

AUGHRIM STREET RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION
40 Aughrim Street, Dublin 7
Email: asadublin7@gmail.com

29 August 2022

Your Ref: HA29N.313892

SUBMISSION TO BORD PLEANALA

BUSCONNECTS: BLANCHARDSTOWN TO CITY CENTRE CORE BUS CORRIDOR

Aughrim Street Residents Association welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to An Bord Pleanala on the Blanchardstown Bus Corridor

We fully support BusConnects objectives for the provision of an effective and efficient public transport system and the provision of safe cycle lanes. We support the objectives of promoting public transport and encouraging its use over private cars. We also acknowledge that the NTA has engaged with the local community in Stoneybatter through meetings with representatives of Stoneybatter Pride of Place and that the scheme has been revised to take account of some community concerns.

However, we wish to express our deep disappointment that this planning application was lodged with a 30 August deadline in mind. August is the height of the holiday period which made local consultation difficult. The NTA would have been well aware of the deadline when submitting their planning application. There is no reason why the application could not have been submitted even two weeks later which would have greatly facilitated local communities prepare their submissions

We believe that the promotion of public transport should not be at the expense of our fragile urban communities. We want a balanced set of proposals that enhances modes of transport and travel while protecting our living environment.

1. Impact of Current Traffic Management Proposals on Aughrim Street

A central component of the proposal is for a Bus Corridor on Prussia Street with all northbound general traffic being redirected through Aughrim Street. While we understand that the NTA's proposal for a complex rerouting system at the southern end of the village will provide some mitigation on the levels of traffic coming through the village and travelling up Aughrim Street, we remain strongly opposed to the proposal to route all northbound general traffic through Aughrim Street on a 24/7 basis.

The routing of all general traffic coming from Stoneybatter/Manor Street through Aughrim Street includes all non-bus traffic including vans and trucks as well as commuter traffic. Prior to the introduction of Covid-19 restrictions we witnessed severe traffic back-ups on Aughrim Street from the junction with North Circular Road to St Joseph's Road, while on Prussia Street traffic was backed up all the way from Hanlon's Corner to Manor Street.

The NTA informed us previously that no traffic counts had been carried out on Aughrim Street prior to Covid-19. This is unfortunate as there has not been an opportunity to take accurate traffic counts due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic over the past two and half years. We attach photos taken on Aughrim Street and Prussia Street in November/December 2019 before the pandemic which show traffic on Aughrim Street at capacity even with Prussia Street open to general traffic (See photos on p.4). We are seriously concerned about how much worse it will be when Prussia Street is reserved for buses only.

The effective closure of Old Cabra Road and Prussia Street to general traffic will result in southbound traffic diverting to Blackhorse Avenue and continuing through Aughrim Street. The Bus Gate at Aughrim Street Manor Street will remove through traffic from Aughrim Street to Manor Street. However, there is still the opportunity for southbound traffic to travel into Aughrim Street and redirect up Cowper Street to Oxmantown Road. The creation of a series of traffic restrictions such as no left/right turns to prevent this may help but will undoubtedly create problems for local residents who need to access the village by car.

The restrictions on Prussia Street will also result in a significant increase in local traffic on Aughrim Street and St Joseph's Road seeking to access the two main supermarkets in the area – Tesco on Prussia Street and Lidl on the Old Cabra Road.

There is a very busy parish church on Aughrim Street which holds one funeral most days. St Gabriel's School is accessed off Aughrim Street and the increased traffic on Aughrim Street will create road safety issues for pupils attending this school and for elderly people attending church services. The N2 bus will travel down Aughrim Street at least three times per hour. Aughrim Street is quite a narrow street beyond the junction with St Joseph's Road, where most houses do not have front gardens to act as a buffer against the increased traffic.

We would urge Bord Pleanala to consider relaxing the bus gate on Manor Street and Bus Corridor on Prussia Street to allow general traffic access to Manor Street and Stoneybatter from Prussia Street and Aughrim Street at non-peak hours. We suggest that the Prussia Street bus corridor and Manor Street bus-gate be operational only Monday to Friday from 7am to 10am and from 4pm to 7pm.

During peak hours the measures such as the Bus Gate at Blackhall Place and the right-turn ban for general traffic at the junction of Kirwan Street and Manor Street, while onerous will provide some welcome mitigation for Aughrim Street.

Left turn bans at the junction of Cowper Street/Carnew Street to prevent rat-running into Oxmantown Road while allowing access to Carnew Street/Cowper Street from Aughrim Street should be considered. Signage on Aughrim Street should indicate that there is no through route to Oxmantown Road from Aughrim Street.

Consideration should be given to a pedestrian crossing at the junction of Aughrim Street and Cowper Street. The crossing could be strategically located so that it would serve the Church and the school.

2. Environmental Impact

The houses at the lower end of Aughrim Street, which is very narrow, have no front gardens. Residents are particularly concerned about the impact that vibrations from the additional heavy traffic will have on these old Victorian houses which have light foundations.

Residents are concerned about the negative impact that the hugely increased traffic levels will have on air quality in the Aughrim Street environs. The World Health Organisation identifies urban air pollution as “*the invisible killer*”, and increases the risk for cardiovascular and respiratory disease, cancer and adverse birth outcomes, and also are associated with higher death rates. We understand that the NTA state that their EIA shows that the impact on air quality would be negligible

However, we would still request that the NTA undertake to monitor regularly air quality on Aughrim Street during peak traffic times, to ensure that emissions do not exceed the WHO recommended exposure levels for particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5), ozone, nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide, as well as any equivalent guidelines that are designed to encourage an improvement in air quality, and to share their findings with local residents.

3. Public Realm

We welcome the new proposal for an enhanced public realm at the junction of Aughrim Street Manor Street and Prussia Street. Proposals for the retention and enhancement of our green spaces are welcome. However, we believe that the benefits of these measures are grossly exaggerated given the level of traffic that will be directed through Aughrim Street.

While the NTA proposes some welcome public realm improvements along the Bus Corridor, there are no public realm improvement proposals for Aughrim Street.

Given the proposals to route all northbound general traffic through Aughrim Street, there should be some gain for Aughrim Street, in terms of enhanced pedestrian facilities, wider pavements, pedestrian crossings and planting in tandem with the Greening Stoneybatter strategy.

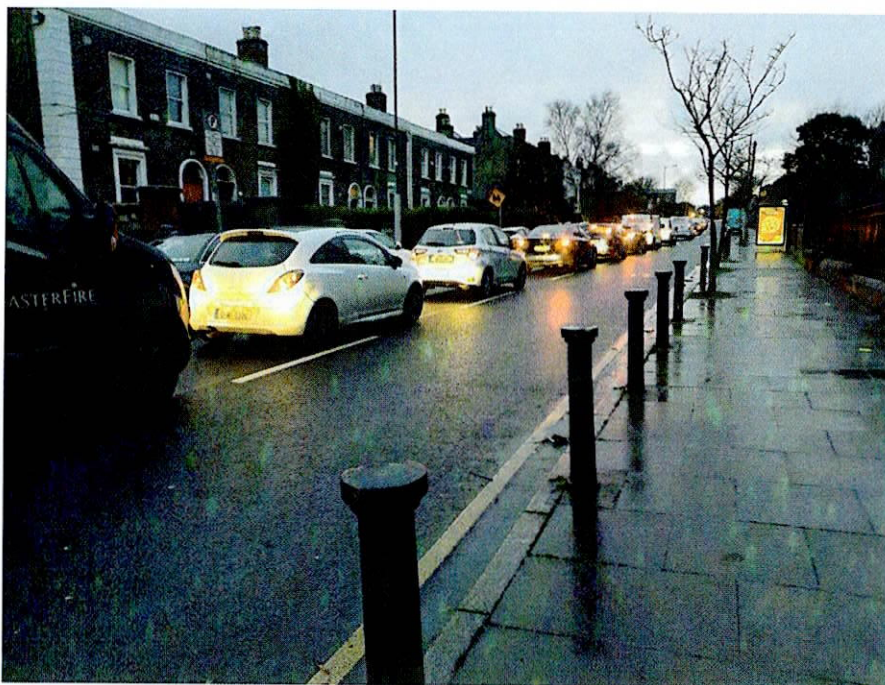
Conclusion

We would ask An Bord Pleanála to give due consideration to the genuine concerns of Aughrim Street/Stoneybatter residents and to ensure that Bus Connects changes are balanced and take cognisance of the existence of a vibrant residential and business community in the Stoneybatter area.

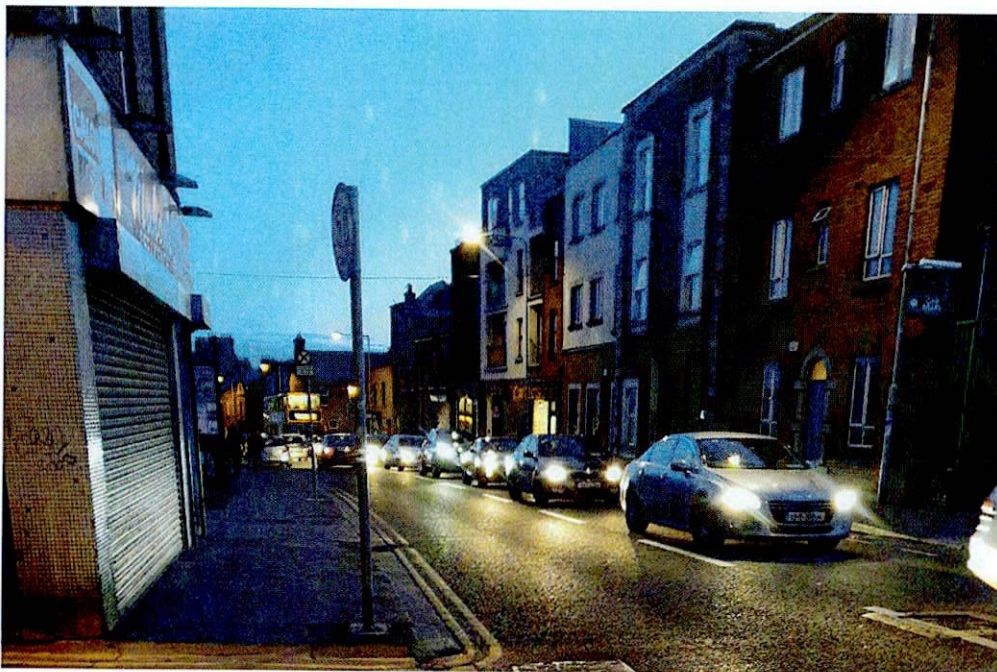
Yours faithfully

Lorna Maguire
Chairperson
Aughrim Street Residents Association

Photos



Traffic on Aughrim Street @16.15 on 8 December 2019
Backed up from NCR to just below St Joseph's Road



Traffic on Prussia Street @ 16.50 on 19 November
Backed up from NCR to Manor Street