

**Submission to An Bord Pleanála on  
Railway (Metrolink - Estuary to Charlemont via Dublin Airport) Order [2022]**

**Case reference: NA29N.314724**

I reside in one of the Dublin City Council homes marked for demolition and I use the swimming pool in Markievicz Leisure Centre. I have applied to the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission for legal assistance and representation at any oral hearing of the Railway Order application so that my submission can be reasonably considered.

I have lived at my home on Townsend St. for the past 28 years, having moved here when the Moss Street flats were sold. I am blind and my home and community provide me with a quality of life not easily replicated elsewhere. As a blind person, I have a navigational knowledge of the local environment and landscape which I have acquired over 40 years. I find swimming extremely beneficial and having a public pool in close proximity to my home has been a vital facility.

In recent years I went to great personal expense to adapt my home on Townsend Street to my needs, which I cannot afford to do again. And without these adaptations, I could not live safely and comfortably in any new home. The reason I paid for these adaptations myself is that despite requests over the years, Dublin City Council had been unable to make these adaptations to my home.

And I will lose all this if my home is demolished and I am relocated elsewhere in the city. In addition, as a visually impaired person I am dependent on local services which will not necessarily be available in a new environment. More specifically, I have a dog walker for my guide dog who I have got to know over the past 7 years. I use the community service provided by the Guards in Pearse Street Garda Station and which other areas do not provide. I also use the veterinary clinic in Sandymount where I have attended for 17 years. I know the vets extremely well and I would not get the same standard of service from another veterinary practice. Likewise, I have a GP that I can work with and do not wish to change.

I feel that affected residents have been provided with no satisfactory evidence that demolition of the Townsend street apartments is unavoidable, and that our voices have been largely ignored by the Metrolink project and Dublin City Council.

MetroLink's own Environmental Impact Assessment Report describes the impact of the proposed location for Tara station as 'significant':

"The loss of a number of residential buildings required to build the Option 0 will result in a significant environmental effect and will require the rehousing of all the residents of these units. In addition, the loss of the Markievicz leisure centre will impact on the local population as it

serves as the only public swimming pool in this area." (Volume 2, Introduction and Project Description, 7.7.10.9.2)

To help mitigate against these effects, the Report promises Metrolink will ensure, in part, that:

"Clear communication channels are opened with property owners to ensure there is a clear understanding of the process"

and

" TII will work closely with Dublin City Council to provide an alternative to the Markievicz Leisure Centre."

(Volume 2, Introduction and Project Description, 7.7.10.9.3 Overall Conclusions)

However, as a blind person I was left uninformed because, originally we were not notified about public consultation, and subsequently notifications to me appeared in printed format rather than braille, as I had requested. And, in fact, the statutory period of Public Consultation came and went and most local people were unaware that it had even taken place.

And the promised alternative to the Leisure Centre is dependent on Dublin City Council being able to provide a suitable site, which - given the demand for and value of land in the city centre - is likely to be somewhere on the outskirts.

In light of all of this I request that An Bord Pleanála refuses approval for the Metrolink project or, alternatively, makes it a Condition of the approval that the location of the Tara station be reworked.

I believe that the planning and decision making of Dublin City Council and TII are worthy of vigorous investigation given the burden they are asking local residents to carry.

Please send any responses in braille with the following instructions to the braille transcriber:

1. Please use non-UEB braille, i.e. SEB..
2. Write on only one side of the page.
3. Use approximate A-4 sized paper and not the very large 3cm x 30 cm.

Signed

Áine Wellard

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