populated and they have many attractions. The trip attractors include: third level colleges, schools, library, cinemas, swimming pool, pubs, restaurants, shops. Duplicating the Luas Green line - by bringing *MetroLink* to Charlemont and Manders Terrace - would provide negligible Transport User Benefits, as residents in that area already have the Luas. Moreover, the Charlemont area has few trip attractors. However, bypassing Portobello/Rathmines would reduce significantly the Transport User Benefits of continuing *MetroLink* to South West Dublin as a Phase 2 project.

6 The NTA commissioned Jacobs to produce the *Metro to Knocklyon Feasibility Study*, which was published in 2022. Our submission to An Bord Pleanála noted that this *Feasibility Study* reported a Benefit to Cost Ratio of 0.8, but that the *Study* contained numerous flaws, and these flaws were not disputed by TII in their response. The failure of TII to address the flaws in the Jacobs *Feasibility Study* led the Metro South West Group to commission Professor Austin Smyth to carry out an independent audit of the *Metro to Knocklyon Feasibility Study*.

7 We expect that Professor Smyth will have completed his audit before our next appearance at the Oral Hearing when he will address you.

8 For now, our conclusion is that:

An Bord Pleanála should not approve of *MetroLink* going beyond St Stephens Green to Charlemont and Manders Terrace - as this would severely compromise the benefits of continuing *MetroLink* to South West Dublin - pending a proper evaluation of the costs and benefits of continuing *MetroLink* to South West Dublin.

We invite TII to explain to you how is it possible to continue *MetroLink* from Manders Terrace to serve Portobello and Rathmines?

This concludes Point One.

Point 2

Our second point is that once the upgrading of the Green Luas line was shelved in 2019, TII should have re-evaluated other relevant options for the South City - in particular - the Metro North O'Connell Street station under O'Connell Bridge. Previously approved by An Bord Pleanála, that provided an entry and exit north and south of the quays, on Bachelors Walk and Aston Quay.

9 The Metro North Business Case concluded that the interconnection with DART would involve a 'short walk' to the Tara Street DART station. This walk would be around 200m. However, this 'short walk' would require passengers to cross three busy streets, Westmoreland Street, D'Olier Street and Tara Street.

10 The following could be a solution. On exiting Tara Street DART station, there could be a large METRO sign above an escalator – bringing passengers below street level, to a pedestrian tunnel leading directly to the *MetroLink* station under O'Connell Bridge. This 200m pedestrian tunnel could be located under Burgh Quay. If a 200m walk underground is considered to be too long, travellers could be installed. This tunnel could also facilitate switching from both DART and *MetroLink* to the Luas Green Line on Westmoreland Street and vice versa.

11 From a passenger perspective, this type of underground interconnection is comparable to many interconnections, to be seen in metro systems across Europe.

12 Furthermore, as proposed under the approved Metro North Scheme, *MetroLink* would continue to **St Stephens Green West**, where the station would be adjacent to the Green Luas stop. An Bord Pleanála has previously given its approval to both the Metro North station at St Stephens Green West and the route to it. The interconnection between *MetroLink* and the Green Luas stop would be very straightforward at St Stephens Green West. A short 'run off' beyond this *MetroLink* station for the trains would mark the end of the project – pending a full review of the options for the south of Dublin, including continuing *MetroLink* to South West Dublin via Portobello/Rathmines.

13 Again, for passengers, this simple interface between ***MetroLink* and the Green Luas Line** would be far superior to the proposed interchange at Charlemont.

Benefits from a passenger perspective

14 The substitution of the previously approved and modified Metro North proposal would offer passengers the following:

- (i) A good interchange with the Luas Red Line on Abbey Street (with a 100m walk on the surface) - this is currently lacking in the present plan.
- (ii) Good interchange with DART at Tara Street (c.200m uninterrupted walk underground).
- (iii) Good interchanges with numerous buses along both quays and O'Connell Street - lacking in the current plan.

- (iv) Good interchange with the Green Luas Line on St Stephens Green West.
- (v) Good interchange with the Green Luas Line on Westmoreland Street and O'Connell Street.
- (vi) Eliminate the cumbersome and convoluted proposed interchange with the Green Luas at Charlemont.

Other benefits

15 There are many other benefits:

- (i) Eliminate the demolition of apartments etc. and other disruption adjacent to Tara Street.
- (ii) Avoid the disruption and damage to Trinity College.
- (iii) Avoid the disruption along the route from St Stephens Green to Manders Terrace, including around Charlemont.
- (iv) Locating the *MetroLink* station at St Stephens Green West would facilitate its future integration with DART Underground.

Cost reductions

16 The additional **capital** cost of the proposed 200m pedestrian tunnel under Burgh Quay and a short escape shaft would be far outweighed by:

- (i) Two fewer stations to be excavated, at Tara Street and Charlemont.
- (ii) Saving on tunnelling, tracks etc. due to reducing the length of *MetroLink* by c. 1.2kms.
- (iii) The proposed demolition of apartments adjacent to Tara Street, and necessary compensation, is avoided as are all other landowner issues south of the Liffey.

Conclusion

17 This variant of the Metro North proposal would:

- Be much better for passengers,
- Be much less costly for the Exchequer,
- Entail less damage and disruption, and
- Ensure that the future extension of *MetroLink* towards South West Dublin is not compromised without proper evaluation.

Accordingly, this variant of the Metro North proposal should have been considered and evaluated by NTA/TII and the results of this evaluation should have been presented to An Bord Pleanála.

Thank you for your attention. If you have any questions, we will attempt to answer them.

Metro South West Group

5 March 2024