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Harry Reynolds Road Cycle & Pedestrian Route, Balbriggan, County Dublin

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1.0 Introduction

Dublin Cycling Campaign (DCC) is the lead member of of Cyclist.ie - the Irish Cycling Advocacy Network and has been campaigning since 1993 for improved provision for people who cycle and would like to cycle throughout Dublin City and County - <https://www.dublincycling.com/>. Cyclist.ie is the federation of cycling advocacy groups, greenway groups, and bike festivals on the island of Ireland - <http://cyclist.ie/>. Cyclist.ie is the Irish member of the European Cyclists' Federation - <https://ecf.com/>. The common vision of DCC, Cyclist.ie and ECF is that cycling becomes a normal part of transport and everyday life for all ages and abilities.

We commend Fingal CC for the overall clarity of the display of the proposals digitally. It is though, disappointing that there are no location specific photo-montages provided as part of the main suite of drawings as part of this consultation, which would aid the general reader. The designed cross sections might give a rough idea of what is proposed, but these need to be amplified by realistic scaled cross sections and photo

montages. This particularly applies to the roundabout and junction proposals and those close to the different parks.

Cyclist.ie is strongly supportive of the overall aim of the route proposal - i.e. to improve the quality of the cycling environment linking a number of educational and community facilities, and commend Fingal County Council for this and for much of the design. However, we think that there are important elements of the design which significantly lower the overall quality of the proposed facility. In particular, there are design elements which give rise to an inconsistent design of the facility and difficulties in regard to how people on bikes will interact with pedestrians especially at crossing points.

2.0 General Comments

2.1 Speed Limits

We note that the proposed route will link various community facilities, and we suggest to Fingal CC that with this new progressive design and carriageway narrowing, the speed limits along and close to these routes need to be reviewed, in particular the 60kph limit on the section of road between the R132/Dublin St roundabout and the Castlelands roundabout. Due to the density of housing estates that the route passes through, strong consideration should be made of introducing a 30kph speed limit on certain sections.

2.2 Shared Space Design

The proposed designs incorporate significant levels of shared space (pedestrians and cyclists) design at a variety of locations and especially at junctions. This is not acceptable in the context of this urban scheme. The National Cycle Manual (cyclemanual.ie) is quite clear on the use of shared space and states as follows in Section 1.9.3:

‘Shared facilities are disliked by both pedestrians and cyclists and result in reduced Quality of Service for both modes. With the exception of purpose-designed shared streets, shared facilities should be avoided in urban areas as far as possible.’

We urge the designers to revisit all of the areas in which shared spaces are currently proposed and either (i) justify the choice of using shared design (against the Cycle Manual guidance) or (ii) raise the quality of the design to meet the standards required.

Additionally, there are particular problems with cycle-tracks leading directly to crossing points at which pedestrians (and cyclists) will be waiting. See for example the location of the new toucan crossing on Drawing #105.

2.3 Roundabouts

Dublin Cycling Campaign does not consider roundabouts in general to be conducive to supporting increased cycling use. Cyclists do not like them as they tend to divert cyclists away from the main traffic flow, and in the case of the designs on this project, diverting them through a slow crossing processes for each arm of the junction while mixing with pedestrians - and, in particular, when making a right turn.

We urge the consideration of replacing the existing roundabouts with standard junctions, where motor vehicles must stop and give way, and cyclists and pedestrians can be given easier priority movements. In particular the Castlelands roundabout, which is not technically part of this scheme, but is close to a number of schools and colleges, and was designed to encourage fast motor entry, should be included, and redesigned.

2.4 Bus Stops

We are unclear as to the frequency of buses along this proposed route but, where possible and where sufficient space is available, bus stops should be designed in line with best practice 'Island Bus Stop Design' to reduce conflict between pedestrians/bus users and cyclists. There are too many cases in which off-road cycle tracks will lead cyclists directly towards the places in which bus users will be waiting for the buses.

2.5 Zebra Crossings

We are delighted to see the proposals include a number of zebra crossings, at various locations, which will give priority to pedestrians over motor traffic. The use of zebra crossings was discontinued in many areas over recent years, but potentially have a very important role in improving the safety of vulnerable road users, and in reversing the priority given to motor traffic over pedestrians.

We would hope that these zebra crossings will also be legally accessible for use by cyclists?

2.6 Carriageway Widths

We note the variety of main carriageway widths proposed for this scheme, many of them reduced from existing widths. Where possible, we suggest that Fingal CC consider a standard carriageway width of 6.0 metres, particularly on this proposed scheme which runs through and close by a number of high density housing estates. Reducing the carriageway widths will enable greater space to be given to the proposed improvements in walking and cycling facilities.

2.7 Flashing Amber Priority

We note the proposal for flashing amber priority for cyclists at the Chapel St/Harry St and are delighted to see this option, but would request specific information on how it is proposed to operate?

2.8 Raised Tables

We are delighted to see the widespread use of raised tables at many of the junctions, which helps to regulate and slow traffic, and provide greater safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

3.0 Specific Location Related Points

3.1 Hampton Woods Junction (Drawing #103)

The discontinuation of the 2 way cycle facility across the Hampton Woods Junction is not acceptable. The route should be clearly marked through this minor junction.

3.2 Harry Reynolds/Drogheda St Junction (Drawing #104)

While the proposals shown are an improvement at this junction, they are not of the required standard and make it extremely difficult for cyclists to negotiate any form of right turn or awkward movement. We are unhappy with the level of shared space at this junction. As shown, this will lead to too many conflicts with pedestrians. The designs here need a complete rethink.

Additionally, we are disappointed that some of the proposals shown on the drawing are unclear and are not shown on the legend, making it difficult to fully understand what it proposed.

We suggest the consideration of a raised table at this junction, and also clear cycling and walking links to St Molaga's school to the east of Drogheda St.

3.3 Harry Reynolds Road and Chapel & Westbrook Housing Estates

We are disappointed that the opportunity to improve permeability between these housing estates and the Harry Reynold's Road, has not been availed of on this scheme. With the improvements proposed in the cycling and walking infrastructure, the potential to break through the forbidding walls into these estates to enable easier access on foot or by bicycle to the new infrastructure should be availed of.

3.4 Toucan Crossing Location close to Chapel Avenue exit

We generally welcome the increase in toucan crossings proposed, but question the decision on the proposed location of this toucan crossing close to Chapel Avenue.

3.5 Toucan Crossing at Cemetery

This toucan crossing could be better aligned with the existing access pathways

3.6 Dublin Street/R132 Junction (Drawing #109)

We are very unhappy with the overall redesign of this junction. The roundabout remains as a high speed motorised environment with two entry lanes on two of the arms, and with little or no deflection between all entry arms and the circulatory area - thus encouraging high speed entries onto the roundabout. Meanwhile cyclists and pedestrians are mixed in together and are required to take long detours around the roundabout. This junction is the weakest link in the whole scheme and needs to be revisited.

3.7 CastleLand Roundabout Area

There are a number of educational establishments in this area other than the Bracken Educate Together school, and it is not clear how pedestrians and cyclists are provided for fully in this proposed design here. This should be clarified.

We also suggest the inclusion of a further direct toucan crossing at the Bracken School entrance.

4.0 Summary

Dublin Cycling Campaign / Cyclist.ie is strongly supportive of the overall aim of the scheme of improving connectivity from community and educational facilities to residential areas with better active travel infrastructure.

However, as outlined above we are disappointed with certain aspects of the design and wish to see improvements in the proposed areas.

Overall, we do not think that the proposed design is meeting all of the five main requirements for cycling as per the NTA Cycle Manual:

- Road safety
- Coherence
- Directness
- Attractiveness
- Comfort

[\(https://www.cyclemanual.ie/manual/thebasics/fiveneeds/\)](https://www.cyclemanual.ie/manual/thebasics/fiveneeds/):

We hope that our comments above will be helpful in examining the issues along the proposed route and improving the overall design.

We would be happy to meet with the Council and designers at any stage to develop any of the points raised above.

Yours sincerely,

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