

DRAFT MetroLink Submission:

The purpose of this submission is to outline the impact that plans for MetroLink, as they are currently constituted, will have on my constituency of Dublin North-West. There are a number of technical issues that I wish to draw attention to as part of the consultation process and I have addressed these on a location by location basis. The central objection that I wish to raise however, concerns the proposed station and tunnel boring site at Griffith Park West, the overwhelmingly negative impact that the plans, as currently constituted would have on the area.

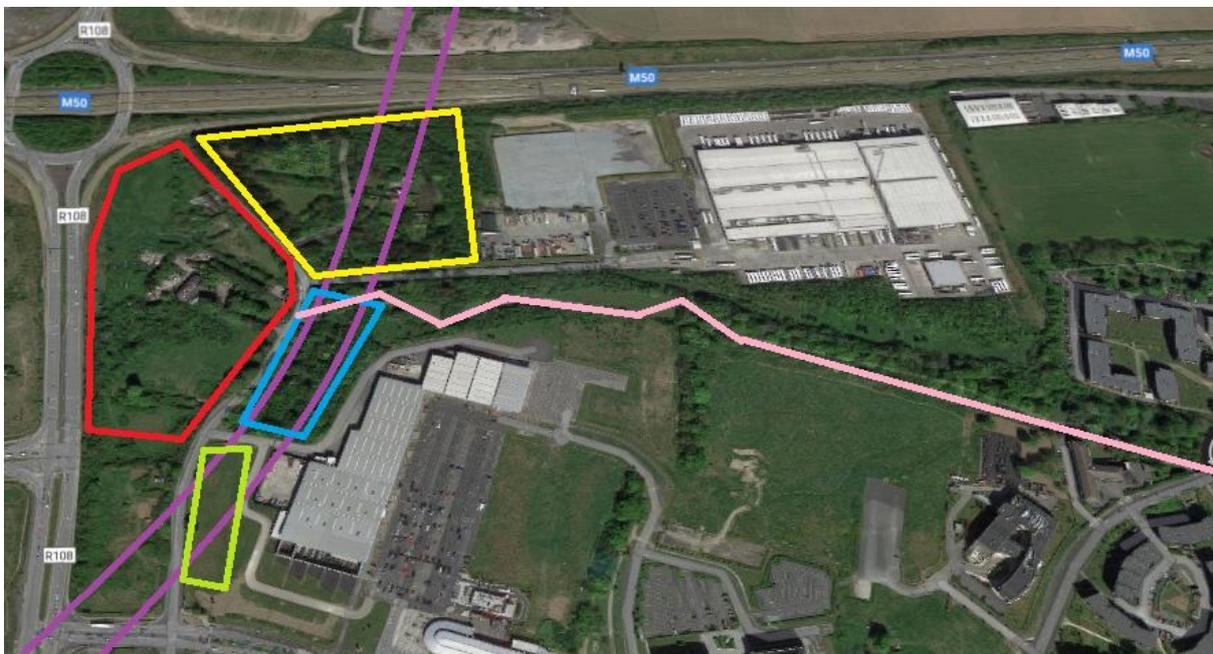
From the outset. I must state that I am strongly in favour of the MetroLink project. The North-West of Dublin has, for many years, been overlooked in the allocation of public transport resources. There have been a number of very disappointing false dawns relating to the metro in the past and it is understandable that people in the area are sceptical that the project will be delivered. It is therefore essential that TII and the NTA work closely with the community to build a level of trust to ensure local 'buy in'. The actions of TII, the NTA so far with regard to local concerns have not inspired confidence in this regard.

The 'B' section of the MetroLink routing options run through the eastern side of the constituency and, having examined the alignment options, I am satisfied that the selected route, B12 is the most appropriate from a connectivity and passenger catchment perspective. In this respect, this submission will focus primarily on technical aspects of route B12 on a north-south station-by-station basis.

1: Northwood Station

The proposal to have tracks, marked in purple, resurface south of the airport and cross the M50 into an at-grade station in Northwood that have appeared in some MetroLink literature should be immediately discounted. As per the below map, the elevated tracks would cut through a private residential property that is outlined in yellow and bounded by the M50, Charter School Hill Lane and the access road to the Tesco Distribution facility. In addition, the area marked in red is of historical significance, containing the ruins of a charter school on the site. Overground works may serve to damage this historical amenity. Finally, consideration should be given to moving the proposed station slightly south, to the area marked in green. The current proposal calls for the felling of mature woodland to create space for the station area marked in blue. As an area with very limited native woodland and forming part of a local walking trail, marked in pink, it would be very disappointing to lose this local amenity.

Figure 1: Northwood Station Map



2: Ballymun Station:

With respect to the location of the Ballymun station, consideration should be given to the relocation of the planned station further west onto the former shopping centre site. As per the below map, the site marked in red is the former Ballymun Shopping Centre, the current proposed location for the station is in blue and the suggested location is in green. This centre has recently been fully vacated and the structure is planned for demolition in the near future. The site is in full ownership of Dublin City Council and it is expected that the lands will be sold for mixed used development. It would be sensible that any future development of this site should fully integrate the metro station into the commercial portion of the site as is the norm in many other European countries. This would, in addition to creating an 'added value' to any future development, would remove the station from the median strip of the Ballymun Road. The current proposal for access to the station be in the median strip of the road has the potential to not only create access issues, as people cross to exit and enter, but will also negatively affect traffic flow on a high volume arterial route in and out of the city. Alternatively, if it is not feasible to alter the routing of the tunnels in this manner, I would suggest that the entrances to the station be confined to the western side of Ballymun Main Street in the future commercial development, and directly on the Cearnóg an tSeachtar Laoch (in orange) to the east of the carriageway.

Figure 2: Ballymun Station Map



3: Albert College Station:

The proposal for a station immediately to the west of Our Lady of Victories Church (marked in blue on the attached map) must ensure that there is effective traffic management in place to ensure unimpeded egress and entrance from this estate onto the Ballymun Road via Albert College Court and Albert College Avenue (marked in red). In addition, as per the attached map there is directly south of the Our Lady of Victories Church, older persons accommodation owned by Dublin City Council. This is marked in green. Given the status of the residents of this development, I would assume that shielding barriers would be installed to protect individuals from dust and noise associated with the works for the duration.

Figure 3: Albert College Station Map



4: Griffith Park West Station:

As the plans currently stand, there is provision for a tunnel boring launch site and metro station at Griffith Park West, St. Mobhi Road Glasnevin.

As per the attached map, the site is home to the Na Fianna GAA club (1), Home Farm FC (4), along with Scoil Mobhí Primary School (3), Scoil Chaitríona Secondary School (2) and is adjacent to the Whitehall College of Further Education (5). As you can see from the map, this is a very compact site which hosts a multitude of sporting, educational and community facilities. The Na Fianna Clubhouse is used extensively for community purposes, including the Tír na nÓg crèche, music classes, dancing classes and a host of other activities. The idea that this site simply encompasses playing pitches is simply untrue and I believe that the visit by representatives for the NTA and TII to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Transport Tourism and Sport underscored this point emphatically.

I believe it to be incomprehensible that neither the NTA nor TII thought it necessary to engage in meaningful pre-consultation with any of the aforementioned organisations before the plans for MetroLink were publically announced. The neglect to inform those affected will mean that the agencies that are responsible for the delivery of MetroLink, will find it extremely difficult to build trust in the community as the project progresses. As I have mentioned previously, the importance of local buy-in to the project is critical and the actions of TII and the NTA with regard to these organisations have undermined this much needed trust.

The prospect of the Na Fianna GAA Club, and Home Farm FC losing control of their playing pitches during the construction of MetroLink is simply not viable or realistic. Na Fianna, in particular is at the heart of the community in this part of Dublin. The club has many very active members, hundreds of parents and children use the club on a weekly basis, it is an intrinsic part of family life for many and an important component of the social fabric of the Glasnevin, Drumcondra, Whitehall and Ballygall area. To uproot these clubs and deny them access to their facilities for six years will simply not be tolerated and the plans must be reconfigured to recognise this.

In addition to the impacts on the sporting clubs, the impact that the launch site would have on the schools and also the college further undermines the suitability of this location. The proximity of heavy boring and extraction machinery to the school sites presents major issues in terms of noise and dust pollution that fencing and screening cannot adequately address. Effective access to the schools for students and parents would also be next to impossible given the scale of the works proposed. Parents, who now actively encourage their children to walk and cycle to school alone, would be forced to resort to accompanying them on the trips to assist with the navigation of the vehicles extracting spoil, or be forced to drive themselves, further adding to the access issues for the site.

The disruption that the extensive and long term works would cause to the schools and clubs along with the access issues to what is a highly populated residential area is unconscionable. While I understand the selection of the B12 route from a connectivity and logistical standpoint, it should not be beyond the capability of the NTA and the TII to find an alternative solution to the current proposals for this site. It is however, very disappointing that TII were unable to provide the requested technical details of the TBM launch site at this location in advance of the deadline for submissions on May 11th 2018.

Figure 4: Griffith Park West Station Map

