



Core Bus Corridor 5: Blanchardstown - Preliminary Submission

1.0 Introduction

Dublin Cycling Campaign is the advocacy group for cycling in Dublin. Dublin Cycling Campaign is the leading member of Cyclist.ie, the Irish Cycling Advocacy Network (ICAN), and wants to make Dublin a safe and friendly place for everyone of all ages to cycle.

We have mixed feelings on the proposed Blanchardstown to City Centre as it has the potential to deliver a high-quality cycle route in places but suffers from car-dominations in others. We understand that the NTA is currently at a preliminary concept design, this is reassuring as we have serious concerns about this route in areas. We look forward to future engagement with the NTA to solve the major issues with this route and to refine the details in later stages.

2.0 General Observations

2.1 There are good changes already

Though we are critical of parts of the concept design there are already huge improvements for pedestrians and cyclists within this concept design. These include:

- The removal of through traffic on the Old Cabra Road and Prussia Street
- Removal of the pedestrian and cyclist hostile Ashtown Roundabout
- The two-way cycle track along the Navan Road

3.0 Route Observations

3.1 Primary Cycle Route Width

This CBC will deliver Primary Routes 4B and 4D, Secondary Route 4A, and a short section of Primary Route 5 of the GDA Cycle Network Plan (CNP). The target quality of service for primary routes in CNP is A+/A. Below is an extract from section 2.3 of the Written Report of CNP, which outlines the desired width of primary cycle routes as 2.5m.

Basis for Target Quality of Service

ROUTE TYPE	PRIMARY / NATIONAL	PRIMARY	SECONDARY
Cycle Volume Existing (3 hour peak period)	n/a	200 -1000	100-500
Target QoS - Width Factor	A+ Two abreast + overtaking Width = 2.5m	A+/A Two abreast + overtaking Width = 2.5m	A/B Single file + overtaking Width = 1.75m
Target QoS - Other Factors	A	B	B

We recognise that achieving a 2.5m wide cycle track on all portions of this route may be challenging, however it is possible to achieve this width along large segments of the route.

3.2 Gaps in the corridor

It is unclear if there will be provision for cyclists between Snugborough Road and Auburn Avenue. The options report states that there should be segregated cyclist facilities through Blanchardstown Village, but no details are provided about exactly what these upgrades would look like.

Similarly in Stoneybatter, the options report recommends that the primary cycle route continue through Grangegorman campus and Grangegorman Lower, but there is no information about how this area would be designed. Indeed, the Grangegorman Development Agency says that there are no plans to build any sort of dedicated cycle route through the campus.

Finally, on map 3, outbound cyclists have no way of continuing along the corridor when the bidirectional cycle track terminates. It's also unclear how any pedestrian or cyclist is expected to navigate the roundabout that follows. Given the impermeability of these

roads and the high density of housing in the area, there should be a bidirectional cycle track on both sides of Blanchardstown Road South.

3.3 Loss of priority at junctions

At many junctions, cyclists lose all priority through the use of shared spaces, and even footpaths where cyclists have to dismount. The NTA's National Cycle Manual states that this loss of priority is "not appropriate for main cycle routes".

Where space is available (e.g. at the Halfway House Pub junction), these designs should be replaced with protected junctions similar those proposed for the North Strand/Fairview cycle routes. There is a good explanation of the principles of this design at www.protectedintersection.com.

Where space is more constrained, other measures like turning restrictions should be used to ensure cyclists have priority through the junction without compromising on cyclist safety. For example, at the junction between Navan Road and Nephin Road, the cycle tracks are only 1.5m wide, which makes cyclists highly vulnerable to being caught in a blind spot and left hooked. Banning turning movements here would facilitate improved priority for cyclists at this junction without having to worry about vulnerabilities like blind spots. For motor traffic, access to Nephin Road and the surrounding residential area could still be maintained from Blackhorse Avenue, Ratoath Road, and Faussagh Avenue, which are easily accessible from Navan Road.

3.4 Streaming lanes

There are two places along this corridor where streaming lanes are used against the recommendations of the National Cycle Manual.

At junction 2 of the N3, the following streaming lanes are being retained:

- Eastbound approach to the flyover (70m pocket turn, with two slip lanes inside)
- Eastbound side of the flyover (120m pocket turn, with a slip road inside)
- Westbound approach to the flyover (40m pocket turn, with a slip road inside)
- Northbound exit from Navan Road/Blanchardstown Town Centre (35m pocket turn, with a slip road inside)
- Other road (two 40m pocket turns, one of which has a slip road inside)

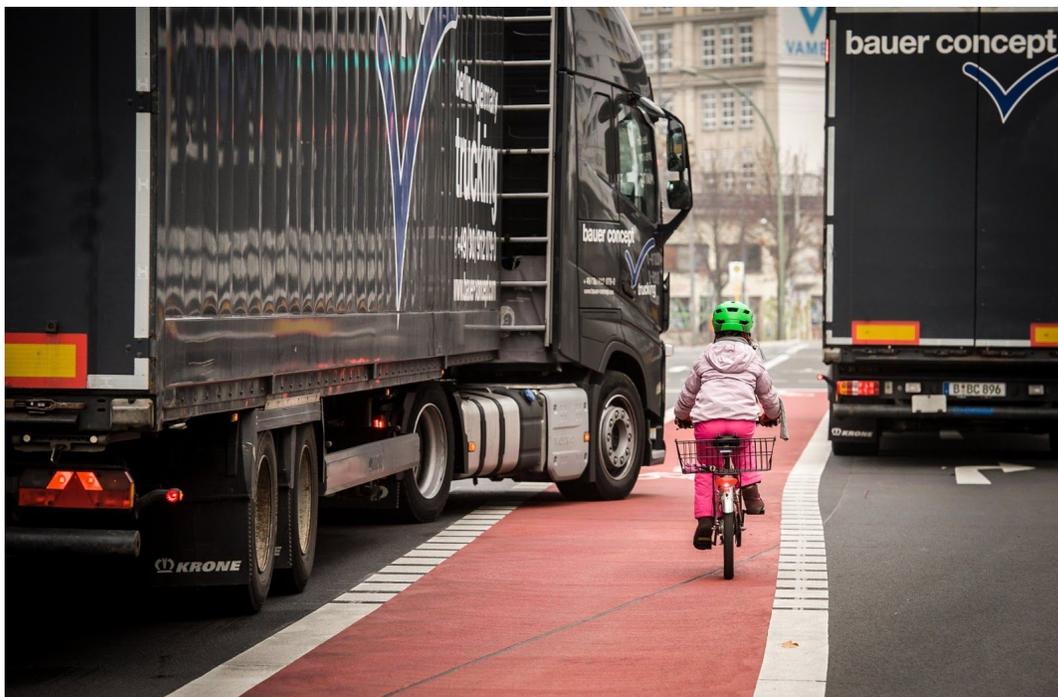
And on Manor Street northbound, a 190m orphaned cycle lane is also proposed.

In section 4.4.4, on junction approaches the manual states that:

- *Streaming cycle lanes can only be used in low traffic speed environments where there is minimal speed differential between cyclists and adjacent traffic*
- *Streaming is not suitable along HGV routes*
- *The permitted weaving area for traffic to cross the cycle lane must be clearly indicated and limited to no more than 10.0m long so as to reduce vehicular speed, and profiled line markings should be considered for the solid white line beyond the weaving area*
- *Streaming cycle lanes should only be used beside right or left hand pockets (i.e. distinct lanes dedicated to turning movements) and should not exceed 30.0m in length*

The proposed pocket turns are clearly not compliant with the manual, so these junctions must be reconsidered.

For a crossing like J2 on the N3 where traffic volumes and speeds are very high, full segregation is really the only solution which would deliver the safety and priority that cyclists need. If bidirectional tracks are used on Blanchardstown Road South, then this could be achieved more cost effectively.



A demonstration of this junction design from German cycling advocates

3.5 Minor junctions and side roads

Around Blanchardstown Town Centre, there are several car park entrances where cyclists are expected to yield to turning traffic. It is not reasonable for cyclists to yield to traffic turning into a car park/minor road.

Most of the other minor junctions do give cyclists priority, but without a buffer, cyclists are still vulnerable to blind spots and left hooks. This risk is especially pronounced where bidirectional cycle tracks are being proposed because some drivers will not anticipate cyclists coming from both directions. Continuous footpaths should be installed wherever possible to encourage caution from drivers.

At some junctions (e.g. Kempton Avenue), there is space to introduce a buffer for cyclists on the approach to the junction.

If there is insufficient space for such a buffer, other traffic calming/elimination measures should be considered. For example, Ashtown Grove and Skreen Road could be closed off from Navan Road, requiring motor traffic to access the residential areas from Kinvara Avenue and Nephin Road respectively. Measures like these have several benefits:

1. They eliminate potential rat running.
2. They reduce the number of junction conflicts for cyclists.
3. They free up space where floating bus stops can be installed.

3.6 Integration with the wider GDA Cycle Network Plan

This route intersects with a number of other cycle routes included in the GDA Cycle Network Plan. Where possible, the tail ends of cycle lanes of these routes should be constructed as part of the Core Bus Corridor. That will ensure that these junctions don't need to be re-designed when future cycle projects are progressed.

Routes that intersect are:

- At the Ashtown Roundabout, the Dunsink Observatory to the Phoenix Park cycle route, which is a secondary route in cycle network plan and an objective of the Ashtown-Pelletstown LAP
- The intersection of Navan Road, Old Cabra Road, Cabra Road and Rathoath Road is also the intersection of the primary route 4 and the secondary routes 4A, 4B and C8. C8 is an important route as it will connect to the planned Cabra

heavy rail station. 4B is an important link from the Pelletstown area towards the city.

- North Circular Road, Secondary Route NO1

3.7 Bus Stops

The frequency and locations of bus stops along this corridor needs to be reviewed to ensure they are appropriately spaced out, and located in places where bypasses for cyclists are possible. For example, between the Halfway House junction and Prussia Street, there is a stop every 250m, and none of these includes a cycling bypass.

Reducing the number of stops along this stretch would improve journey times for bus users and reduce the number of conflict points for cyclists.

We'd strongly encourage the design team to look into all possible options for including bus stop bypasses. For example on map 21 both bus stops could be relocated slightly to nearby green space in order to provide space for a bypass. The first iteration of the North Strand route had few bus stop bypassed, the final design has all bus stops bypassed.

3.9 Cycle track on Queen Street

The 2.5m bufferless bidirectional cycle track proposed for Queen Street is too narrow, particularly at junctions. An alternative option would be to reduce the traffic lanes to 2.8 or 3m each. Queen Street is a 30km/h road with no traffic calming. Reducing the traffic lane width would provide much needed traffic calming. The extra 50-90cm should be used to widen the cycle track and install a buffer.

3.10 Underutilised space on Blackhall Street

The decision to install a 4.8m wide lane on Blackhall Street makes very little sense. Just reducing this lane to 3m makes space for a parking protected, bidirectional cycle track.



3.11 Brunswick Street

We would like the design team to examine changes to Brunswick Street west of George's Lane that would discourage through-traffic as this will be the cycle link between Stoneybatter Village and the two-way cycle track on Queen Street. Through-traffic should be encouraged to use North King Street instead. Then Brunswick Street only needs to function for local access traffic only, which makes the street far safer for cyclists.

The installation of a continuous footpath at the junction of Stoneybatter and Brunswick Street would help discourage through-traffic. The design team should also consider installing a "no straight ahead except for access sign".

3.12 George's Lane should stay one-way and the pedestrian space retained

The southbound traffic lane on George's Lane does not serve any obvious function because traffic can just as easily access Queen Street from King Street North. Installing the southbound lane will necessitate the removal of most of the pedestrian space and cyclists will have to awkwardly cross George's Lane twice in the space of 60m. This is not a reasonable compromise for a lane that does not currently exist and is not necessary.

3.13 Right Turn From Grangegorman Lower

It is currently impossible for a driver exiting the southern end of Grangegorman Lower to make a right turn. It is not clear from the maps if this will be enabled by the new road layout. We'd encourage the design to re-configure the junction here to make it clear that drivers must take a left turn onto Brunswick Street.

3.14 New Rat Run at Cabra Drive

The new bus gate on Old Cabra Road is welcome as it will provide for bus priority and free up space for the two-way cycle track. However, this might encourage drivers from Navan Road heading for the quays to take Cabra Road, then through the residential Cabra Drive to Old Cabra Road. This would be a negative for the residents of Cabra Drive and it would undermine the bus priority on Old Cabra Road and Prussia Street.

3.15 Castleknock Manor

The Cycle Network Plan indicates that secondary route 4A should travel along Castleknock Manor instead of beside the Navan Road (map 14 and 15). This alternative would provide a more comfortable route for cyclists as they wouldn't be beside heavy traffic. It would also better align cyclists with the M50 underpass on Old Navan Road than the current route.

3.16 Outbound Cycle Track on Prussia Street

We'd encourage the design team to continue the outbound cycle track on Prussia Street all the way to the junction with North Circular Road. This would provide cyclists taking a left on North Circular a more direct route and reduce delays caused waiting at toucan crossings.

3.17 Set-down and Parking Map 24

We ask the design team to investigate running the cycle track on the inside of the parking and set-down area in front of Our Lady of Hope Church on map 24. This would remove the conflict between cyclists and vehicles using the set-down area. It would also enable the creation of a bus stop bypass at this location.

3.18 Cyclist Priority at Phoenix Park Avenue

An alternative arrangement for Phoenix Park Avenue on map 19 should be considered in order to provide better priority for cyclists on the Navan Road. Reducing delays increases the quality-of-service provided. Phoenix Park is a dul-de-sac for apartments. The number of turning movements is probably fairly low as a result. There is space for queueing cars on Phoenix Park Avenue and using the left pocket turn on Navan Road.

This could allow for the cycle and pedestrian lights across Phoenix Park Avenue to be green by default and only change to red when there are vehicles queueing. This would reduce delays for pedestrians and cyclists.

4.0 Conclusion

We trust that our observations will be taken into account as the design for this scheme progresses from a concept design to a preliminary design. We look forward to engaging with the NTA as the design progresses.

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