



Dublin Cycling Campaign

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National Transport Authority,
Dublin

Submission by Dublin Cycling Campaign on the Sandymount to Sutton scheme

Summary

We are delighted to have the opportunity to give input on this scheme and we welcome the significant improvements being made for cycling and walking along this route.

We look forward to seeing the benefits of a largely separated cycle track along a key transport radial route to Dublin City Centre. This is currently a busy cycling route which needs significant change to make cycling safer, given the excessive vehicle speeds, shared cycling in shared bus lanes and narrow cycle lanes.

We'd also like to see some better minor road integration points along this route for cycling to help highlight this scheme as one of the important back bones of the GDA cycling network.

We welcome in particular the following elements of the design:

- The expansion of the laneway at Deepwell between Blackrock Park and Blackrock Train Station, which should be completed as soon as possible.
- The walkway from Seapoint to Blackrock along the seafront. It should be considered to extend the walkway from Blackrock to Merrion Gates.
- 2 way segregated cycle tracks at both Sandymount and Blackrock Park
- Cycle tracks protected by parking at Booterstown Avenue / Rock Road on the city bound side of the street.
- 2 way cycle track along Seapoint Avenue
- 24 Hour bus lanes
- New Bus Stop by-passes

It should also be noted that there are many schools, work places and shops located within 500m of this scheme. In order to help reduce traffic congestion in the area, providing separated and protected cycle tracks will make it quick, easy and safe for people of all ages and abilities to use bicycles for their daily trips.

S2S Route

This scheme is not a replacement for the Sandycove to Sutton cycle route. While it is a much needed commuting network investment which helps to add to a joined up route around the bay, it misses out on some of the key attractions of being able to move mostly free of traffic and enjoy the spectacular coastline of Ireland.

We would like to see a continued effort to bring a seafront walking/cycling route between Merrion Gates and Blackrock. This could be done as part of future enhancements of the sea wall defences with the rail line by adding a walking/cycling path on top of the sea wall defences. This would not impact on the protected areas of the bay.

Separated cycling infrastructure

It is important that the upgraded cycling infrastructure is segregated to prevent parking in the cycle track. We have highlighted the impact of poor design and fly parking with our twitter campaign #FreeTheCycleLanes.

Observations of cycling along stretches of the route

Sandymount

Separated Cycle Track

In accordance with sections 1.9.2 and 1.9.3 of the National Cycle Manual (NCM), separate walking and cycling routes should be provided at Sandymount promenade. It is essential that a self-enforcing 2-way cycle track and a separate pedestrian path are implemented, making use of dedicated paths which are well defined visually and spatially. Pedestrian and cycle paths should be separated by a grass buffer and should use surface treatments that are distinct in colour (e.g. black for pedestrians and red for cycles). The existing gym equipment and benches may be retained in the buffer. This will provide a safe, functional and clearly legible facility, that remains attractive.



Figure 1: Existing Sandymount promenade showing benches and gym furniture. The proposed 2 way cycle track should not conflict with these

Where a grass buffer is not feasible, a gently angled kerb and grade separation should be used to separate the modes and avoid potential conflict or collisions.

Bicycle Parking

There is little or no bicycle parking along the Sandymount promenade. This scheme should include the addition of bicycle parking at regular intervals.

Minor Road integration

It's important to make it easy to exit a minor road by bicycle and join the 2 way cycle track. There doesn't appear to be design for integrating cycling with minor roads. This is an important permeability consideration and increases the usability of the 2 way cycling infrastructure. For example, ST John's Road, Sydney Parade Ave, St Albans Park don't integrate well with the proposed scheme.

Some small design considerations to link these roads for cycling would have a great benefit in enhancing this scheme as one of the back bones of a GDA cycling network.

Strand Road / Merrion Gates cul de sac cycle track integration

It is not clear in the detailed designs how the cycle tracks will be integrated along the primary route with the 2 way cycle track and the proposed Strand Road / Merrion Road cul de sac. Perhaps ensuring the cul de sac is not a black top road surface

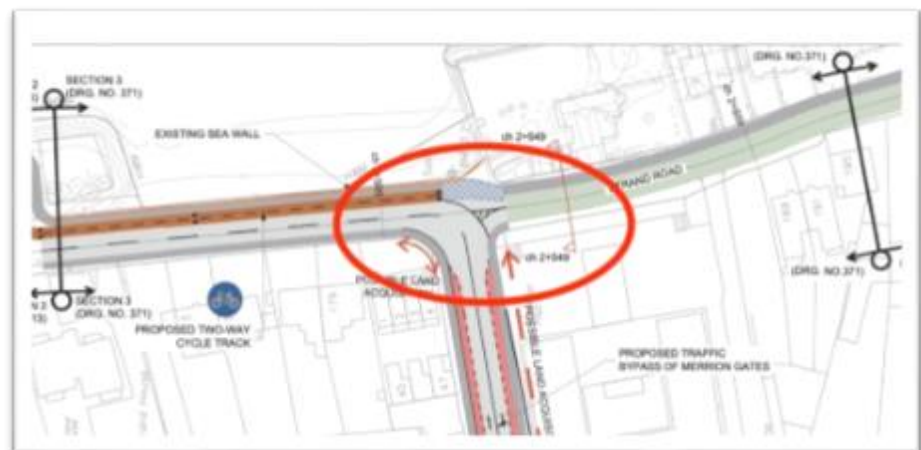


Figure 2: Junction integration problem

will ensure that driving speeds are very low along with slowing the driving and cycling traffic at the shared space integration point, might relieve serious conflict.

Also, the new link road to Merrion Hall does not integrate well in either direction. It is particularly concerning when coming from Merrion Hall that there is no intuitive safe way to get to the 2 way cycle track. It looks like a cyclist might make a risky right turn on the bend to join the off road cycle track.

Emergency flood defences

Rarely through the year, an extreme high tide can be forecasted which necessitates that the access points to the Sandymount promenade be closed off temporarily. When this occurs, it will close off access to the cycle route along the sea front ~1km. As there is no design for alternative cycling along this route, it would be prudent to ensure that the on road cycling experience is still safe and suitable. This may be through the use of traffic calming to promote slower driving speeds and to ensure there is space to cycle even in heavy traffic conditions.

Merrion Gates

Underpass

In accordance with sections 1.9.2 and 1.9.3 of the National Cycle Manual (NCM), the width of the underpass and approach paths should be increased to avoid conflict between pedestrians and cyclists. The design should use a straight-line connection between the northern and southern approaches as shown in Figure 3. Shallow gradients, along with design and landscaping that maximises natural and artificial light in the vicinity of the tunnel will, throughout the day, enable users of the underpass to see straight through the underpass on approach. This will minimise the risk of collisions and any personal security issues that might arise from a confined space. This is important for a self-enforcing design that is consistent with the principles of sustainable safety.

Outbound Cycle lane

On the outbound from the city cycle lane at the Merrion Gates where there is also parking, it would be better to put a cycle track on the inside away from the parked cars with more space, rather than having it in the door zone of the parked cars.



Figure 3: Merrion Gates proposed underpass

It would also be better to extend the 2 way cycle track that is heading inbound to the Toucan crossing as this will allow for people who joined the route from Seapoint / Blackrock to use the 2 way cycle route through the park, along Merrion Road, and then easily cross over here at Merrion Gates to continue inbound to the city centre or elsewhere.

Merrion Gates to Booterstown 2 way cycle track

The proposed 2 way cycle track needs to be more distinctly separated from the adjacent roadway to set out cycling on the left more intuitive. The design shows that people are expected to cycle towards each other in opposition to staying to the left, but instead staying on the right. There is ample median that needs to be resized to give much more distinct and safe separation of the cycle track from the roadway.



Figure 4: Proposed Merrion Road 2 way cycle track in front of Tara Towers

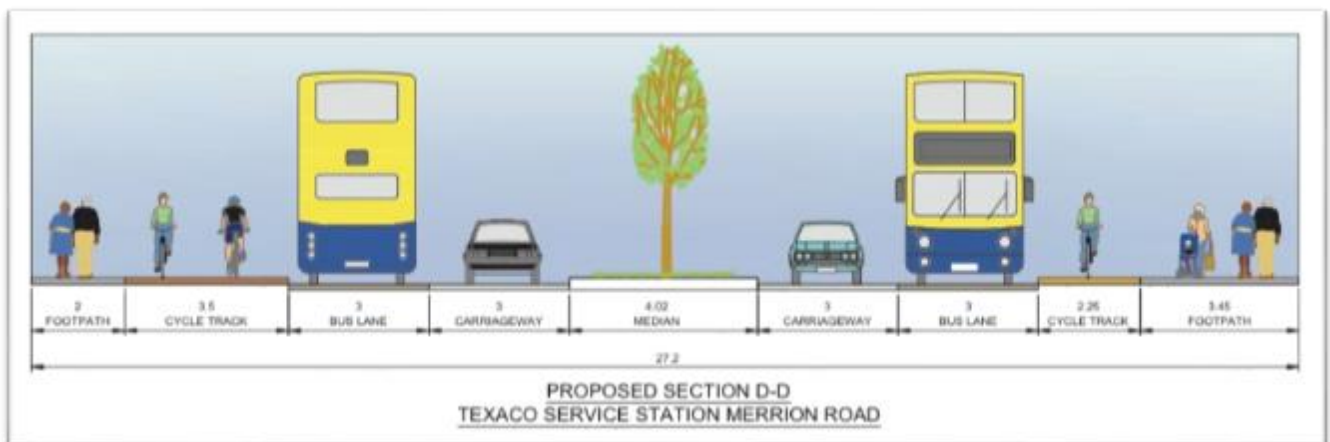


Figure 5: 2 way cycle track showing counter intuitive cycle sides

Blackrock Park

Separated Cycle Track

In accordance with sections 1.9.2 and 1.9.3 of the NCM, separate walking and cycling routes must be provided in the park. It is essential that a self-enforcing 2-way cycle track and a separate pedestrian path are implemented, making use of dedicated paths which are well defined visually and spatially. Pedestrian and cycle paths should be separated by a grass buffer and should use surface treatments that are distinct in colour (e.g. black for pedestrians and red for cycles). This will provide a safe, functional and clearly legible facility, while remaining attractive. Where a grass buffer is not possible, a gently angled kerb and grade separation should be used to separate the modes and avoid potential conflict or collisions.

More permeability with the park route

It would make great use of the 2 way cycling track in the park (green way). It could be integrated with the Rock Road near the Blackrock Clinic (Orange line) to allow for cycling on to Frascati Road and Mount Merrion Avenue. It is a shallower incline than the hilly section close to Mount Merrion Ave (red line).

This same connection (orange line) may offer a better / quicker way to join the linear 2 way cycle route in the park 2 as the entry point at Mount Merrion Avenue (red line) may not present as an attractive / obvious way to get there.

Furthermore, the outbound route adjacent to Blackrock College may present it's own design and operational problems such as a very limited space to work with, the probable need for an outbound bus lane, the possible cost and resistance to the CPO of lands, the possible removal of parking spaces, the tight construction of a cycle track which then adds the risk of people parking in the cycle track rendering the separated cycle track unusable. A design consideration to keep the cycle track clear by a self-enforcing design is required.



Figure 6: Blackrock Park with suggestion route access additions

Separated cycle track inbound on the Rock Road in front of Blackrock College

This is a very welcomed improvement to the current facilities. The existing facilities offer a poor and frightening experience for cycling due to inappropriate widths.

Deepwell Laneway widening

The widening of the laneway to better facilitate walking and cycling is a much needed and very welcome enhancement.

This should perhaps be a wider enhancement than currently proposed to not only facilitate walking and cycling, but to also help facilitate the widening of the train platform at the Blackrock Train Station as it is very small at this section.

Merrion Road

In the proposed detailed designs it shows an on road cycle lane, but the illustration words this as a segregated cycle track. Instead, this should be a raised separated cycle track that is distinctly separated.

The existing arrangement at this stretch consists of a poorly implemented cycle lane. As this stretch gets very congested with private car traffic, particularly outbound, the cycle lane is not usable. Having a cycle track off road will help to give people cycling a safer more reliable space to cycle in.



Figure 7: Deepwell laneway and Blackrock DART station narrow platform

Observations of cycling through junctions

Sydney Parade Avenue / Ailesbury Park

Both of these minor roads are closed to through traffic, however they are commonly used walking and cycling streets that connect to Sydney Parade train station and beyond.

The pedestrian crossing in front of the Merrion Shopping Centre that connects to Sydney Parade Avenue should be upgraded to a Toucan crossing to legally permit cycling across.

Integration of cycling to and from these streets needs to be consider with the small changes to the existing proposed design.

Trimleston Avenue

The integration for cyclists with Merrion Road and Trimleston Road is important to enhance. The proposed scheme shows a Toucan crossing in a small shared space.

This crossing space needs to safely accommodate a number of cyclists and pedestrians while waiting to cross yet still allow the expected volumes of cyclists to continue in both directions in the 2 way cycle track with the minimum of conflict risk.

It also must allow for cyclists of bicycles that carry children (e.g. cargo bikes) to be able to safely and legally cycle across and on to Trimleston Road with much hazard.



Figure 8: Trimleston Avenue / Merrion Road intersection

Likewise the dropped curb should suggest to a cyclist to use it to turn right or left from Trimbleston Road on to the 2 way cycle track without attracting them to use the Toucan crossing to exit Trimbleston Ave.

Therefore it may prove more prudent to allow for Toucan crossing on all arms of the junction to assist with cycling and walking through this junction safely in all directions.

St Vincent's Hospital / Merrion Hall

The left filter turn inbound to St Vincent's Hospital presents a left hook collision hazard for cycling. It would be better to keep this turn the same as it is today without a separate left turn lane.

Herbert Avenue / Estate Avenue

The scheme doesn't call out the moving of the existing pedestrian crossing at Herbert Avenue across Merrion Road. The existing crossing serves local residents and Vincent's Private / Public Hospital and .

This new crossing point must also feature a Toucan crossing as it will help with cyclists making a right turn on to the proposed new link road given that traffic on road will be very busy.

The proposed crossing point at the new link road illustrates a staggered crossing which is not an acceptable way to safely cross pedestrians.



Figure 9: Existing crossing point at Herbert Avenue

Seapoint Avenue edge of scheme

Integration at Seapoint edge of scheme needs to be sure to include a Toucan crossing in order to intuitively connect people cycling onto the 2 way cycle track. There is an existing pedestrian crossing at this location that needs to be enhanced to accommodate this.

Bus Stops

We welcome the number of changes to bus stops within the scheme using bus stop bypasses. These make the cycling environment safer for cyclists and also help with travel times for buses. We need to consider adding more of these to give a higher safety standard for cycling along the scheme, especially consider the high volumes of cyclists and buses.

Other Key Points

- The scheme should take into account that the disused Merrion train station may be a viable station in the future serving the local area.
- There is an opportunity to more easily link the Booterstown Train Station to the park for walking and cycling. Booterstown presents itself as the beginning of a walking / cycling route to Dalkey for city centre citizens.

Yours sincerely,

Keith Byrne
Dublin Cycling Campaign