

Submission of Rathdown Road and District Residents Association regarding Bus Connects Blanchardstown preferred route.

1. Introduction

This is a reflection of some of the concerns of the community represented by this association and the residents who live on Rathdown Road, Orchard Terrace, Charleville Road, Cherrymount Park, Rosemount Road and the surrounding area. These are roads which will be directly and adversely affected by the potential changes to the traffic which would come about as a result of the Blanchardstown leg of the proposed Bus Connects project, and in particular the route as it moves into the area down Old Cabra Road. Firstly, the association is supportive of the Bus Connects project and acknowledges that there is the real potential for an improvement in public transport in the city. This is to be welcomed along with the improvements for cyclists and pedestrians which it is hoped will also be catered for as part of the overall project itself.

However, it is vital that this progress be done without sacrificing (any more than is absolutely necessary) the quality of life and the mobility of the communities who are so significantly impacted by the changes being proposed. The changes must be proportionate, taking into account the need to develop the bus corridor, but also ensuring the ongoing and careful consideration of the impact on the needs of these vibrant city centre communities. Any changes should seek to disrupt the communities in question as little as possible.

There are a series of changes, introduced under this Bus Corridor scheme in Schedule Part III (Section B), Description of Public Rights of Way to be Restricted or Otherwise Interfered With, which are located outside of the core bus corridor route of the Navan Road and Stoneybatter area and which involve serious impacts for the communities involved.

The association is also aware of and supports the significant concerns raised by the residents of Connaught Street, Fassauga Avenue and Monck Place in particular and we wish to express our ongoing support for the residents of those areas. .

2. Current Bus Connects corridor proposed without adequate consideration of knock- on effects on the communities in the centre of the development and who will ultimately be positioned immediately between two bus corridors

The design of this proposed bus corridor cannot be seen in isolation from, and without reference to, the wider context of access to the city-centre by other transport modes. There are significant knock-on effects to other forms of transport (other than buses) by closing off Old Cabra Road, a main traffic artery to the city centre from the north-west. While the move to improve to the quality and efficiency of the bus system is highly desirable, the closing off of the Old Cabra Road gives rise to the significant issue that rather than abandoning their cars motorists will find the easiest and quickest alternative routes to their destinations, resulting in a new set of "rat runs". In an effort to deal with that impact (which has been clearly stated as a concern by this association and in other many previous submissions made by a number of groups and individuals) the NTA has now put forward an application which makes very significant changes indeed to the manner in which traffic can traverse across the area between Phibsborough and Cabra, including what appears to potentially involve the compulsory purchase of a number of portions of public highway and the permanent closure of access points to the area itself. It must be stressed that these extremely broad and wide reaching changes have been put forward for planning permission without any public consultation, and they have been introduced at the last minute in the context of the compulsory purchase order which is being sought.

The association is concerned that certain of the above changes are not proportionate and that they will have significant adverse impacts on the roads which constitute our association without any mitigating measures being taken or considered as part of the proposal. Further, it is to be assumed that these impacts will only be increased when the additional Ballymun corridor comes into effect, and it is most unfortunate that the proposal for the Ballymun corridor will not be accessible or viewable until after such time as the deadline for the within submissions has expired.

3. Issues arising from the proposed restrictions on roads and closures of roads to two way traffic in the immediate area

Our most immediate concern focuses on a number of road restriction changes which are currently proposed in the CPO application for the Blanchardstown Bus Corridor, none of which were set out in any of the proposed designs issued for public consultation since the Bus Connects project commenced in 2018, despite the previous lengthy and thorough states of consultation in that period. None of these proposed restrictions appeared in the final preferred routes which was published in March of this year.

The closure of Annamoe Road and Terrace to two way traffic and the significant restriction on traffic accessing Monck Place, along with the closure to two way traffic at Charleville Road mean that there are very few routes by which residents for the large area concerned with these closures can gain access to their own homes and travel to and from their properties by car. These would become virtually impossible to access from certain directions. It is difficult to envisage how one will gain access to the roads which from part of our association by car without very significant difficulty.

The residents of our association were at no point made aware of the proposed closure of Charleville Road to through traffic in a south bound direction. It is also our understanding that the proposals set out in the NTA's CPO application for Monck Place do not reflect the changes requested by residents from that area at the time. It appears also that the concerns expressed directly to the NTA by local residents about the impact on Fassaugh Avenue, Fassaugh Road and Connaught Street have gone unheeded. The adverse impacts arising from the closure of the Old Cabra Road to general through traffic will now be exacerbated by the new changes. Further, it has been suggested to the residents of our association when we met with the NTA that it their solution to our specific issues is that a main access to our roads when travelling from the North and North West of the city would be that all traffic travelling in this direction would now be gain required to access to our area through Connaught Street, so we are conscious that this traffic will increase the traffic flow on these narrow roads also. A resident of NCR, Monck Place, Great Western Square, Cherrymount, Rathdown Road or Orchard Terrace who wishes to travel by car from the direction of Hart's Corner would be obliged to follow a route via Connaught Street, St. Peter's Road, Cabra Road and then around the sharp corner onto NCR. This would involve directing traffic past the Primary School on St. Peter's Road, which would be a serious traffic hazard with young children coming and going to school. (Has the school been consulted or informed of this proposal?). This suggests that those modelling the traffic are restricting their focus to traffic alone and not considering local

conditions. This route from Hart's corner involves, for example, a large number of parents who a number of times a week may young children to na Fianna GAA club in Mobhi Road so is not a purely theoretical objection.

In that context, the Rathdown Road and District Resident's Association is aware that there is a proposal that an Oral Hearing should take place and we would support this view. It is our concern that the NTA has been inconsistent and arguably unfair in its dealings and responses to concerns raised locally, and it has failed even to attempt to resolve all major local adverse effects, it has created new problems while addressing problems elsewhere. While it must be accepted that there will inevitably be some impact on the surrounding areas when a change of this nature takes place, it is our submission that the balance has not been properly managed with regard to the current proposal..

4. Issues specific to Charleville Road and Rathdown Road and the surrounding roads-

The changes at Annamoe Terrace and the permanent closure of one lane at the south end of Charleville (and the very severe limitation of traffic access to Monck Place) will render travel by car to our homes almost impossible at all hours, as anyone seeking to travel by car will have to enter into a very limited direction of travel and then compete with the arterial traffic which has already been forced from other routes, which is inevitably going to lead to huge congestion and delays.

People who live in the area already are very supportive of public transport and it is a main form of travel for the vast majority of us, but residents sometimes have no option other than to travel to and from their home in their car, and this will become a lengthy, difficult and seemingly impossible task under the current proposals. This is particularly difficult for elderly or vulnerable people who require their car but also for those who must use a vehicle for work or other activities. Not everyone can use public transport and the people who live in the areas most directly affected must have the right to enter and exit onto their own road with some sense of ease. The current proposals appear excessive, and there must be alternatives which could be considered. This could include, for example, not using any potential option of CPO at this juncture, but rather on a trial basis attempting to put a more moderate proposal in place. there could be time limited restrictions, so the south end of Charleville road and Monck Place could

be closed to traffic by the use of signage for certain hours of the day (during rush hour) and then traffic could be allowed to use the roads as normal outside these peak periods. If that did not sufficiently deal with the problem then the matter could be further considered in a more reasonable and realistic way. Alternatively, perhaps access to all of these roads could be made on the basis of local access only. While measures such as these would require enforcement and policing they would place less of a burden on the residents who form part of the community.

Under the current proposals a main point of access onto roads such as Cherrymount Park, Rathdown Road, Orchard Terrace and Rosemount Road would be to make use of the proposed new turning points which will come into existence with the proposed lifting of the no-right turn and no-left turn at St Peter's Church. There are serious concerns about cycle safety arising from the proposed changes at this narrow V shaped junction. Already, three lanes of eastbound traffic and two lanes of westbound traffic merge at this junction. There will be increased eastbound traffic flows due to the Old Cabra Road changes on top of the very significant road users currently using the junction, and it is very difficult to see how vehicular traffic will cleanly manoeuvre this v-shaped junction.

5. Other alternatives must be considered.

We have only dealt in this submission with the issues as they impact on the quiet residential streets mentioned above. While we are aware of all the issues that are being raised by the broader community- they will be dealt with by others in their submissions and we support their concerns. The quality of life of a significant community, and of residents would be severely adversely affected by these changes, and in particular as we address in this submission by the proposed taking of all other vehicles from the Old Cabra Road and funnelling them down the New Cabra Road while significantly restricting access to the area and making the traffic management for the area unworkable for those who live and work in this community.

We are aware of the concerns being expressed about the manner in which the modelling of traffic has taken place and would support those concerns also.

While the idea of enhancing the bus routes into the centre of the city is commendable, it cannot take place without thought as to the consequences of such actions, or at the expense of the

residents living in these communities and villages at the heart of the city. Any solution to the provision of a preferred route must not divert traffic from that arterial route down our quiet residential roads, either in or out of the city centre. Therefore all efforts must be made to allow for other solutions, which would not bring this about.

Committee for the Rathdown Road and District Residents Association on behalf of the Association