

The Secretary
An Bord Pleanála
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By hand and email: sid@pleanala.ie

Dáta | Date
23 August 2022

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TII22-119204

AN BORD PLEANÁLA	
LDG-	056585-22
ABP-	313892-22
25 AUG 2022	
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Re. **Strategic Infrastructure Development – Blanchardstown to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Scheme (the “Proposed Development”)**

ABP Case ref. HA29N.313892

Dear Secretary,

We refer to the application being made by or on behalf of the National Transport Authority pursuant to section 51(2) of the Roads Act 1993 (as amended) (the “Act”) in relation to the proposed road development consisting of the construction of the Blanchardstown to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Scheme (the “Application”).

Introduction

In accordance with the Roads Acts 1993 to 2015, the National Roads Authority’s (known as Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) for operational purposes) primary functions are (i) to provide an integrated approach to the future development and operation of the national roads network throughout Ireland, and (ii) to secure the provision of a safe and efficient network of national roads.

The M50 national road is a motorway and is also part of the Comprehensive Trans-European road network and the N3 national road is a national primary route. TII accordingly wishes to make this submission in relation to the proposed Blanchardstown to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Scheme and its impact on the N3 national road between N3 Junction 1 (M50 J6) and N3 Junction 2 (Snugborough).

TII in principle supports the objectives of the ‘Blanchardstown to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Scheme’ and it would expect that the project can be developed in such a way as to address the concerns outlined below and avoid adverse impacts on the safety, security and operation of the national roads network and users of that network.

Impact of the Proposed Development on the N3 between N3 Junction 1 (M50 J6) and N3 Junction 2 (Snugborough)

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) has reviewed the proposals for the BusConnects - Blanchardstown to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Scheme (hereafter referred to as the “Proposed Scheme”) and would make the

following observations in relation to the proposed design in the area between N3 Junction 1 (M50 J6) and N3 Junction 2 (Snugborough):

1. TII are concerned with the alterations proposed to the existing diverge lane between the Mill Road bridge and the access road to the James Connolly Hospital. It appears from the drawings that this taper diverge lane is being foreshortened due to the construction of the new bus lane. This is likely to give rise to traffic weaving, road safety and operational issues at this location on the N3 mainline carriageway. TII requests that the length of the existing taper diverge lane be retained as close to its existing configuration as possible, and that the existing overhead sign gantry is retained at approximate chainage A1750.
2. BusConnects will improve cycle facilities on the city side of the N3/M50 interchange. With improved cycle infrastructure there is potential for increased cycling demand to/from nearby areas in northern Dublin 15 such as Sports Campus Ireland, the Institute of Technology Blanchardstown, corporate business parks, residential areas, and Connolly Hospital Blanchardstown.

TII is of the view that cyclists, who would expect to travel between these locations and the existing and emerging active travel networks in the region of the N3/M50 interchange, may attempt to use the proposed BusConnects bus lanes on the N3. It is the opinion of TII that high quality segregated active travel infrastructure, as defined in the NTA's GDA cycle network plan, would be safer and would likely prove more attractive to cyclists if in place. TII consider that alternatives parallel to the N3, such as the proposed Tolka Valley Greenway and the proposed improvements through Blanchardstown village would be more appropriate in the interests of public safety and also to encourage active travel modes.

TII is also of the view that such parallel cycle infrastructure alternatives would need to be in place prior to the opening of the BusConnects corridor. This would minimise the risk of cyclists choosing to cycle in the high-speed traffic environment of the N3 and also encourage modal split. In this regard, it would be important that appropriate directional signage to these alternative active travel routes is provided as part of the Blanchardstown to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Scheme.

Conclusion

TII trusts that the foregoing comments prove of assistance to the Board in their consideration of the scheme. As always TII remains available to engage with the Board and the NTA in relation to this proposal especially in the promotion of sustainable safe travel.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Walsh
Chief Executive Officer

c.c.: National Transport Authority