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15th December 2020

By email to cbc@busconnects.ie

Re: BusConnects third round of public consultation

Dear Sir/Madam,

We (Cllr. Darcy Lonergan, Cllr. Janet Horner and Neasa Hourigan TD) wish to comment on the above public consultation. We are appreciative of the opportunity for further engagement on the BusConnects plans.

Overall, we really welcome the plans and the prospect of the development of public transport within the Dublin Area. This is particularly important for the Cabra-Glasnevin, North Inner City, Dublin Central areas which we represent which have very low car ownership rates and therefore are particularly reliant on public and sustainable transport modes.

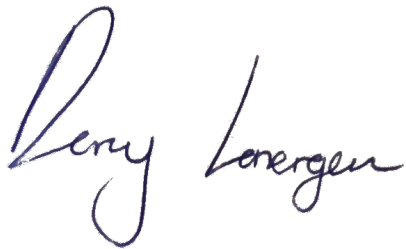
It is important that BusConnects is a step forward to increased access to safe transport, whether through buses or walking or cycling and an improved, healthier living environment with less noise and air pollution, less traffic and less speeding. We think careful consideration of the diversity of needs of communities, particularly those living in the inner city can achieve that.

There are a number of points, detailed below, that we feel need to be addressed in the current designs.

Kind Regards,



Neasa Hourigan TD, Dublin Central



Cllr. Darcy Lonergan, Cabra-Glasnevin



Cllr. Janet Horner, North Inner City

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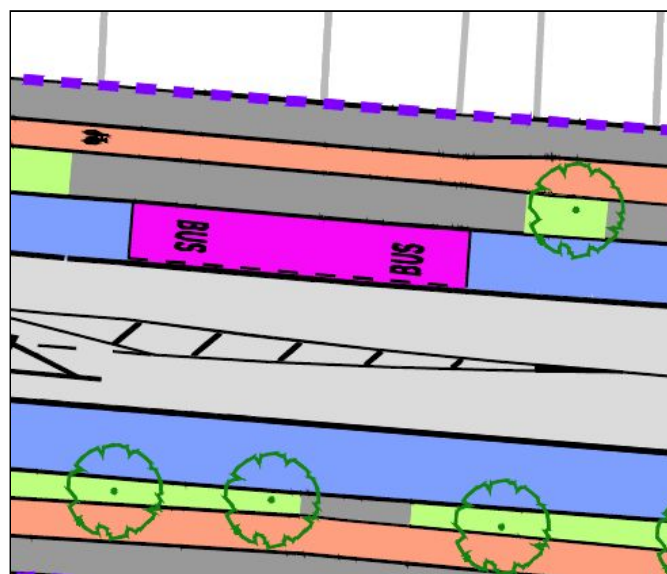
1. Changing travel patterns

Looking towards a climate safe future, and particularly recognising the significant disruption that COVID has brought to our way of life, we have to account for changed travel patterns. Commuting journeys only ever accounted for 20-30% of all journeys taken and is due to be an even smaller percentage as working from home becomes increasingly common. This means that providing adequate, safe and sustainable transport for people to move within and between communities will become all the more important.

Rather than providing central transport "spines" between residential areas and commercial centres, we need a web of transport options across our communities. This is part of equality-proofing transport plans - recognising that the needs of women, older people, children and people with disabilities are often marginalised within current transport provision.

2. Accessible bus stops

With a view to a street user hierarchy that would prioritise the more vulnerable footpath users (the disabled, the elderly, young children, etc.) we would ask that measures be implemented to ensure that bus stops can be accessed safely. This is especially important where the bus stop is only accessible by crossing a cycle lane. It is not clear from the designs what steps are currently being taken.

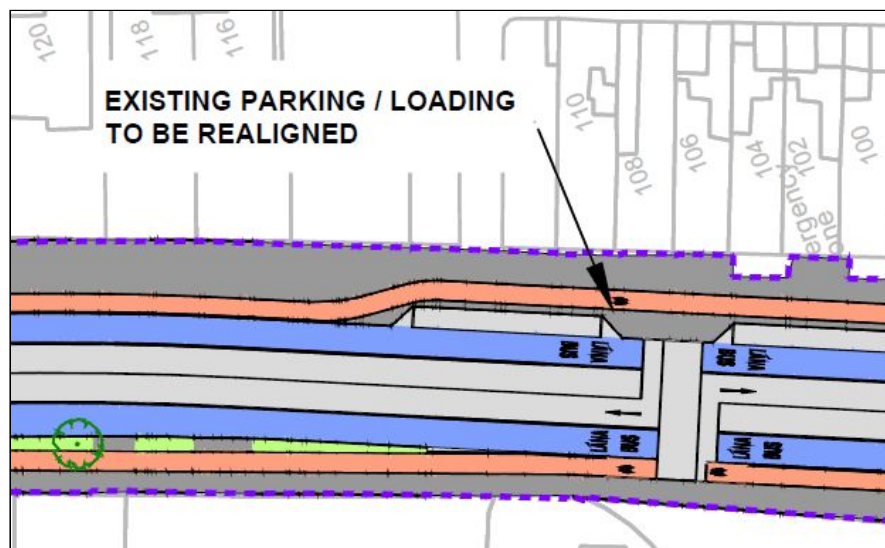


3. Accessible on street parking

In a similar vein we would like to know what measures are being taken to ensure the safety of cyclists and drivers using parking protected bike lanes.

Some drivers/passengers who will use the parking will be disabled and/or infirm and we should do our best to accommodate such drivers/passengers. We have seen parking protected bike lanes deployed in Dublin Central that appear to have given little regard for how people would safely exit the car (either cycle lane side or traffic side) or where people would cross the cycle lane to get to the footpath.

Likewise it needs to be clear for cyclists where they can expect pedestrians to cross the cycle lane.

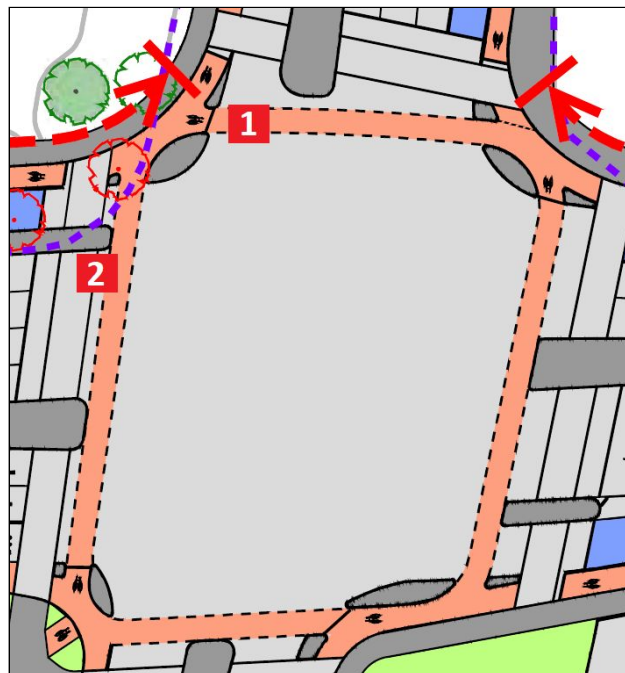


4. Cycle lane junctions

We have concerns about the layout of the cycle junctions. It is not clear from the design how a left turning driver (2 in below diagram) would know to yield to a cyclist (1 in below diagram). Our understanding is that both the driver and the cyclist would have green lights simultaneously. While similar junctions are in place in other jurisdictions, none have been deployed in Ireland as far as we know.

We hope that, if such junctions are deployed, there is a multifaceted effort to ensure their safety including:

1. Signage and design elements at the junctions
2. Driver education initiatives
3. Updates to the RSA driver training materials



5. Additional bridge at Frank Flood Bridge

We warmly welcome the proposal to add a pedestrian/cyclists bridge alongside Frank Flood Bridge. Frank Flood Bridge as it currently stands is a dangerous pinch point for cyclists as the cycle lane disappears for a stretch over the bridge.

6. Phibsborough

We note the submission made by the Beyond the Junction group and are in agreement with the issues that they identify, namely:

1. Motor traffic levels
2. The pinch points
3. Lack of provision for local businesses
4. No safe direct route to the city centre for cyclists

To focus specifically on two items we feel strongly that

- The 200-300 estimated change in road traffic with CBC in place (AM Peak 2028) on Connaught Street is a significant increase for a residential street that is already busy.
- Overall the plan means that Phibsborough village is being confined to being a junction and there is little scope to improve the village for residents, pedestrians, cyclists and local businesses.

We appreciate that resolving this would be a material change to the plan but would urge BusConnects to work with the residents and businesses in the area to come up with a workable plan for all.

7. Dorset Street

Dorset Street is an important street for shopping and amenities for many of the surrounding areas. Dorset Street is currently very difficult to cross as a pedestrian and is unsafe to cycle. Shops on the street suffer as a result of the inordinate length of time and prohibitive conditions (most especially for wheelchair or buggy users navigating the gates at the crossings) to cross and it is next to impossible to provide a safe, sustainable option for school children to access their schools. We would query whether the retention of the median strip on Dorset Street is conducive to an improved pedestrian experience? Would the space not be better used to provide increased pedestrian space while the removal of the median strip would also support slower traffic?

There should also be a continuous cycle lane to connect Dorset Street to Stoneybatter and the Blanchardstown corridor. Continuous cycling routes are key to supporting those who would otherwise be too nervous to cycle on Dublin streets.

8. Gardiner Street

While we note that Gardiner Street has been removed from a spinal route, we would like to restate again the importance of progressing an improved streetscape for Gardiner Street. Residents of this street live with dangerous, speeding traffic and little provision for accessing their community safely by bicycle, scooter etc. This road urgently needs attention and while we recognise that it is no longer within the scope of the BusConnects plans, we would ask that alternative plans be put in place to deliver this urgently needed street upgrade without waiting until BusConnects is fully implemented.

9. O'Connell Street

O'Connell Street is a core route on the BusConnects plans but does not provide for any safe cycling routes. This is a huge oversight as it means for many people on the Northside of Dublin, there are safe routes to bring you to the edge of the city but not into it - this urgently needs to be addressed.

10. Previous submission

We wish to draw your attention to Cllr. Janet Horner's submission from last April as many of her observations remain the same:

<https://janethorner.ie/post/busconnects-public-consultation-april-2020/>

11. Loading bays

We note that loading bays along some stretches of the routes are being repositioned and that some will be designed in the next design phase. Not specific to any change but we urge BusConnects to give appropriate priority to the placement of loading bays. In addition to the commercial need for business in Dublin Central, well designed and positioned loading bays encourage delivery drivers not to illegally park on pedestrian or cycling infrastructure. This is especially important given the limited enforcement of the rules around illegal parking.

12. Junction corner radii

Where possible we'd ask that corner radii on junctions are reduced as much as possible. For example it is not clear from the designs whether the corner radius of the junction (circled in yellow below) has been reduced to slow cars entering Church Avenue from Drumcondra Road Upper. If not we would recommend this action is taken in addition to the raised crossing already included to protect both pedestrians and cyclists.

