

An Bord Pleanála,
64 Marlborough Street,
Rotunda,
Dublin 1,
D01 V902

22nd August 2022

RE: **Observation on the Bus Connects Blanchardstown to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Scheme.**
Case Number :HA29N.313892

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I am writing as a resident of Phibsborough, residing in the precinct of streets of Monck Place, Avondale Road, Avondale Avenue, Leslie's Buildings and Great Western Square; in observation to the Blanchardstown to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Scheme.

Introduction

The local network of streets in which I reside, *Monck Place, Avondale Road, Avondale Avenue, Leslie's Buildings and Great Western Square*, have the potential to be severely disrupted by vehicular traffic displacement caused by Bus Connects (both the current application for the Blanchardstown to City Centre and the imminent application for the Ballymun to City Centre Corridor).

In recognition of this possibility, the Bus Connects professional team have actively and positively engaged with this community during the design and planning phase of the proposed Corridor.

The proposed alterations to vehicular traffic movement to the local network of streets in which I reside contained in the Bus Connects Blanchardstown to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Scheme reflect a resolution of my concerns.



Red line Outline of environs of Monck Place, Avondale Road, Avondale Avenue, Leslie's Buildings and Great Western Square (left) and detail plan layout of streets (right)

The local Environment at Monck Place, Avondale Road, Avondale Avenue, Leslie's Buildings and Great Western Square

The streets of Monck Place, Avondale Road, Avondale Avenue, Leslie's Buildings and Great Western Square are old and narrow residential streets, first appearing on the 1829-41 6 Inch Dublin First Edition Maps. In recent decades they have witnessed an augmentation of vehicular through-traffic, given their layout and location as a rat-run to avoid the North Circular Road/ Phibsborough junction.

Their historic design and layout have not been conducive to this traffic augmentation and an increase in traffic accidents has been the result.

Furthermore, the streets are residential in nature, with a mixed community of both elderly residents and families with young children. The ability for a sustainable urban community of residents to prosper is hampered by the use of the communities streets as a traffic artery. Air Quality, safety of more vulnerable road users, noise and vibration are all aspects of the local environment in this location that are demonstrably dis-improving over recent times.

Bus Connects is a significant infrastructural project that has a clear logic to induce a more sustainable urban transport modal shift. I support the decarbonising of movement for the City's residents. In this observation I note that in tandem with the wider Bus Connects Objective, the protection and improvement of quality of local environments that are affected by the Bus Connects scheme is also paramount. Both objectives are mutually compatible and I support how the Bus Connects plan has managed these resolution of both as the relate to my local area.



Images of community improvements & environmental efforts of upgrade, Monck Place

Pre-Application Consultation

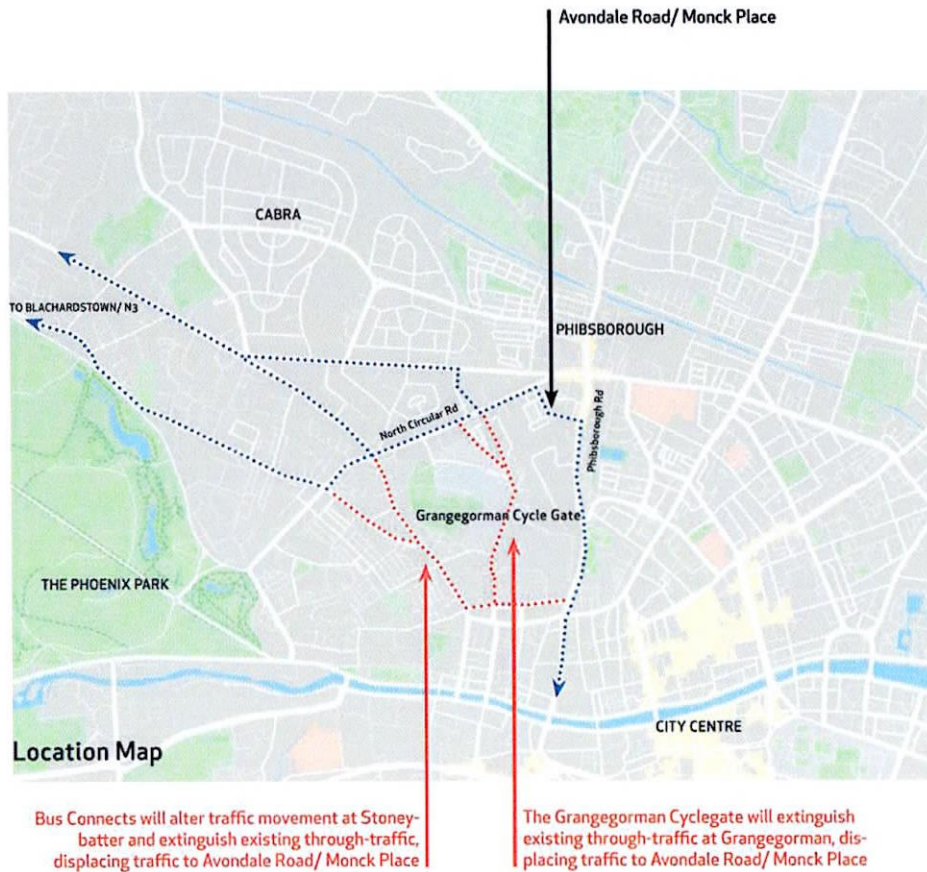
Prior to the lodgement of the application to An Bord Pleanála for the Blanchardstown to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Scheme, the Bus Connects/ NTA design and planning team met with an open forum of residents of Monck Place, Avondale Road, Avondale Avenue, Leslie's Buildings and Great Western Square. Two meetings were held, via Zoom, with multiple attendees (devices) from residents. The dates of these meetings were:

- Wednesday 18th November 2020
- Wednesday 24th February 2021

At the meetings, the residents set-out their concerns regarding the combined effects of:

- the removal of vehicular traffic lanes & route options proposed in Bus Connects to facilitate unimpeded Bus Corridors,
- the associated decommissioning of route options in Stoneybatter (to correctly mitigate the effect of Bus Connects on those communities) and
- the closure of the vehicular route option through Grangegorman.

This would all have the net effect of funnelling all vehicular traffic travelling from the Blanchardstown direction to the City Centre through the only remaining route option: Avondale Road & Monck Place (with associated paths via Great Western Square & Avondale Avenue).



This outcome would be negative for a number of reasons:

1. Any remaining car-route option for motorists to complete a journey with ease to the city centre represent an undermining of the Bus Connects objective: to promote modal shift from private motor car to a public transport option.
2. The augmentation of the narrow streets of Avondale Road & Monck Place as a rat-run would be a wholly inappropriate consequential effect of the Bus Connects Plan and severely dis-improve the quality of the local environment for the community of residents.
3. Any downgrade of the liveability of urban communities is a negative outcome and is counter to multiple policy platforms that recognise the innate sustainability of compact city living.
4. It could be assumed that further augmentation of the Avondale Road & Monck Place rat-run would be accompanied by an ongoing augmentation of the road safety issues & accidents witnessed on these roads.

Bus Connects Proposal & Detail plan at Avondale Road/ Monck Place & Avondale Avenue

In recognition of the foregoing concerns highlighted by the local community at the 2 pre-application consultation meetings, the design and planning professional team at Bus Connects/ NTA were proactive in their recognition of these legitimate concerns raised.

The roads at Monck Place, Avondale Road & Avondale Avenue have now been included in the Bus Connects scope of application, with proposed traffic movement restrictions now applied to these roads to prevent the future misuse of these roads for rat-running traffic:



Extract of Bus Connects Plan to restrict traffic flow at Phibsborough Road, Monck Place & Avondale Avenue ('Phibsborough')

I understand that these restrictions will reduce the ease of access for residents of my local roads, however in the context of the alternative (no preventative measures), the Bus Connects/ NTA proposal is far preferable. I note the NTA's traffic modelling projected an additional 300 vehicular movements on these roads per hour upon implementation of the Bus Connects corridor, should no preventative measures be put in place.

Paradoxically, I also note that should the intent of Bus Connects be successfully delivered, the City can look forward to future time of reduced vehicular traffic congestion and roads better prioritised for pedestrians, cyclists and users of public transport. In this context, I do not understand the above measures to be an imposition, rather a necessary undertaking to enable better movement for all residents of the City.

In summary, I commend Bus Connect/ NTA for their meaningful and positive engagement with my local community. I support the Bus Connects/ NTA proposal to alter the movement of vehicular traffic to my local roads, with all the consequential benefit this will deliver. I ask that should an oral hearing be required as part of the application process, that I be included as a participant in the oral hearing.

Yours Sincerely,

Stephen Clancy, 31 Avondale Avenue, Phibsboro, Dublin 7, D07YA09