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BusConnects - Blanchardstown to City Centre Core Bus Corridor

Ref: 313961

AN BORD PLEANÁLA	
LDG- 056728-22	
ABP- 313892-22	
30 AUG 2022	
Fee: € 50	Type: copy
Time: 15:03	By: Loid

To whom it may concern,

I request the following comments to be included in the adjudication on the BusConnects Blanchardstown to City Centre Core Bus Corridor proposals referred to An Bord Pleanála (ABP).

The BusConnects project provides a real opportunity to improve our public transport service and provide viable alternatives to vehicular traffic by encouraging pedestrians, cycling and bus use. The project will also provide improvements to the public realm in the city and local areas.

While outside the remit of An Bord Pleanála (ABP), the singular most effective method of increasing bus usage is to provide free public transport. This would be a cost effective way of contributing to action on climate breakdown by encouraging people from their vehicles while also subsidising lower income groups who tend to use public transport.

Unfortunately, the BusConnects project will also direct extra traffic onto residential roads and impose travel restrictions on some local residents. With such serious affects, the process should have been completely open and transparent and subject to a full public consultation. This does not appear to have been the case. The National Transport Authority (NTA) referred the proposals to An Bord Pleanála (ABP) but the period for observations to ABP has been over the summer months which I believe limits the opportunity for residents to engage properly. Various changes have been introduced since the Final Preferred Route document was published in March 2022 and communities have not had an opportunity to discuss these particular changes or to clarify aspects of the proposals. There is also a €50 charge per submission which will discourage residents from engaging with the process.

Various resident groups organised well attended public meetings to inform local people about the project in the Dublin 7 area, clearly showing the current proposals are an issue which concern the local community. It should have been the state agencies involved who organised such meetings rather than abdicating their responsibility to voluntary community groups.

Councillors have also been ignored during the current phase and no update has been provided to Dublin City Council's Traffic Strategic Policy Committee. No communication has taken place with the local councillors in Dublin 7 on the latest proposals prior to the referral to ABP. I asked the NTA to facilitate a

meeting with myself as an elected representative of the local area without success. I also asked the chair of the Traffic SPC to request a meeting with (NTA) on my behalf to discuss the proposals and how they will affect the residents of Dublin 7, again without success.

Concerns have also been raised about the traffic modelling used by the project. Public consultation would have provided an opportunity for those concerns to be addressed. The accuracy of the modelling will be pivotal to the success of this project and we must be absolutely confident that method used is trustworthy.

Please note the following comments on some of the general aspects of the current proposals

The proposal to remove the roundabout at The Halfway House Pub will encourage speeding traffic. As has been argued previously, the roundabout is an important visual sign for motorists that they were entering a built-up residential area and should travel carefully.

The insistence on channelling large amounts of traffic along the New Cabra Road is unsustainable. The New Cabra Road currently experiences traffic volume issues and to add significantly more traffic will simply exacerbate an already problematic situation. The proposals will also force extra traffic onto Fassaugh Avenue, Fassaugh Road and Connaught Street.

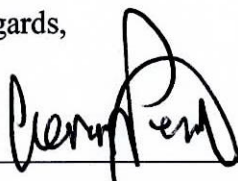
Phibsboro is an acknowledged traffic bottleneck and suffers severe congestion during the day. Directing additional traffic into Phibsboro is also unsustainable.

The importance of trees to mitigate against noise and pollution has been universally recognised. I note the removal of a significant number of trees as part of the current proposals. The NTA have committed to replacing the lost trees where possible. I feel it is important that ABP include a condition instructing the NTA to replace the maximum number of trees with suitable semi mature trees where possible.

I believe the lack of public consultation is the cause of serious concern and I ask that ABP include a condition that such consultation must take place before the process can continue.

I also wish to request an Oral Hearing as a limited opportunity to allow residents to raise their concerns and clarify some of the proposals.

Regards,



Cllr Cieran Perry

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