

To whom it may concern;

I am writing as an elected representative for the North Inner City within the constituency of Dublin Central in support of the MetroLink project.

At the outset, I want to state my support for the delivery of a Metro transport infrastructure and endorse the recommendation taken by the National Transport Authority in 2014 that the construction of a Metro system occur to help ease the transportation needs of Dubliners now and into the future.

Notwithstanding this support, I believe the public consultation process that has taken place over the past six to seven weeks as being poor. The National Transport Authority, in my view, must take ownership of the consultation and communication element of this project from now until the completion of MetroLink, pending a successful Railway Order planning application. Too many residents, businesses and organisations have raised with me their criticisms of how the consultation process has been run.

With regards to the Emerging Preferred Route published by the National Transport Authority and Transport Infrastructure Ireland at the end of March, I think many of the mistakes made with the 'Metro North' proposal more than a decade ago have not been repeated here. Like the points made by the Griffith Avenue & District Residents Association in their submission, I believe the planned use of roads to tunnel under as being a very positive step meaning that the number of homes that the tunnel or tunnels will run under is greatly reduced. I am conscious, however, of the households in the Goldsmith Street area of Phibsborough where tunnelling is proposed under the Emerging Preferred Route that these works are located at an appropriate depth so as to minimise the potential impact on homes and business, during both the construction and operational phases of the project. I am also of the view that there should not be any significant realignment of the Emerging Preferred Route that would see substantially more homes under which tunnelling would occur. In the event that such a situation should arise, the National Transport Authority and Transport Infrastructure Ireland would commit to holding a further substantial and meaningful period of public consultation to enable any affected communities to be consulted but to offer their feedback and opinions.

In terms of the tunnelling requirements and the experience of other projects across the world, especially those undertaken in recent years, can one tunnel be used to locate both metro lines rather than two tunnels being dug in parallel to each other? My distinct preference would be, if it is feasible, that only one tunnel be dug to accommodate metro trains travelling in both directions. I feel that if this is an issue that can be made early and quickly, that the National Transport Authority and Transport Infrastructure Ireland make such a decision early and communicate that decision to communities living along the route as quickly as possible. I say that on the basis that one tunnel rather than two will have significantly less potential impact on the homes, businesses and facilities of communities living along the proposed 26km route.

I think it is necessary for the National Transport Authority and Transport Infrastructure

Ireland to think again about the location of the Tunnel Boring Machines being launched from the main pitches of Na Fianna CLG on St. Mobhi Road. The potential impact on the club is immense but also given the proximity of both Scoil Mobhi and Scoil Chattriona to the location of the proposed launch site as outlined in the Emerging Preferred Route. There are substantial grounds upon which the implication of this decision would have on both schools. Health and safety is an obvious one, but the impact and ability of teachers to educate young children in an environment that would have significant excavation, movement of heavy vehicles would be large. Indeed, if the Emerging Preferred Route was to be the basis of a Railway Order planning application coupled with the potential construction time period, future enrolment in both schools would be affected and possibly the continued viability of both would be brought into question. Therefore, I believe the National Transport Authority and Transport Infrastructure Ireland, upon the completion of this period of public consultation, make the examination and resolution of this issue among its immediate priorities and to communicate the proposed resolution prior to the end of the current academic year at the end of June.

I welcome the approach of the National Transport Authority and Transport Infrastructure Ireland to link proposed stops along the Emerging Preferred Route that will see linking up occur with other transport infrastructure. I am conscious, however, that the proposed Glasnevin station is located next to the Royal Canal. I would request that the advancement of this project is not used by the National Transport Authority, in any way, to delay or impede the construction of the Royal Canal Greenway between Guild Street in Dublin 1 and Ashtown in Dublin 15.

Throughout the period of public consultation, I have met with householders whose homes may potentially be the subject of a Compulsory Purchase Order. I genuinely feel for them as they bought a home some years ago with a view to it being their forever home. Somewhere to grow old with their husband or wife or partner or other family members. With the Emerging Preferred Route, this intent or hope has been thrown into doubt. I firmly believe that every step possible must be taken to provide clarity and certainty to those affected by the possibility of a Compulsory Purchase Order on their homes with regards if this will happen, when it may take place, how and what process will be used to advance the Compulsory Purchase Order and that a fair and equitable deal will be reached and that this a firm objective should the situation arise.

In terms of possible stops within the North Inner City area that I am proud to represent and across the wider Dublin Central constituency which I am a representative, I believe the districts in which stops are provided in the Emerging Preferred Route are appropriate. I do not believe that it would be a correct decision for the National Transport Authority and Transport Infrastructure Ireland to make if a particular district was not served by a Metro stop. While I am enamoured by the further impact on O'Connell Street with more construction work potentially, I recognise that some disruption and works are necessary in order to develop and create the type of major and essential transport infrastructure the communities of Dublin need now and into the future.

If there is one lesson, I think the National Transport Authority and Transport Infrastructure

Ireland could take from the recent engagement of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Transport, Tourism and Sport would be to treat all stakeholders equally. Some established community groups and residents associations in the Ballymun, Cabra / Finglas and North Inner City Electoral Areas were not afforded the opportunity to make presentations or offer observations on the impact of this proposal. I believe that all groups, be they residential, sporting, cultural or commercial, that they be afforded the same opportunity with further consultation and engagement in advance of a formal Railway Order Planning Application being lodged with An Bord Pleanala.

There are countless more issues that I could discuss or offer observations on but I appreciate that I will have an opportunity to do that as we advance along this process to the lodging of a formal Railway Order Planning Application some time in 2019. However, in conclusion, I do want to reiterate some points:

- € € € € An alternative location for the launch of the Tunnel Boring Machines at the Griffith Park stop be found.
 - That a resolution of this matter be communicated publicly as quickly as possible following the conclusion of this period of public consultation.
- € € € € A decision be taken as quickly as is feasible with regards to whether one or two tunnels are necessary and that this be communicated publicly at an early time.
- € € € € That the alignment of the Emerging Preferred Route be maintained as far as is possible, notwithstanding the observations outlined above relating to the Griffith Park stop and the proposed launch site for the Tunnel Boring Machines.
- € € € € That as few homes as possible will see tunnelling occurring underneath them.

Finally, given the level of interest and concern from the communities located along the Emerging Preferred Route, and the time and expertise requirements that will be placed upon local Resident Associations, I believe it appropriate for the National Transport Authority and Transport Infrastructure Ireland to appoint an Independent Expert of suitable standing to advise and support residents and communities living along the Emerging Preferred Route. Within that context, the National Transport Authority and Transport Infrastructure Ireland should consider the preparation Draft Residents Charter that would be submitted as part of a formal Railway Order Planning Application for the consideration of An Bord Pleanala to provide protection for individual householders and communities living in the vicinity and along the proposed Emerging Preferred Route of MetroLink.

I wish those involved in the consideration of the submissions received on the Emerging Preferred Route well and look forward to the early resolution of some issues that have been during this consultation process and to full report in due course.

Kind Regards,

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