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Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council,
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County Hall, Marine Road, Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin

Submission by Dublin Cycling Campaign on the Frascati Road and Temple Hill Route Improvements

Introduction

Dublin Cycling Campaign broadly welcomes the proposed changes to Frascati Road and Temple Hill to provide for cyclists. This scheme is of great importance given that this route has a large number of cyclists using it daily and because it is a difficult route to cycle through during busy periods. All efforts to reduce the speed of traffic and provide high quality cycling facilities, with special attention given to manoeuvres at junctions will have a positive effect on cycling.

It is also particularly important to be sure of providing the right mix of interventions considering the recent tragic death of cyclist Louise Butler in August 2013 from a collision with a HGV along this very stretch.

While we strongly endorse the objectives of the proposed works, we are very concerned about the proposed retention of the cyclist-hostile slip roads in the road design. The design still focuses priority on motor traffic over cyclists and pedestrians with the retention of these slip roads and many staggered crossing. It is our view that all slip roads need to be removed from all junctions to give a safer environ for vulnerable road users.

The proposed Temple Hill shared space between pedestrians and cyclists will be too narrow and the potential for illegal parking and proposed bus lay by in key places would negate the facilities for cyclists.

The current design suggests changes that are of “high quality”, but they are only a minimum recommended level for any cycle route in the present NTA network study. Ideally standards should be above that particularly along this route given that it has a high number of conflict points compared to other sections in the DLR area.

It would be of great benefit to incorporate trees into the route to enhance the traffic calming and give a more street locality feel to Blackrock. The bypass is a fast bleak road that disrupts the heart of Blackrock.



Figure 1 – Frascati Road, looking North

Slip turns

The most pertinent problem to cyclists has not been addressed by the retaining of nearly all the slip roads at junctions. This is not in keeping with current design standards to help vulnerable road users. Both cyclists and pedestrians are exposed to increased unnecessary risk from fast left turning vehicles, especially from larger vehicles such as buses, coaches and HGVs. Slip roads belong in motorway road environments only where ‘free flow’ is the overarching imperative; they are completely inappropriate in urban environments where there are many pedestrians and cyclists in the traffic mix.

The slip roads must be removed in all cases to reduce this risk for cyclists and pedestrians. The Manual for Urban Roads and Streets recommends that designers of new or upgrade road schemes should “omit left turn slips, which generally provide little extra effective vehicular capacity but are highly disruptive for pedestrians and cyclists”, section 4.4.3 of DMURS. Slip turns allow motorists to quickly turn on or off a road fast, thus putting pedestrians and cyclists in greater danger and they increase the number of crossings pedestrians must navigate.

Other official advice in the National Cycle Manual, produced by the National Transport Authority, says that the slip turns “often gives drivers an unreasonable sense of priority,” allows “vehicles to take corners at higher speeds” and “restricts views of cyclists and pedestrians”, section 4.5.5.

The most significant problem slip is on the uphill outbound left to Monkstown Road. A cyclist is travelling here at below average speed with attendant ‘wobble’ and exposed to fast left turning vehicles. The cyclist is adjacent to a left only lane, yet the cyclist will be travelling straight ahead. This is a significant conflict point. This the type of road design element which currently makes cycling on some urban roads feel scary and threatening. This scheme needs to address these problems.

All other slips roads onto Rock Hill, Mount Merrion Avenue, Frascati Shopping Centre, Seapoint are busy turns and the slips need to be removed to reduce the conflict risk to cyclists.

The recommendation in the Manual for Urban Areas states, “Where demand warrants, they may be replaced with left turning lanes with tighter corner radii” and the NTA says: “Should it be necessary to retain the dedicated slip lanes, at a minimum these could be converted into signal controlled turning pockets, as opposed to merge based designs” as seen in the current design.

Of the left turn slips currently in place controlled by a yield sign or a flashing amber traffic light, adjustments are to be made on some to narrow approaches or radii, but most are to be retained as merge-based turns against the advice from the NTA and other government guidance.



Figure 2 – Temple Hill Road slip to Monkstown Road, looking South

Frascati Shopping Centre and Frascati Road

This junction needs to be completely revised. If the entrance and exit to Frascati Shopping Centre was located here at the junction with Rock Hill, then significant advantages could be achieved.

The need for a right filter lane into Blackrock could be removed. This is mostly used by traffic leaving Frascati Shopping Centre to make a U turn to head outbound towards Monkstown. If this same traffic could instead leave at the Rock Hill shopping centre junction, the traffic could make the desired right turn more easily.

This would then have the advantage of changing the inbound road width from 3 lanes to 2, and allow for the pedestrian crossing distance to be reduced. This could then open the design to a better cycling, pedestrian and bus interaction along this section.

The other crossing points around all the junctions of the centre could be revised and reduced to make it much easier and simpler to cross for pedestrians.

This would also mean the removal of the existing slip road to the shopping centre before the current bus stop inbound.



Figure 3 – Frascati Shopping Centre junction with Frascati Road and Rock Hill, looking South



Figure 4 – Frascati Road, looking North

Environmental Impact

The proposed design still retains the islands and there are no plans mentioned to plant trees to soften the look of the route. The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (section 4.2.2) recommends this to help reduce traffic speeds and to making this route a street rather than only a traffic artery.

Shared Use with Pedestrians

It is particularly noted that there will be a very confined space of shared pedestrian / cyclist use at Temple Hill / Newtownpark Avenue. Cyclists travel much faster than pedestrians and on important commuting routes this can be a significant hazard for both users. This element of the scheme design needs to be re-examined.



Figure 5 – Temple Hill to Newtownpark Avenue, looking South

Illegal parking in the cycle track

A concern needs to be raised on the risk of vehicles parking in the cycle track and the risks this causes to cyclists. This is likely to happen outside the Zurich insurance buildings where it has been noted that taxis park outside the main entrance on the footpath.

This is also likely to happen with visitors to the Garda station. The risk posed to cyclists is not being able to get out and back into the cycle track safely.



Figure 6 – Frascati Road outside Zurich Insurance, looking North

Crossings

The introduction of Toucan crossings along the Frascati Road and the addition of a new crossing at Sweetman’s Avenue are welcomed. It can be difficult to move around Blackrock locally by bicycle and these improvements will help.

However the retention and introduction of more staggered crossings, particularly around slip junctions are not in line with the advice in the Manual for Urban Roads and Streets. The Manual notes in section 4.3.2, “Safety concerns regarding pedestrian crossings should also be viewed in the context of pedestrian behaviour. Research has found that pedestrians are less likely to comply with the detour/delay created by

staggered crossings, leading to unsafe crossing behaviour. It will generally be more desirable, from a safety point of view, to provide a direct single phase crossing.”

Cycle Track

A 2m minimum width of cycle lane should be aimed for along this stretch, and is achievable in line with National Cycle Manual recommendations of minimum 2.25m.

There is a need for a cycle lane and ASL marked on the inbound direction of Monkstown Avenue approaching the junction instead of the second straight ahead car lane.

The cycle lane on Newtown Avenue can be increased from 1.5m by reducing the car lane widths from their current proposed 3.25m width.

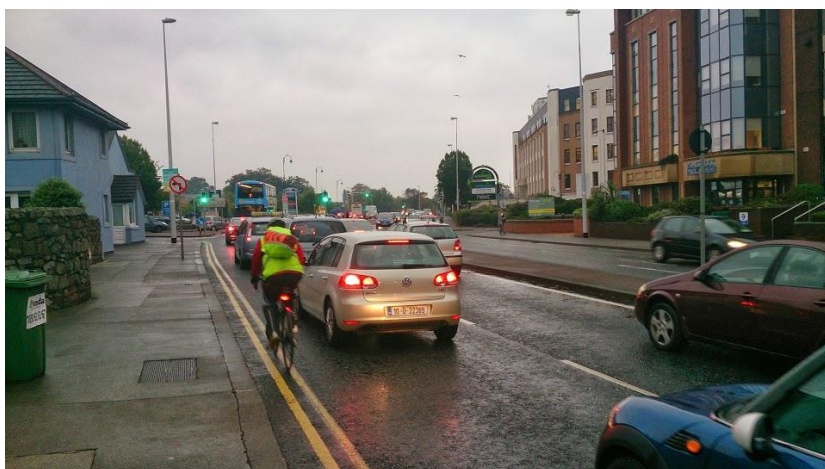


Figure 7 – Frascati Road, looking North

Junctions for cycling

There is a need to reduce junction radii in line with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets.

Cycle lane markings should be continued around bends to ensure adequate space is left by drivers for left turning cyclists. This applies in particular at the following main junctions;

- Rock Hill junction joining Frascati Road
- Carysfort Ave onto Frascati Road
- Stradbrook Road into Newtownpark Avenue inbound
- The Temple Hill section which comprises a turn onto Newtown Avenue

There are a number of places where an ASL, an Advanced Stop Line or “Cycle Box”, would benefit cyclists in traffic and to help with turning right. They would be most helpful at the junctions coming from the lessor roads on to Frascati Road and Temple Hill. In particular;

- At Carysfort Avenue junctions onto Frascati Road
- Newtown Avenue on to Temple Hill / Temple Road
- Monkstown Road on to Temple Hill (assuming a cycle lane is enabled for cyclists)
- Stradbrook Road on to Temple Hill

It appears in the design that the cycle left only from Mount Merrion Avenue to Rock Road has been realigned and made to be a much sharper join in to the road rather than the gradual join that exists currently. Is that the intention or could this be left as it is currently? It would be good to see similar implemented in other places such as;

- Frascati Road left to Mount Merrion Avenue
- Rock Hill left on to Frascati Road to join the cycle track.
- Carysfort Avenue left on to Cycle lane both Inbound and Outbound
- Stradbroke Road left to Newtownpark Avenue

The proposal should also consider closing the entry/exit to the village at Sweetman's Avenue to Frascati Road except for Garda.

Bus Stops

We note that there are currently proposed bus stops near Carysfort Ave and Frascati Road, but the bus stop inbound after Sweetman's Ave on Frascati Road should then be removed.

We are concerned by the proposed design of the Bus lay-by at Temple Hill because it is in the cycle track. This is a downhill section of road that would see a cyclist trying to go around a bus with fast moving traffic. This proposal needs to be removed. The removal of the left slip to Barclay Court could be utilised for a proposed bus stop and cycle track.

The proposal for a bus stop at Frascati Road and Temple Road outbound is too close to the cycle track. This needs to be reconsidered and the removal of the left slip road to Temple Road could be better used as a proposed Bus Stop.

Leisure and recreation cycling opportunities

It could be sign posted clearly for commuting and recreational cyclists to take a quieter route when heading inbound by going right at Temple Hill to Newtown Avenue and on to Main St, Idrone Terrace and Blackrock Park.

Coming from Rockfield Park "The Rockies" behind Barclay Court needs to join up to the route into Blackrock Park. A future route could be provided from Temple Road through to Main St to Idrone Terrace and Blackrock Park. Perhaps the church grounds could be favourable to accommodate for this. There is a laneway with steps that could also be revised.

We recommend that the quality of the sign posting of the cycle route through Blackrock Park coming from Mount Merrion Avenue be improved.

Traffic Lights

There is mention in the report of having cycle lights outbound at Mount Merrion Ave and Rock Road. But will they be able to achieve to allow cyclists advance when the main traffic has red? We would strongly support the introduction of traffic signalling that enables cyclists to advance before the rest of the general traffic.

Yours Sincerely

References

DLR Documents, Frascati Road and Temple Hill Route Improvements, 24-Sep-2013

<http://dlrcoco.ie/newsevents/latestnews/title,9831,en.html>

National Cycle Manual, December 2009

<http://www.cyclemanual.ie/>

Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, March 2013

<http://www.environ.ie/en/Publications/DevelopmentandHousing/Planning/FileDownload,32668,en.pdf>