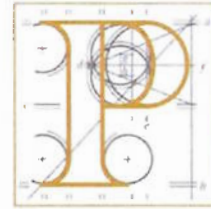


Our Case Number: ABP-318758-23

Your Reference: SID-OBS-001490



An
Bord
Pleanála

Drogheda Cycling Group
c/o Noel Hogan Chairperson
45 Castlewood
Dublin Road
Drogheda

Date: 15 February 2024

Re: Proposed public realm improvement works known as the "Westgate 2040 Project"
in Drogheda, County Louth

Dear Sir / Madam,

An Bord Pleanála has received your recent submission in relation to the above mentioned proposed development and will take it into consideration in its determination of the matter. Please accept this letter as a receipt for the fee of €50 that you have paid.

Please note that the proposed development shall not be carried out unless the Board has approved it or approved it with conditions.

If you have any queries in relation to the matter please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned officer of the Board at laps@pleanala.ie

Please quote the above mentioned An Bord Pleanála reference number in any correspondence or telephone contact with the Board.

Yours faithfully,

Aisling Reilly
Executive Officer
Direct Line: 01-8737131

JA02

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Westgate 2040 Regeneration



Submission by Drogheda Cycling Group

Review of Plan aims and objectives.

The Drogheda Cycling Group welcomes that the Westgate 2040 Regeneration planning proposal recognises the benefits of active travel and, within this plan, seeks to further the town's active travel management strategy by.

- Introducing clear, direct pedestrian and cycle routes in and around the town
- Improving the pedestrian and cyclist experience by reducing barriers to pedestrian and cycle flows through the Westgate
- Improving the pedestrian and cyclist experience by reducing barriers to pedestrian and cycle flows through the Westgate

Review of Public Realm and Road improvement works.

Public Realm improvements – Cycle Parking Stands

We note and welcome that the plan includes provision for an additional 36 Cycle Parking Stands with capacity to accommodate approx. 72 no. parked bicycles. However, the proposed location, Figure 1 (opposite Barlow House) does not connect to the proposed two-way Bicycle Lane on Father Connolly Way and, in that way, fails to offer further connection to the existing Boyne Greenway accessed across Dominics bridge adjacent to Father Connolly Way. We would ask that consideration be given to adding a number (TBD) of Cycle Parking Stands in the Car Park area to front of Courthouse and adjacent to the Bicycle Lane on Father Connolly Way. We also note that the Road Safety Audit suggests, from the design proposals, that provision for wayfinding and safe unobstructed access to and from these spaces is not clear, as many of the spaces are located adjacent to narrow footways, where there is insufficient space for cyclists to walk alongside pedestrians, and no provision for suitable kerb transitions/dropped kerbs to facilitate transfer from off road to on road facilities

Road improvement works - Riverfront Cycle Lane

We welcome that the proposed development will provide for a 2.0m wide cycle lane, and footpath as part of the river Boyne riverfront area and that it will connect the riverfront with an underpass of the Bridge of Peace. However, as noted in the Road Safety Audit, the proposed cycle lane width along the riverside on Fr. Connolly Way is too narrow for two-way use. Also, there's no overhead clearance provided adjacent to the proposed elevated walkway where cyclists using this space maybe at risk of striking their head on the overhead hazard, which include sharp edges. Note, this is incorrectly referenced in the RSM Report as Figure 58 when it is detailed as Figure 68. We would also ask that consideration be given to appropriate surfacing of all paths in the area to avoid possible slippage (the existing Boyne boardwalk is a very positive development but can be slippery in wet weather).

Road improvement works – Georges Street junction.

The existing R132 Georges Street / R132 Trinity Street / R900 West Street junction is highly problematic and of safety concern for cyclists. Currently there are two proposed design schemes for improved cycle ways being (1) the North Road Cycle/Pedestrian Design Scheme on the R132 North Road from the Rosehall* Junction south to the R900 Fair Street junction and (2) Construction of segregated cycle lanes from the Bridge of Peace along the old Dublin Road (the R132) and terminating at MacBride Railway Station. Both design schemes connect through the existing R132 Georges Street / R132 Trinity Street / R900 West Street junction but neither addresses its shortcomings and safety issues. This plan reprioritises George's Square enlarging it into a public realm plaza area which, without additional provision for cycling, will exacerbate the challenge for cyclists.

Therefore, we are pleased within this Westgate plan it is proposed to upgrade the junction with a reduction in the number of carriageway lanes and widths to facilitate the provision of an on-road cycle lane. However, as noted in the Road Safety Audit, no provision is made for safe continuity of the proposed cycling facilities through the bus stop area on both sides of George's Street, cyclists will be vulnerable at this location, and will need to enter the carriageway on a very narrow lane, presenting significantly increased risks of conflict with passing traffic, or alternatively pedestrians will need to mount the kerbs in potential conflict with pedestrians and passengers on the footway adjacent, including on the eastern side of the cross section, where the footway is narrow

*Section 2,1,2 of the Access & Active Travel Management Strategy document (Materials 8) incorrectly identifies this junction as Rosehill rather than Rosehall

Westgate connectivity to the Boyne Greenway

The existing 4.5km long Boyne Greenway commences at the south bank of the river from St. Dominic's Park alongside the Bridge of Peace to the site of the Battle of the Boyne Visitor Centre at Oldbridge via the existing ramparts and a series of boardwalks. A major extension is currently at Option Selection stage and will add approximately 26KM extending westward to Navan. Together with the recent state acquisition of the lands at Dowth Hall demesne, this is envisaged to be a flagship scheme for tourism with the potential to promote and enhance Drogheda as the gateway to the Boyne Vallery, as well as providing a superior public leisure and recreation amenity for the town's residents.

It is critical that the Westgate 2040 regeneration is not a missed opportunity to connect the new public realm to this Boyne Greenway. Existing cycle routes are laid out in Figure 4. Drogheda Cycling Group is asking that the final plan ensures a continuous, free flowing, safe and accessible cycle route

from the Rosehall roundabout on R132, along the North Road, through the Westgate area onto Fr Connolly way and across Dominic's Bridge accessing the greenway on the south bank of the river.

We consider the development of the greenway nearby to also be an opportunity to develop a bike hub and pump track on nearby land. In particular, St. Dominic's Park presents an ideal opportunity for the development of a pump track. This track (see figure 5 below for an example) would be a place for new and returning cyclists (i.e. adults who have not cycled in many years) to develop their skills at handling and manoeuvring bicycles in a safe environment – developing these skills would be crucial in light of the planned increases in people choosing cycling as their mode of transport in the years ahead. Developing this in parkland which adjoins the start of the proposed Boyne Greenway would be ideal and create a real public asset for Drogheda.

Figure 1



Figure 2

Figure 3

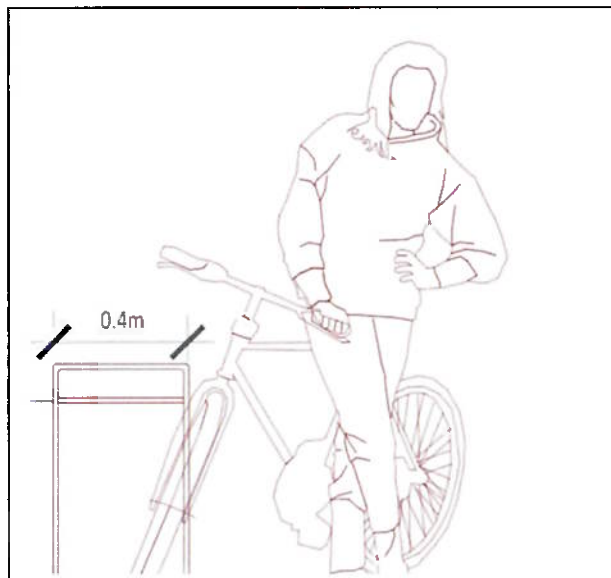


Figure4



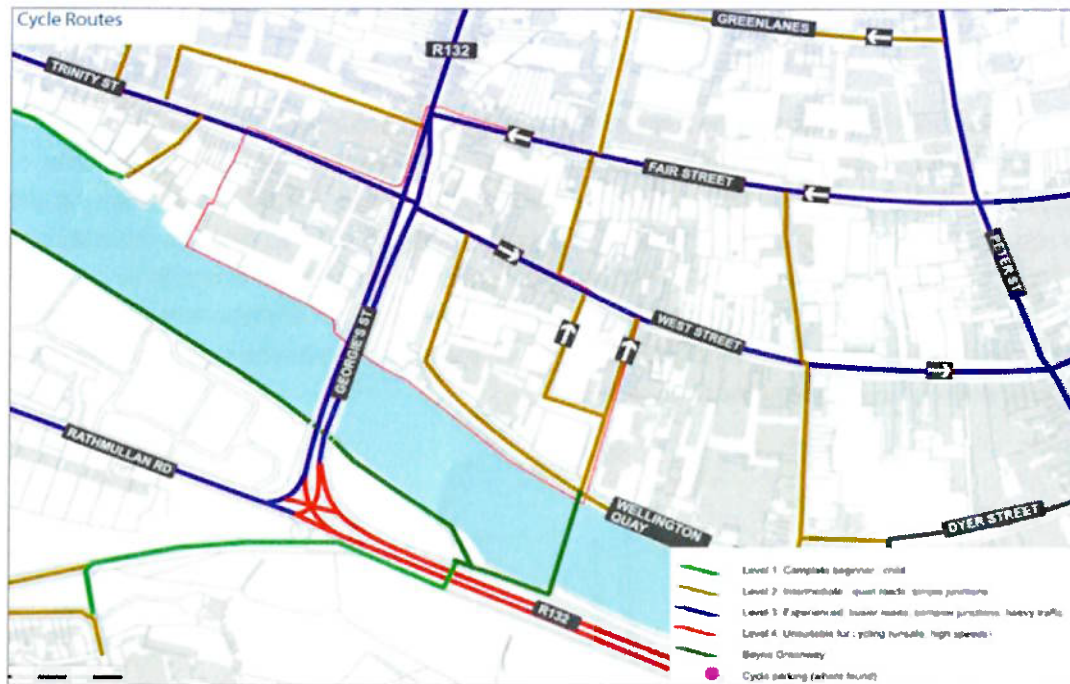


Figure 5



Correspondence address:

Noel Hogan

Chairperson, Drogheda Cycling Group

45 Castlewood, Drogheda, Co. Louth. A92T9KT

