



LUAS FINGLAS

EMERGING PREFERRED ROUTE

SUBMISSION
September 2020

**DUBLIN
COMMUTER
COALITION**

Advocating for commuters,
cyclists and pedestrians in Dublin

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INTRODUCTION

Who we are

Dublin Commuter Coalition was established in 2018 as a voluntary advocacy group for public transport users, cyclists and pedestrians in Dublin and surrounding counties. The Coalition acts as a unifying voice for commuters in these areas so that they may express their concerns, their hopes and their vision of a Dublin that works for all users of sustainable transport.

Summary

Dublin Commuter Coalition welcomes the plan to extend the Luas Green Line to Finglas. This extension is a key element of the Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2016-2035. It would provide a vital high capacity light rail service to the growing suburb of Finglas while opening up an entirely new transport corridor from Charlestown to Broombridge and the City Centre. However, we strongly support extending the route further to Northwood.

We welcome the provision of a parallel walking and cycling route along large parts of this route. This is a very positive step for transport planning in Dublin but we believe that significant design changes are required to make it safe, continuous and accessible to everyone.

THE ROUTE AND ACCESS TO STOPS

Terminus

We believe that the proposed terminus at Charlestown falls short of the true potential of the line. Extending the line further north east to interchange with MetroLink at Northwood would provide a world-class rail network for the Finglas, Cabra, Glasnevin, Ballymun and Santry area. It would enable seamless journeys from Swords to Finglas as well as from the City Centre to IKEA. It would also give residents around Charlestown an alternative option of taking MetroLink to the City Centre.



Figure 1: Indicative route highlighting the potential for interconnection at Northwood

In the event that the route does terminate at Charlestown, it's crucial that a corridor between Charlestown and Northwood is identified and protected for a future extension. The lands between Hampton Wood and Northwood still contain a range of vacant or underutilised sites, however this is unlikely to be the case for much longer after MetroLink is delivered.

Location of the Charlestown stop

The proposed Charlestown stop is on the opposite side of a busy junction for residents of Melville, Lanesborough and Charlestown who would make up the majority of users of this stop. It would seem that relocating the stop to be north of this junction would eliminate the need for a crossing for these people.

Frequency

While we recognise that the proposed frequencies and journey times are preliminary, the proposed frequency of 8 trams per hour per direction would be the lowest of any terminus on the Luas system. It has not been made clear if this is an operational choice or a design limit. Public transport

users in the Charlestown area would be accustomed to frequencies as high as 27 buses per hour (E2, F1, F2, F3 and 7) into the City Centre at peak times under the proposed BusConnects network. While they would benefit from the additional capacity of Luas, if the proposed Luas frequency is any lower at off-peak times then they would lose some of the freedom offered by the proposed high frequency BusConnects network.

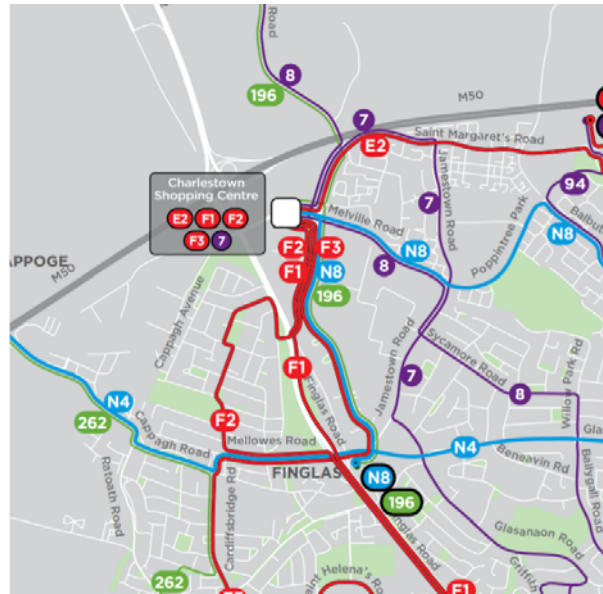


Figure 2: Proposed BusConnects network in the Charlestown area

Links to Finglas village

The proposed Finglas Village stop has a very large catchment area stretching from Finglas East to Finglas West and Finglas South. To enable passengers to walk from this stop to the village centre and nearby areas, it is imperative that safe walking routes are provided. This would require modifications to footpaths and junctions in Finglas village such as:

Pedestrian crossings must be provided across the busy junctions on Seamus Ennis Road with Jamestown Road and Main Street. Due to a lack of safe crossing point across Jamestown Road, a journey from Jamestown Social to the proposed Luas stop 400m away would involve nine pedestrian crossings (six signalised and three non-signalised). This 400m journey could easily take ten minutes. This poor existing standard of connectivity would negatively impact access from Finglas village and Ballygall Road to the Finglas Village stop. Furthermore, the northern end of the five-arm junction also needs to be completely redesigned to make it safe for vulnerable users.

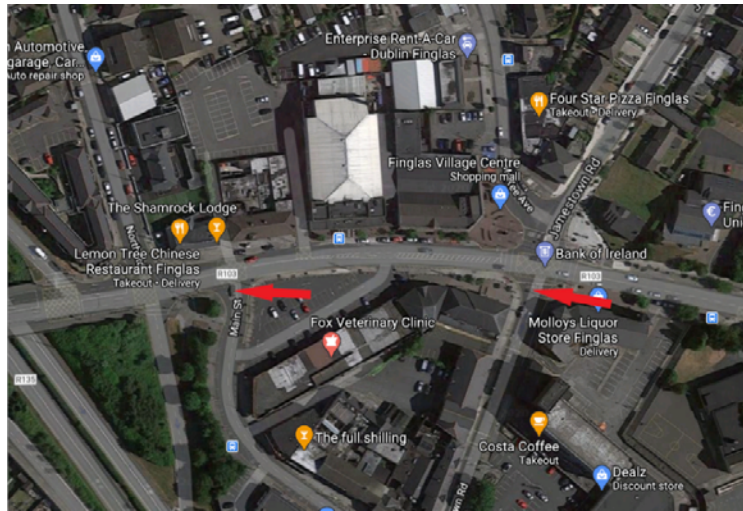


Figure 3: Locations of pedestrian crossings in Finglas village which would improve connectivity to the proposed Luas stop

North Road is a quiet cul-de-sac with very little traffic. However, crossing North Road as a pedestrian requires three crossings – one signalised pedestrian crossing and two non-signalised slipways. These slipways pose a danger to pedestrians and are entirely unsuitable for a quiet road with no through traffic. This junction must be redesigned to include a single pedestrian crossing across North Road.



Figure 4: Unnecessary and dangerous three stage crossing of a cul de sac (North Road)

Continuous footpaths must be provided across minor roads and car park entrances as is proposed for the Clontarf to City Centre scheme. This would provide priority for pedestrians across these junctions and help to slow traffic.



Figure 5: Example of a continuous footpath in the Clontarf to City Centre scheme

Permeability of Jamestown Business park

The business parks to the east of and south east of the Charlestown stop is an employment hub in the area that would generate a large number of trips. However, these business parks are fragmented and extremely impermeable. For the Charlestown stop to be of any use for travelling to these business parks, the permeability through them and the pedestrian facilities in them would have to be vastly improved. This would also bring residential areas on Jamestown Road within 10-15 minutes of the Charlestown and Mellows Park stops.

Junction design

Throughout this EPR, the design of junctions has fallen short of safe design practices for pedestrians and cyclists.

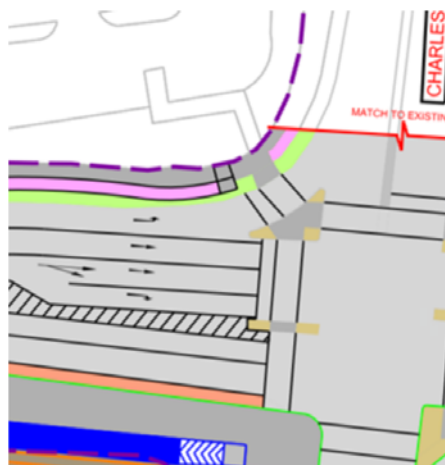


Figure 6: Slipways and pedestrian islands at the Charlestown junction

The EPR proposes retaining slipways and multistage crossings at the junction outside Charlestown Shopping Centre. This car-centric design is

unsuitable given the large number of pedestrians that will travel between the Luas stop and the shopping centre. It's also unsuitable for the hundreds of pedestrians that will cross between the park & ride and the Luas stop at peak times. The pedestrian islands and waiting areas are not safe to handle the surge of pedestrians. This junction must be redesigned for people, not cars.

The redesign of the Finglas Road and St. Margaret's Road roundabout presents an excellent opportunity to finally make this junction safe for pedestrians and cyclists. However, the proposed design is overbearing and hostile for vulnerable road users. It feels like a missed opportunity that emphasises traffic flow over access to the Luas stop itself. At the very least, one of the northbound lanes on the Finglas Road should be removed to tie in with the BusConnects preferred route for the Finglas Road which proposes one bus lane and one general traffic lane only.



Figure 7: BusConnects preferred route drawing of the Finglas Road junction

We strongly urge TII to consult with the NTA design teams that are currently working on junction designs for BusConnects Core Bus Corridors. Below is an example of a protected junction from BusConnects Core Bus Corridors.

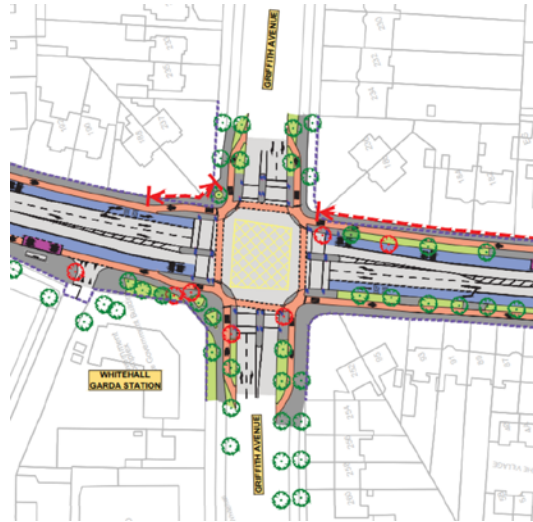


Figure 7: BusConnects preferred route drawing of the Finglas Road junction

Shared space

The walking and cycling route – particularly between Tolka Valley Road and Finglas Road – often has shared spaces that result in unnecessary conflict between pedestrians and cyclists. We would welcome placing the walking and cycling routes on different sides of the Luas tracks if possible, to minimise conflicts at stops and road crossings.



Figure 7: BusConnects preferred route drawing of the Finglas Road junction

Coherence and connectivity

A coherent and continuous route is necessary to ensure that is accessible to people of all ages and abilities. The walking and cycling route proposed in the EPR has major gaps at a number of locations where walking and cycling provision either disappears or is sub-standard.

For example, a parallel cycling route should be provided between Broombridge and Tolka Valley Road. There is ample space within the industrial estate to provide this. At Patrickswell Place, the cycling route suddenly changes to unsegregated on-road cycle lanes. Given the low

number of entrances onto the road, this section would be greatly improved by continuing the two-way cycle tracks.

The NTA's Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan outlines proposed and existing cycle routes and greenways in the Greater Dublin Area. By ensuring the proposed route connects with the local cycle network as well as the Tolka Valley and Royal Canal Greenways, a safe and continuous network can be delivered in Broombridge and Finglas.

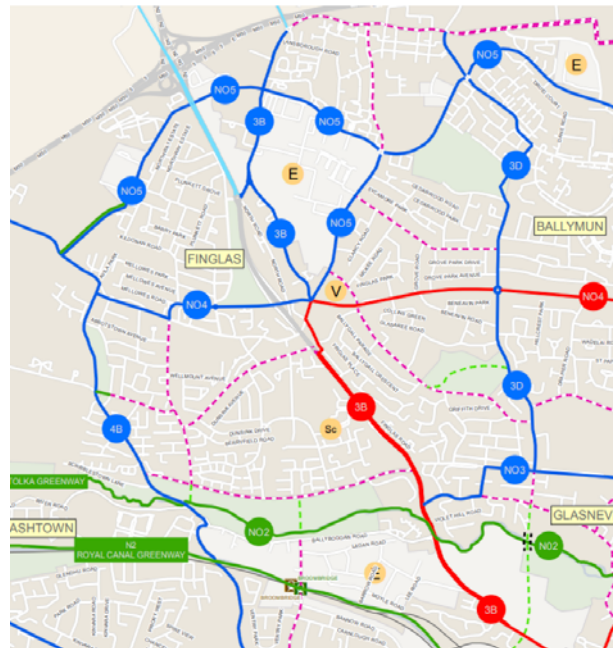


Figure 7: BusConnects preferred route drawing of the Finglas Road junction

Parking

The convenience of access to Lanesborough Park compared to the park & ride for motorists travelling south on St. Margaret's Road – especially at peak times – poses a risk of Lanesborough Park and nearby residential areas being used for commuter parking. This area already suffers from illegal parking by motorists visiting Charlestown Shopping Centre despite free parking being provided beneath the shopping centre and the very same surface car park that is proposed to be used as the park & ride for this project.

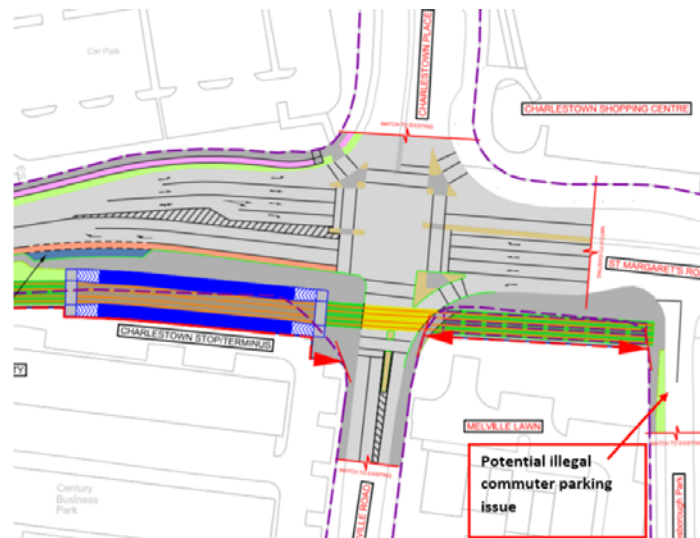


Figure 7: BusConnects preferred route drawing of the Finglas Road junction

Without appropriate measures, this may aggravate the issue. Filtered permeability at the junction with St. Margaret's Road and Lanesborough Park is a potential solution. It's already not possible for vehicles to turn right from Lanesborough Park onto St. Margaret's Road or right from St. Margaret's Road onto Lanesborough Park. This may require consultation with residents to arrive at a workable solution.



CONCLUSION

We completely welcome this much needed and long-awaited project but it could be greatly improved by extending it further to Northwood. We also welcome the decision to provide walking and cycling routes alongside this project and we believe that, with the right design, it could be transformative for the area.

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