

**An Bord Pleanála,
Strategic Infrastructure Division,
64 Marlborough Street,
Dublin 1.**

10th March 2014

Re: Application by Galway Harbour Company for Permission for Extension of Galway Harbour, at Renmore and Townparks townlands, Galway City. (Reference No. PL61 .PA0033)

Dear Sir/Madam,

The National Transport Authority (the "Authority") welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Strategic Infrastructure Development application, and accompanying Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), lodged with An Bord Pleanála on 10th January 2014.

The Authority considers that the extension of Galway Harbour, as proposed, is a strategically important development, and the proposal is supported by land-use planning policy such as the Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region (RPGs). In particular, the RPGs include a specific objective (IO21) which supports the sustainable redevelopment and expansion of Galway Harbour.

The Authority has no objection in principle to the proposals set out in the application. The provision of facilities for cyclists and pedestrians as part of the overall proposal is to be welcomed, as it will enable access by those modes to the employment and recreational uses that will be contained within the expanded harbour lands. The design of those facilities is acceptable. In order to properly integrate the expanded Harbour site with the city centre, the proposed cycle lanes and footpaths need to be complemented by improved cycle and pedestrian facilities outside the site. The Authority will pursue those improvements through its involvement in the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport's Galway City Investment and Accessibility Programme, in partnership with Galway City Council. In order to ensure that cycle and pedestrian movement in the area is as convenient as possible, all cycle facilities should be designed in accordance with the Authority's National Cycle Manual and the Authority is willing to consult with the designers at the detailed design stage.

The City Development Plan 2011-2017 includes Specific Objectives for Transportation in Section 3.6, including the following for Cycling:

- Provide a cycle way between Ceannt Station and Renmore having regard to the objective to dual track this section of rail line.
- Provide a cycle way beside the railway line from Renmore/Ballyloughaun to Roscam Park and Curragrean having regard to the objective to dual track this section of rail line.

These objectives demonstrate that linking the city centre to the wider city area to the east is an aim of the City Council's proposals for sustainable travel in the city. The Galway Harbour Enterprise Park (GHEP) is located between Renmore and the City Centre, and there is an opportunity to improve the connectivity of those two areas, which is of poor quality at present, by capitalising on the infrastructure being proposed in this application. That represents an alternative to providing connectivity along the railway alignment, where the priority may be to construct additional tracks, as is stated in the development plan objectives above.

The existing informal links from Renmore are shown on the 'Cycle Lane / Link Paths Layout Plan' (Drawing No. 2139-2132) submitted with the application. The improvement of the linkages into the site will be a matter for other agencies to progress, as such works would be outside the site of the current application. To safeguard such works in future, it is important that the detailed design extends cycle paths and footpaths as far as the site boundaries, i.e. on the short section of road northwards from the GHEP road as far as the existing fire access bridge under the railway tracks, and eastwards from the proposed Renmore Promenade Road in the direction of Renmore Beach.

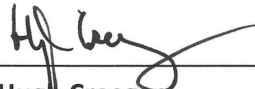
The Authority notes the following specific Public Transport objective in Section 3.6 of the City Development Plan which seeks to plan for improved connectivity between the city centre and the east of the city:

- Reserve lands for a sustainable transportation corridor parallel with the rail line from the city centre to the eastern city boundary.

The application site, as well as the roads and streets in its vicinity at both east and west, are located along the route that such a corridor would occupy. It is the view of the Authority that the layout of the development, as proposed, would not preclude the development of that sustainable transport corridor within the overall harbour lands.

We trust that the above comments will be taken into consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Hugh Creegan

Director of Transport Investment and Taxi Regulation