

METROLINK RAILWAY ORDER – COMMENTARY ON TII RESPONSES – MARCH 2024

I would like to thank the Board for giving me the opportunity to make this short presentation.

I am a retired Architect motivated originally, as a concerned citizen, by the notion of a possible loss of the Luas Green Line and associated waste of tax payer monies.

Over recent years I have been voluntarily advising the Rethink Metrolink group and more recently the Metro South West Group.

My submission to the Board claimed that TII's south city route design from O'Connell Street to Charlemont was fundamentally flawed and neither TII's responses nor the reports from this hearing persuade me otherwise.

You have heard all the arguments in detail many times over by now and I don't envy you the task of spending the summer months assessing all that you have heard and adjudicating on an outcome.

I am not going to revisit the issues in detail again but I am going to simply outline some key problem areas as I see it and present you with one possible solution which could avoid and sidestep many of the issues you will have to address.

The main problems I see are as follows: -

- 1. FIRSTLY, TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE NO PROPER FEASIBILITY AND COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS HAS EVER BEEN CARRIED OUT OF A FULLY THROUGH-RUNNING METRO ROUTE FROM SWORDS, THROUGH THE CITY CENTRE TO ANYWHERE SUBSTANTIVE ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE CITY, THAT DIDN'T TRAVEL OVER THE LUAS GREEN LINE ELIMINATING THAT SECTION OF THE LINE.**
- 2. THE PROPOSED METROLINK ROUTE DESIGN IS PHYSICALLY UNABLE TO SERVE THE CAMDEN STREET / PORTOBELLO OR LOWER RATHMINES AREAS (AND THEN TRAVEL ON TO THE SOUTH WEST) FROM A STATION AT CHARLEMONT**

Further the proposed route would be unable to serve a future conversion of Cathal Brugha Barracks to extensive residential use housing perhaps up to 2500 people.

(The intended Metrolink route extension from St Stephen's Green to Charlemont is essentially the tail wagging the dog; the problem is that the tail is actually placed on the wrong part of the dog!)

3. THE IMPACT AND DISTURBANCE OF A MULTI-LEVEL INTERCHANGE STATION AT CHARLEMONT IS BOTH UNWARRANTED AND UNNECESSARY

You have already heard in detail and at length from others about the unsuitability of this residential location and the resultant damage to the Dartmouth neighbourhood.

The Charlemont interchange is a complicated multi-level design due to the need to travel below the 4m diameter Grand Canal Drainage Tunnel – ref Gerry Duggan’s earlier submission – and then connect with the elevated Luas Green Line across the Grand Canal – a very significant height separation.

The proposed staircase and lift connection to be placed directly in front of the façade of the Carroll’s Building is an affront to this iconic Listed Building - Ref no 3280 on the Dublin City Council Schedule of Protected Structures

4. THE LOCATION OF A STATION AT SSG EAST FAILS TO OPTIMISE THE INTERCHANGE POTENTIAL WITH THE LUAS GREEN LINE AND A FUTURE DART UNDERGROUND STATION

I am concerned that the Railway Order route design does not seriously and adequately take account of the proposed Interconnector / Dart Underground / Dart+ Tunnel only allowing for a flip-flop east or west location on St Stephen’s Green.

Provision for the Dart Underground line is in the National Development Plan and is the most important missing infrastructure link in Dublin, which is capable of converting our Town into a truly modern City.

The DART+ Tunnel Route Options and Feasibility Final Report of October 2021 by the National Transport Authority (page 79 - section **5.2.4.3.3 - St Stephens Green Station**) confirms that the previous DART Underground station design has been simply mirrored to suit a proposed SSG East Metrolink station.

A Metrolink station could be located on the west side of SSG interconnected with the Luas Green line and a future DART Underground station in a major interchange opportunity.

In terms of a SSG West location option and the protection of SSG itself, I would like to suggest to this hearing (and Dublin City Council’s attention) the possibility of an access location within a potentially redeveloped SSG Shopping Centre – cross-referencing in a sense the proposed use of the Carlton Cinema site in O’Connell Street.

Architecturally speaking, surely we don't need massive overground structures to enter and exit our Dublin Metro – I don't see these in other cities.

In terms of such a major interchange I would also point out that there is adequate space for the SSG Luas stop to move south to the other end of SSG West closer to Cuffe Street on either a permanent basis or on a temporary basis during Metrolink construction.

5. THE DIVERSIONARY LOOP UNDER TRINITY COLLEGE TO CONNECT TO THE DART OVERGROUND AT TARA STREET IS BOTH UNWARRANTED AND UNNECESSARY

You have already heard at length from others on all the difficulties being caused by the proposed CPOs and demolitions in this location.

In terms of passenger numbers here, the Metrolink Cost Benefit Analysis was completed back in early 2018 and now the Aircoach routes 702 & 703 serve large parts of the coastal region from Greystone north to the Airport speedily via the Port Tunnel.

The curvature of this route to Tara Street causes the proposed SSG station to move to the east side of the Green more remote from the Luas line and causes the O'Connell Street station to move further north up O'Connell Street.

Additionally this proposed route runs under Trinity College with all the associated disturbances requiring extensive mitigation.

6. THE RELOCATION OF THE STATION AT UPPER O'CONNELL STREET IS DICTATED BY THIS LOOP TO TARA STREET

This location no longer connects with the Red Line Luas which feeds both the main line stations of Heuston to the West and Connolly to the East

It should be noted that the distance from SSG West to Lower O'Connell is only 1.0K and therefore would not require an intervention shaft for a single bore tunnel.

**7. THE ADDITIONAL COSTS AND DISTURBANCE OF GOING TO TARA STREET, AS
OPPOSED A ROUTE DIRECTLY FROM SSG TO LOWER O'CONNELL STREET, IS
VERY SIGNIFICANT**

TII responses contain no substantial comments regarding the potential savings of avoiding Tara Street and running directly from SSG to Lower O'Connell Street

I am aware the distance from Lower O'Connell Street to the Mater is greater than 1K but I think we can agree that the provision of an intervention shaft in between would be less expensive than building a station at Tara Street, and that is before the shorter tunnelling distance is taken into account.

CONCLUSION

**FOR ALL THE ABOVE REASONS THE PROPOSED ROUTE FROM O'CONNELL STREET
VIA TARA STREET TO CHARLEMONT FAILS TO ACHIEVE THE MAXIMUM "NETWORK
EFFECT" THAT TII, IN THEIR RESPONSE TO MY SUBMISSION, CLAIM TO BE SEEKING.**

In my opinion the South City route should run from Lower O'Connell Street directly to SSG West on to Portobello and on to Rathmines with a view to a future extension to the South West and then possibly on to Tallaght as a complete through-running entity.

Such a layout would: -

Avoid an O'Connell Street station remote from the Red Line Luas

Avoid Tara Street building demolitions and re-housing.

Avoid tunnelling under Trinity College Dublin

Avoid the reconstruction of St Stephen's Green East

Avoid a re-design of the route under the Cadenza Building at the Grand Canal

Avoid damage to the entire Dartmouth Square West neighbourhood

I would suggest therefore that the Board only grants the Railway Order, in a form it sees fit, as far south as the Mater with a request to TII to return with a revised south city design omitting Tara Street and Charlemont stations.

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