



Clonskeagh Road (UCD to Clonskeagh Bridge)

Context

DLR Cycle Advocacy Group is a branch of the Dublin Cycling Campaign, which is a registered charity that advocates for better cycling conditions in Dublin.

We have a vision of a Dublin where people of all ages and abilities feel safe to cycle as a mode of transport.

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown published a [Public Consultation report](#) and [Layout Plans](#) for the Clonskeagh Road (UCD to Clonskeagh Bridge) project in July 2020.

Summary

Dublin Cycling Campaign are supportive of projects where walking and cycling are placed at the top of the transport hierarchy. Unfortunately, we cannot support this project in its current format. We would ask that the Council and designers meet with us to go through the many flawed issues arising in the proposed design:

- 36% of the length of the cycling facilities in the plans are unsegregated. There is no treatment at junctions to make people cycling safer.
- Crossing of side roads for pedestrians is not improved or made safer at a number of junctions. Most of the side roads will still be over 6 m wide, with large corner radii. This is unsafe for people walking and cycling.
- Protecting people cycling at pinch points in particular, should be a given, but the proposed design at the Beech Hill Road makes people cycling vulnerable to encroaching drivers, particularly along this bus route.
- Cyclists will be expected to share space with bus passengers at some bus stops and will share space with buses at other bus stops. There is ample space to prevent this from happening if bus stops are relocated and converted into island bus stops that are safe for all users.
- The island bus stop in this scheme is not safe for cycling as the cycle lane width is too narrow and turns too sharp. There is space to improve the layout even if this means relocating the bus stop and/or rationalising the number of bus stops.

- The scheme makes no attempt to plan for traffic reduction. If the designers and planners of the scheme do not believe that traffic evaporation and modal shift can happen by reallocating road space, we need to fundamentally address why this scheme is being proposed in its current form.

Objectives of the scheme

Dublin Cycling Campaign advocates for better cycling facilities that will enable people of all ages and abilities to cycle. Currently, the people who cycle in Dublin are not representative of the general population. Cyclists tend to be adult, male and brave. This is a result of the relatively poor quality of cycling infrastructure, and no coherent cycle network in Dublin.

Unfortunately, the objectives of this scheme are not aligned with this vision. Improving facilities for existing cyclists is important, but there also needs to be a concerted effort to make cycling a viable option for the many people who do not currently feel safe cycling on Dublin roads.

Disappointingly, this lack of vision is borne out in the design. Junctions are still pretty much as dangerous and uninviting as they are at present, and the small amount of segregation offered by this scheme disappears at conflict points where it is needed the most. These changes will do nothing to make cycling safe or comfortable for less experienced or more vulnerable cyclists. Meanwhile, not a single inch of road space has been taken from motor traffic, and not a single right turn lane has been removed. It is clear that this scheme aims to improve the safety of people cycling and walking only insofar as it can be achieved without any inconvenience to drivers.

The designers of this layout were given the instruction to design for the objectives:

“The objective of the Project is to develop a high quality commuting and leisure cycle route along Clonskeagh Road”

“The specific objective of this proposed scheme will be to provide segregated cycle and pedestrian facilities where possible. The objective of the proposed scheme is to give existing cyclists a safer, more convenient route, while also encouraging a growth in the number of commuters ”

Positive aspects of layout

- The presence of the one island bus stop is welcome.

- Combining the straight ahead and left-turn lane going southbound at Clonskeagh bridge is positive as it would replace the existing dangerous combined left-turn lane and cycle lane.
- The proposed new pedestrian crossing on the southside of Clonskeagh Bridge is welcome.
- The segregation, where it exists, is welcome.

Improvements needed in layout

Overall points

At all stages where cycle segregation is lost, it is to facilitate the free movement of motor traffic. A continuous, uniform, segregated route is needed to achieve modal shift. This is not provided for here so this is a missed opportunity to add a high quality cycle facility to provide safety for users of all ages and abilities.

The “pinch-point” refers to the place where space for cars increases from 6.5m to 8.7m and the space for pedestrians and cyclists decreases from 8.5m to 6.1m. These facts alone are enough to warrant a full review of the proposed designs as unsuitable.

Footpath widths are being reduced in many places. This is not consistent with the objectives of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown or DMURS. Proximity and access to a high quality walking route (the Dodder Greenway) means these footpaths should be given higher priority than they currently are. The footpaths are also used for road signage aimed at car drivers, and other street furniture, further limiting the effective footpath width.

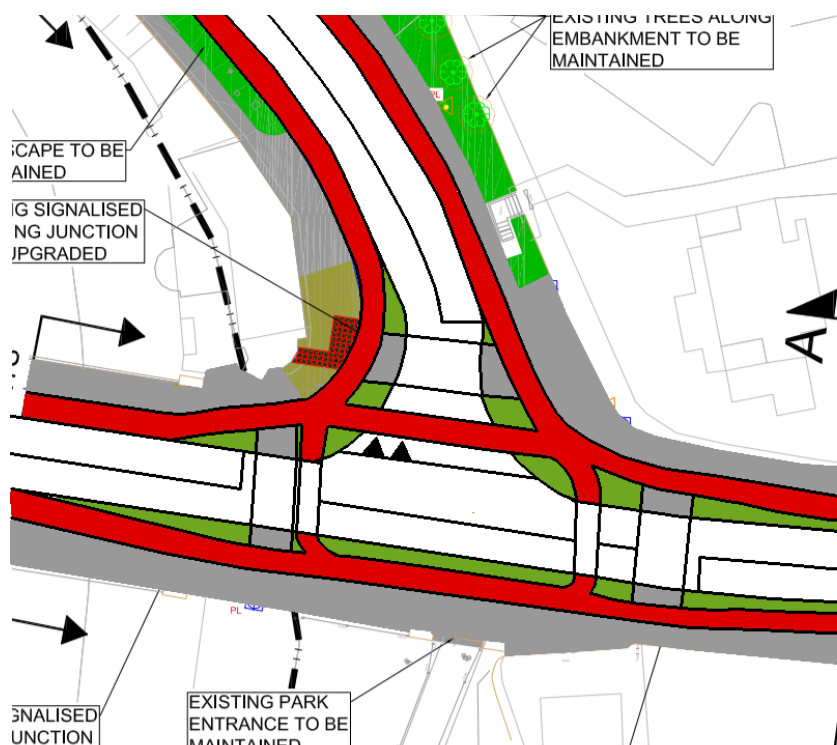
Layout sheet 1 (Clonskeagh Bridge)

We are extremely disappointed with the design of the Beech Hill Road junction. For people cycling, this junction design offers minor improvements, but it fails to address the reasons that this junction is so hostile and dangerous.

1. Northbound drivers continuing straight routinely invade the existing cycle lane to avoid cars waiting to turn right. This scheme does absolutely nothing to prevent this behaviour. We would like to see a segregated raised cycle track installed here, with a 30-50cm buffer between the traffic lane and the cycle track to keep people safe when cycling.
2. Cyclists wishing to turn right onto Beech Hill Road have to cross a busy traffic lane, avoiding the cars mentioned in the previous point. Some cyclists may be comfortable making this maneuver. However, for a less experienced cyclist, or perhaps a child cycling to David Lloyd, this feature makes the junction

impossible to safely navigate. Once again, this scheme fails to address this problem. We would like to see a dedicated space with its own traffic signal allocated for right-turning cyclists. This right turn cycle lane should also connect to a cycle lane on Beech Hill Road to ensure that cyclists aren't forced to compete with cars for space as they turn onto Beech Hill Road.

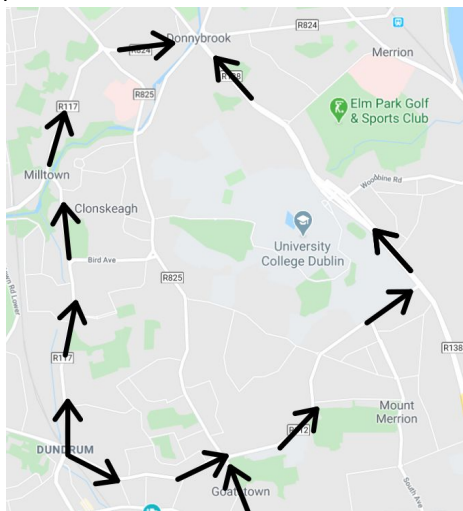
3. Currently, the southbound cycle lane on Clonskeagh Road also functions as a left turn lane. We welcome the decision to remove the left turn lane and make the cycle lane mandatory. However, we have observed elsewhere in the city (for example on Richmond Street South) that drivers often use mandatory cycle lanes as left turn lanes. As stated in point 1, the problem is the lack of a physical buffer between the traffic lane and the cycle path. This cycle track needs to be clearly protected
4. On weekday evenings, Beaver Row backs up almost the whole way to the N11. This is extremely hostile to people cycling who are left with almost no space. This lack of space becomes particularly problematic near the Beech Hill/Clonskeagh Road junction, where cyclists are at risk of getting caught in blind spots. This scheme is an opportunity to provide protected cycle paths on Beech Hill Road between the business park entrance and Clonskeagh Road, which will improve safety and reduce the risk of people cycling who regularly get cut off by left-turning drivers.



Ultimately, the only way to provide segregated and sufficiently wide cycle paths without narrowing the footpaths is to remove the right turn lane. The image above

shows how the removal of this lane would create enough space for a much safer junction design which is safe enough for a child to cycle to school.

Removing the right turn lane might require a right turn ban. However, most inbound traffic would be able to access the N11 just as easily using Mount Anville Road/Foster's Avenue, or using Milltown Road/Eglinton Road, as shown in the map below. This underlines the need for schemes like this to be part of broader traffic management that prioritises sustainable modes of transport over unsustainable modes.



Reducing the number of cars using Beaver Row would also benefit passengers on the 11 bus. Currently, this bus is constantly stuck in traffic, and it can take 20 minutes to get from Goatstown to the Dodder bridge some mornings. Banning the right turn onto Beech Hill Road would remove a huge volume of inbound traffic on Clonskeagh Road, dramatically improving the reliability of this bus service.

Remove right-turn filter lane into Beech Hill business park. It doesn't aid traffic flow even at peak times.

Layout sheet 2 (Whitebeam Road & Whitethorn Road)

We also have serious concerns with the designs of the Whitebeam Road and Whitethorn Road junctions.

These roads are currently used as a rat run connecting Milltown/Dundrum with Beaver Row. Residential roads are not suitable for the function of carrying through traffic, and these rat runs should be closed or restricted. At the very least, the right turn into Whitebeam Road should be banned.

This rat running also creates a number of safety hazards on Clonskeagh Road, which have not been addressed in this scheme.

1. Particularly during periods of heavy inbound traffic, vehicles turning right from Clonskeagh Road onto Whitebeam Road or Whitethorn Road do so across a yellow box junction in stationary traffic. This is a hazard for cyclists continuing straight, especially when taller vehicles are in the stationary traffic, as right-turning drivers fail to observe oncoming straight-ahead cyclists. Compounding this, the cyclists are travelling downhill in large numbers making sudden braking more dangerous.
2. Straight-ahead drivers frequently turn into the painted cycle lane to undertake vehicles waiting for a gap to turn right onto Whitebeam Road/Whitethorn Road. This is a major hazard for cyclists continuing straight-ahead outbound along Clonskeagh Road. A 100 mm kerb is not enough to prevent drivers from undertaking and can simply result in cyclists having a false sense of security that drivers may not do this. Drivers have been recorded mounting the 100mm raised cycle lane on Lower Kilmacud Road where a new road layout was introduced in 2019.

The rat running is also responsible for some of the congestion on Beaver Row. Often a driver waiting to turn right onto Whitebeam Road prevents other traffic from moving out of Beech Hill Road. Banning this right turn would improve the safety of people cycling and improve the flow of traffic.

Both traffic flow and the safe movements of pedestrians and cyclists are disrupted by the junctions with Whitebeam Road. One of these junctions should be permanently closed to entering/exiting traffic. These roads are not appropriate roads for connecting Dundrum/Milltown with Ranelagh/Donnybrook/Ballsbridge. Drivers using these as through-routes from Dundrum Road, are using them to access Beech Hill Road/Beaver Row in order to reach Donnybrook. The more appropriate routes for these journeys are to use Bird Avenue or Milltown Road.

The benefits would be:

- Potential for relocating a bus stop into the space made available from closing one of the junctions to through traffic. This would also provide better conditions for both pedestrians and cyclists for an island bus stop.
- Reducing number of turning conflicts for cyclists. In particular:
 - Particularly during periods of heavy inbound traffic, vehicles turning right from Clonskeagh Road onto Whitebeam Road or Whitethorn Road do so across a yellow box junction in stationary traffic. This is a hazard for cyclists continuing straight, especially when taller vehicles such as buses, vans or SUVs are in the stationary traffic, as right-turning drivers fail to observe oncoming straight-ahead cyclists. Compounding this, the cyclists

are travelling downhill in large numbers making sudden braking more dangerous.

- Straight-ahead drivers frequently turn into the painted cycle lane to undertake vehicles waiting for a gap to turn right onto Whitebeam Road/Whitethorn Road. This is a major hazard for cyclists continuing straight-ahead outbound along Clonskeagh Road. A 100mm is not enough to prevent drivers from undertaking and can simply result in cyclists having a false sense of security that drivers may not do this. Drivers have been recorded mounting the 100mm raised cycle lane on Lower Kilmacud Road where a new road layout was introduced in 2019.
- Segregated cycle tracks could be maintained for more distance throughout the scheme.
- Reduction in volume of traffic using Whitebeam and Whitethorn Road as a “rat-run” thereby creating more pleasant streets for residents.
- Fewer roads for pedestrians to cross when walking thereby better conditions for pedestrians.
- Fewer vehicles using the Clonskeagh Bridge junction, particularly to turn right hence better traffic flow for public transport and private vehicles using Clonskeagh Road as a primary route.

Layout sheet 3 (Clonskeagh Drive)

Most of the inbound cycling facilities here are segregated which is positive.

The outbound side is not in keeping with wanting to provide safe cycling facilities. The bus stop could become an island bus stop by realigning the road by reducing the grass verge (and possibly trees) on the inbound side. It is clear that the designs are prioritising the ability of car drivers to overtake buses at the stop, over and above safe cycling facilities.

The mouth of the access road to Clonskeagh Drive and Richview has a current width of 18 metres. The designs appear to only slightly reduce this. The width should be limited to 7 metres maximum. The footpath and cycle track should be given clear priority to this minor access road. Segregation for people cycling should not be sacrificed for such a lowly trafficked turn. People walking should not be left to cross a wide 15 metre side road. A continuous footpath should be strongly considered here.

Layout sheet 4 (Annsbrook & Clonskeagh Motors)

The space outside Clonskeagh Motors is marked as a footpath, yet is used daily by Clonskeagh Motors as free car storage/advertising on public land. The bus stop should

be moved here in order to provide an island bus stop in front of Clonskeagh Motors and reclaim this illegally annexed footpath space. Clonskeagh Motors also illegally use the grass verges either side of this footpath for car storage/advertising every day.

The quality of a walking and cycling scheme should not be reduced to facilitate the illegal behaviour of a car dealership.

The turning radii of the Annsbrook junction appear improved but it is not clear why there would need to be any encouragement to drivers to go fast on these turns. Lane widths of 3.25m at the mouth of the junction should be sufficient. A continuous footpath and retaining a segregated continuous cycle track should also be considered the minimum.

Traffic reduction measures

- We propose the following traffic reduction measures that all have safety benefits for people walking and cycling:
 - Combined single traffic lane existing from Beech Hill Road.
 - Removal of right filter-turn onto Beech Hill Road.
 - Modal filter on Beech Hill Road after the turn to Beech Hill Office Park. Space to be reallocated to a 2-way cycle track and expanded footpath on Beech Hill Road. Liaise with Dublin City Council regarding traffic movements on Beaver Row, which could be made 2 way from the turn off to Beech Hill estate.
 - A modal filter at Whitebeam Road to be proposed and benefits explained to local residents. Drivers intending to travel from Dundrum Road to Clonskeagh Road should use Whitethorn Road. The junction with Whitebeam Road interrupts traffic flow and puts people cycling in danger.

Spending time, energy and money on changes that do not deliver high quality cycling infrastructure is not a good use of scarce resources. The designers appear to be committed to using some of the low quality concepts advised in the National Cycle Manual. Projects such as Bus Connects, Fitzwilliam cycle route and Clontarf cycle route use high quality design principles that are not contained in the National Cycle Manual and are supported by Dublin Cycling Campaign. If DLR County Council cannot propose similarly high quality infrastructure designs at this time, we propose that this scheme be delayed until such time as the National Cycle Manual is updated or until the Council are prepared to match the high quality designs of the aforementioned projects.

Reference

- [Public consultation report](#)

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