

Observation on the Blanchardstown to City Centre Core Bus Corridor 5

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Observation by Michael Hannon

Address: 56 Ardpatrick Road, Navan Road, Dublin 7 D07 C3K6

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1.0 Introduction

We, the Hannon household, support the Core Bus Corridor Projects (CBC) and particularly the Blanchardstown to City Centre Core Bus Corridor 5.

Nevertheless, we do have concerns about the possible negative impacts of this project on our Navan Road Community. Our focus is particularly on the area from the Parkway Railway Station to the Old Cabra Road junction with the North Circular Road. We support the Navan Road Community Council (NRCC) in its efforts to make this CBC a project that will enhance the life of our community and to contribute pro-actively in developing this project. We are also cognizant that there is a wider population that must benefit from this project and who access the city for work and leisure purposes.

The CBC projects are not just infrastructure projects. They are projects being undertaken in existing communities and the outcome of the projects should be an enhancement of the areas in which they are going to be constructed. We do not wish to see, nor will we tolerate, a negative consequence arising because of this project in our neighbourhood. The project should enhance our neighbourhood and we want to see a tree lined CBC corridor from Blanchardstown to City Centre. **When this project is completed our community and indeed the NTA, should be proud to be able to see a tree lined Core Bus Corridor. This is the essence of Proper Planning and Development.**

Unfortunately, our time for discussion with the National Transport Authority (NTA) via the NRCC was cut short by the Covid pandemic and we were left in a situation where we had no direct engagement with the NTA. Many of the issues that have now arisen could have been dealt with if this engagement had continued.

While we and the NRCC support the Core Bus Corridor Projects, we are focused on an end outcome that is positive for our community and that produces an enhanced, efficient, modern, transport system.

We want this CBC project to be a catalyst to develop:

- A more efficient transport system to convey the commuter, our elderly and disabled community, and visitors into and out of the wider city areas in an efficient and comfortable manner.
- A fair and attractively priced fare structure.
- Safe and enhanced Cycle lanes and pedestrian paths.
- A new vibrancy in our neighbourhood with initiatives arising from the CBC project. We want this project to be the starting point for the rejuvenation of our Navan Road area and indeed the wider Blanchardstown to City Centre Core Bus Corridor 5.
- A reduction in vehicular traffic that is currently impacting on the Air Quality, Noise and Traffic Safety and impacting on the viability of the Public Transport service of our area.
- A tree lined Navan Road from the Parkway Railway Station to the North Circular Road. Indeed, a Blanchardstown to City Centre Core Bus Corridor 5 that is tree lined.

2.0 Our concerns and our proposals to make this project work to the benefit of our community and our city.

We are a Community. Not a Motorway!

Our community vision has been gradually negatively interrupted by the continual growth of car commuting and the consequent impediments to an efficient public transportation system. However, this Core Bus Corridor project now provides our community with a vision and the investment to undertake a major restructuring of transport, not alone in our area but also in creating a mobility system template for other towns and cities. If implemented properly it will not alone provide a safe and less costly way to commute but it will also transform the health, environment, and wealth of our area - and indeed other towns and cities.

We want a Community. Not a Motorway!

3. Trees

What the Core Bus Corridor Proposes

Trees

The National Transport Authority (NTA) has proposed the removal of hundreds of street trees to facilitate this project. This is very evident from the Parkway Rail Station and along the Navan Road as far as the North Circular Road. We do not see an effort in the documentation to make our community one that has at its core the well-being of people and their economic lives.

The well-being of our community arises from many areas: for example, trees, reduction in pollution, safe walking and cycling opportunities and an efficient and clean public transport system.

Together with the NRCC we have identified at least 150 street trees to be removed to facilitate this project. There are also unquantified numbers of woodland trees that will be removed.

What the Core Bus Corridor can do better

There is an opportunity to replant street trees in properly constructed tree pits that will still allow for the provision of cycle lanes, public transport, and car lanes. The technology for this is available in other countries, e.g., Denmark, France, Germany, Britain and indeed in Ireland. These large tree pits (and they will have to be large) will be constructed to current European standards and where it has been possible to plant trees in particularly challenging locations. There are many examples in the Navan Road itself, of street trees that were previously planted into restricted tree pit sizes in pedestrian paths and that have not grown properly as a result.

What we demand is a recognized and agreed standard for tree pits to be used in the replanting of new street trees. This will include proper structural soil growing media for the root areas.

Other Tree Planting Opportunities

There are potentially several locations where trees could be planted and that can contribute positively to a more livable environment. These are areas adjacent to the Navan Road. Here are two examples:

The School for the Deaf

There is a long linear space in an area between the boundary wall to the Navan Road and the

	<p>school buildings where trees could be planted. We would suggest Birch trees and that are not invasive but would provide a greener environment that would enhance the livability of our NRCC area as well as contribute to CO₂ reduction.</p> <p>Open Spaces and Institutional lands fronting onto the Navan Road</p> <p>There are open spaces in these areas where extra trees could be planted with the agreement of the residents and the Institutional property owners. There are opportunities to plant trees in local schools.</p>
<p>4.0 Dealing with Vehicular Traffic</p>	
<p>What the Core Bus Corridor Proposes</p>	<p>What the Core Bus Corridor can do better</p>
<p>4.1 Reducing Vehicular Traffic</p> <p>We are not anti-car. The reality is that there will be cars on our roads for some time to come. Nevertheless, more and more cities throughout Europe and even in the US, are grasping with the issue of overwhelming numbers of cars that reduce public space, contribute to CO₂ emissions, and contribute to negative health outcomes for their population. The same is true of this country and particularly in Dublin. However, we have been unable to find in the NTA documentation any consideration of proactively reducing vehicular traffic and in particular, commuter traffic and in a manner that will benefit the commuter and the wider citizen population both financially and healthily. Has the NTA considered the programme of Government to reduce Carbon emissions?</p> <p>An example: before Christmas 2019, in a very short evening period we counted over 100 cars on the Old Cabra Road from the North Circular Road to the Navan Road. We only counted the cars that had one driver and no passenger – and the cars were not moving.</p> <p>There must be a better way to commute!</p>	<p>The example of other European Cities</p> <p>Many European cities, e.g., Bilbao, Freiburg, Berlin, Copenhagen, Paris, Bordeaux and even London, to name a few have managed to proactively reduce or begin to reduce vehicular traffic in their cities. Such actions in these cities contribute to making them more attractive for business and for people to live in. They are becoming livable cities.</p> <p>There is, from what is now published, no evidence that such a proposal has been considered by the National Transport Authority (NTA).</p> <p>To our community the NTA has, in effect, avoided learning from the experience of cities in other countries in helping to create living cities that are good for the economic viability and health of our wider area and its people.</p>

What the Core Bus Corridor Proposes	What the Core Bus Corridor can do better
<p>4.2 Providing a positive alternative for the Commuter</p> <p>There has been discussion and provision of Park and Ride facilities but with the existing facilities the evidence seems to suggest that, without enforcement a significant proportion of commuters will continue to access the city and suburbs by car.</p> <p>In the NTA document there is a reference to “movement of people, rather than solely, the movement of vehicles”. Again, without enforcement there will be significant avoidance by the commuter of using the public transport system.</p>	<p>How to make Park and Rides Work!</p> <p>Several significant interventions to entice the commuter to move to public transport are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p>● Provide Park and Ride facilities at strategic locations with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ cheap or preferably nominal or no parking fees <li>○ a regular bus service. <li>○ comfortable enclosed shelter for the commuter who is waiting to make a bus connection <li>○ properly maintained and regularly serviced public toilets <li>○ Clean, safe, and comfortable Café/Restaurant and open at hours that will benefit the commuter <li>○ Security <li> <p>● Restrictions</p> <p>Creating a computerized system that only allows a reduced number of cars into the city each day. This will start at the Park and Ride locations and to make it work it will have to be enforced.</p>
<p>4.3 The Old Cabra Road</p> <p>There is a proposal for a Bus Gate on this road. Whilst this would seem to be a positive idea, the consequences of it may be to create new issues on at least four narrow roads in our area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Blackhorse Avenue <li>● Baggot Road <li>● Nephin Road <li>● Skreen Road. <p>Motorists and other road users will use these roads to take short cuts (also known as “Rat Runs”) onto Blackhorse Avenue. This will result in congestion, danger to the young, the old, the disabled, pedestrians and cyclists and who must navigate narrow and busy road areas.</p>	<p>We propose that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● extra ramps should be installed on Blackhorse Avenue to mitigate and reduce the volume of traffic on this road. <li>● The Blackhorse Avenue Road is upgraded to make it fit for purpose for the commuter, the pedestrian, and the cyclist. The ramps should allow for cyclists to be able to ride across the ramp without having to reduce speed and to do this will mean having bollards to prevent motor vehicles moving into the cycle space area.

What the Core Bus Corridor Proposes	What the Core Bus Corridor can do better
<p>4.4 Castleknock Road</p> <p>The NTA does not propose any intervention on Castleknock Road leading from the Ashtown Roundabout to the Phoenix Park Gate. This section of Castleknock Road is unfit for purpose and dangerous for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pedestrians • parents and guardians with children • the old and the disabled • cyclists <p>Essentially the pedestrian path is too narrow to allow safe access for this cohort of residents.</p>	<p>The existing path should be reconstructed and widened, and it may be more effective and safer that the road should essentially become a one car lane direction road only.</p> <p>This is proper Planning and Development</p>
What the Core Bus Corridor Proposes	What the Core Bus Corridor can do better
<p>5.0 Our Environment</p> <p>5.1 Ashtown Roundabout</p> <p>When NRCC met with the NTA on several occasions some years ago, it was eventually agreed that the Ashtown Roundabout and the trees growing on it would be retained. This is a landmark feature.</p> <p>For our community, this roundabout has signified a positive and landscaped entry point to our local area, and it is also a positive signal point for traffic leaving the Navan Road towards Blanchardstown and the northern counties. Additionally, it provided an attractive signal to the entrance to Dublin City itself.</p>	<p>Unfortunately, and without any discussion with NRCC the eventual plans showed that the roundabout would be removed and with it the particularly fine stand of Pine trees.</p> <p>This roundabout planting should <u>not</u> be removed. It is an intrinsic element of the positive environment of our area.</p> <p>We do support the existing proposals to make this location a safe one with a traffic light system and that safeguards the pedestrian and cyclist.</p>
<p>5.2 Enhancing the Environment of our area</p> <p>The proposed works to create the new Core Bus Corridor and the enhanced cycle lanes are welcome.</p> <p>There are however, two potential negative outcomes arising from the Core Bus Corridor works.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There will be a reduction in tree numbers in many locations. However, this should not be inevitable. When there is a deficit of street trees caused by infrastructure works, the consequences of a loss of trees impacts on the health of the community as well as the environment of the area. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We want to work with the NTA to create a positive and “green opportunity” for the residents of the existing houses that face onto the Navan Road - and from the Ashtown Roundabout to the junction of the Old Cabra Road and the North Circular Road. This “Green Opportunity” is to have suitable trees planted in the front gardens of resident’s houses. This planting would have to be with the agreement of the residents. The planting should be smaller type trees, for example, Birch or small Maple trees. The trees would be planted in the

2. The works that will be necessary to undertake the construction of new cycle and pedestrian path infrastructure will, as outlined in the NTA proposed works, necessitate the undertaking of remedial work in front gardens. We understand that this work will necessitate the rebuilding of the boundary walls and railings.
3. There are proposals for tree planting in the NTA document. However, many of the proposed trees are not suitable for this environment. In addition, there are too many tree species proposed and, in many cases, the specified trees will be too large for such a narrow road corridor

gardens by the agents of the NTA and the maximum number of trees to be planted would be three for each garden and subject to the agreement of the householder. The maintenance of the trees would be undertaken in the first two years by the NTA agents and in the third year would then be the responsibility of the house owners.

2. There should also be opportunities to plant trees in Institutional properties.
3. Replacement boundary walls and road frontage shall be high quality materials and be to a design, specification and aesthetic appropriate to the period homes affected. There shall be Equity in the use of high-quality materials and treatment of replacement boundaries across all the areas affected by the Core Bus Corridor project.
4. In addition, the disturbed garden areas should be reinstated by a reputable landscape firm under the supervision of the NTA.