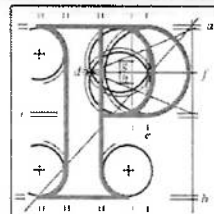


**Our Case Number:** ABP-320164-24



**An  
Bord  
Pleanála**

Eamon O'Rourke  
55 Howth Lodge  
Howth  
Dublin 13  
D13 KH59

**Date:** 10 September 2024

**Re:** DART + Coastal North Railway Order 2024 - Northern Line between Dublin City Centre and Drogheda including the Howth Branch  
Dublin City Centre and Drogheda, located in counties Dublin, Meath and Louth

Dear Sir / Madam,

An Bord Pleanála has received your recent submission in relation to the above mentioned proposed railway order and will take it into consideration in its determination of the matter. Please accept this letter as a receipt for the fee of €50 that you have paid.

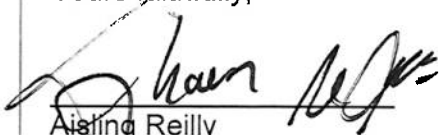
The Board will revert to you in due course with regard to the matter.

Please be advised that copies of all submissions / observations received in relation to the application will be made available for public inspection at the offices of the relevant County Councils and at the offices of An Bord Pleanála when they have been processed by the Board.

More detailed information in relation to strategic infrastructure development can be viewed on the Board's website: [www.pleanala.ie](http://www.pleanala.ie).

If you have any queries in the meantime please contact the undersigned officer of the Board at [laps@pleanala.ie](mailto:laps@pleanala.ie). Please quote the above mentioned An Bord Pleanála reference number in any correspondence or telephone contact with the Board.

Yours faithfully,

  
Aisling Reilly  
Executive Officer  
Direct Line: 01-8737131

RA05

|                    |         |  |
|--------------------|---------|--|
| Tel                | Tel     | (01) 858 8100  |
| Glaó Áitiúil       | LoCall  | 1800 275 175   |
| Facs               | Fax     | (01) 872 2684  |
| Láithreán Gréasáin | Website | <a href="http://www.pleanala.ie">www.pleanala.ie</a>   |
| Ríomhphost         | Email   | <a href="mailto:bord@pleanala.ie">bord@pleanala.ie</a> |

|                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 64 Sráid Maoilbhríde | 64 Marlborough Street |
| Baile Átha Cliath 1  | Dublin 1              |
| D01 V902             | D01 V902              |

AN BORD PLEANÁLA

64 MARY BOROUGH STREET

ROTONDA

DUBLIN 1

DOI V902

55 HOWTH LODGE

HOWTH

DUBLIN 13

D13 KH59

5-9-2024

To Whom It May Concern,

I have read through the various documents provided in relation to the "DART + Coastal North" proposals and wish to submit my comments in respect of the contents.

I **Do not** object to the main thrust of the proposal which is the extension of the Dart services to Drogheda and stations in between.

I **DO** wish to object to those elements of the proposal that directly affect the existing Dart service between Howth and Dublin, which if implemented;

- would downgrade the level of existing services to Howth;
- would create public safety concerns for road users in the area and for Dart passengers transiting Howth Junction;
- would entail a serious curtailment of the rights of way, established over 177 years ago, at all four level crossings between Howth Junction and Howth;
- would impinge on the Civil Liberties of Howth residents by depriving them of their right to Freedom of Movement as provided for by the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the EU Maastricht and Lisbon Treaties.

That Irish Rail should want to improve and expand existing services is of course laudable, but such improvements must be real, based on a proper, fact based evaluation and be respectful of all affected groups.

I apologize for the length of my submission, but there were in fairness several different issues that had to be addressed, and I trust that you will give them your fair and full attention.

Yours,



|                  |           |
|------------------|-----------|
| AN BORD PLEANÁLA |           |
| LDG-             | 074692-24 |
| ABP-             |           |
| 06 SEP 2024      |           |
| Fee: €           | 50        |
| Type:            | CHA       |
| Time:            | 9.35      |
| By:              | post      |

***“The DART+ Programme will both modernise and improve the existing rail services in the GDA, providing a range of benefits for both the residents of the GDA itself, as well as those living in surrounding regions.”*** ( Executive Summary, page ES1)

As a resident of Howth - and therefore of the GDA (*Greater Dublin Area*) - I have to challenge and contradict that statement. There is neither improvement, nor benefit arising from the proposed changes

I am a regular and frequent user of the Howth / Dublin / Howth Dart services, which is currently is a +/- 30 minute journey, with no transfers with and no capacity issues other than at the peak hours.

Under the proposed changes - primarily it would appear to facilitate only the services operating on the “mainline” - Howth would become a “branch line” with a “shuttle” service operating to and from Howth Junction.

A platform change, a wait of indeterminate length to connect with the next “mainline” service, with no guarantee of any space availability on that service, would eventually deliver you to Dublin city centre.

On the return journey to Howth the transfer at Howth Junction, would entail not just a platform change, but a crossing of the tracks using the existing footbridge and again a wait for the next “shuttle” service to Howth.

On both journeys - to Dublin and on return - during the transfer passengers would be exposed to the prevailing weather conditions. Any elderly or infirm passengers, anyone traveling with small children, would be particularly disadvantaged by the proposed changes.

The restricted platform space at Howth Junction would pose a safety risk particularly on holiday weekends, or summer periods and the outline proposals for improvement to the facilities would not remove these concerns.

The proposed changes would definitely not provide any “benefits” for any residents using DART services from Howth, Sutton, Bayside, and Howth Junction to travel to/ from Dublin and would instead represent a most significant deterioration in current service standards and entail increased safety risks.

In their submission and planning Irish Rail have relied upon "**Traffic Modelling**" data that was 3 and 4 years out of date, with sampling times taken midweek, ignoring the multiple developments, both underway and in planning for Baldoyle, Sutton and Howth and the forecast 24 % increase in local population. They make no allowance for the significantly increased traffic volumes that occur at weekends and cause bumper to bumper tailbacks between Howth, Sutton, Baldoyle, Howth Road Junction, and beyond.

The proposed more frequent closing of all 4 level crossings. would result in the build up of traffic queues with tailbacks at Baldoyle Road and Sutton Cross encroaching at peak times onto the main Howth Road and at Lauders Lane adding to the Station Road queue.

It would appear that Irish Rail were either unaware of the new developments, or have ignored them as they have ignored the very specific concerns of the resident of Howth Lodge and Claremont Road.

#### **DART plus / DART + Coastal North**

In an extract from the documentation provided by Iarnród Éireann in the Phase One Consultation process, Section 2.2 Level Crossings, states:

***"Claremont Crossing (913) allows for access to a small residential development on a private road and providing exclusive access to the area for motor vehicles."***

This is incorrect. The road referred to is not private. It is a public road, a cul de sac, off which is the entrance to the Howth Lodge development of 55 apartments, 9 private houses and 6 townhouses. In correspondence, Iarnród Éireann have already admitted their error in describing the access road as "private" and have accepted that it is indeed a "public" road. They have however repeated the erroneous statement in the Phase Two documentation and again in their formal submission to An Bórd Pleanála, which is either careless "cut and paste", or a deliberate attempt to downplay the effect of the increased closure times at the Claremont Crossing.

Not only would the increased closures at this crossing impact heavily on the 200 plus residents, plus service vehicles, who have to cross the rail line several times a day. It would also create dangerous buildups of traffic on a bend in the road as residents wait for access to/from the main Howth Road. With a proposed available crossing time of 12 - 18 - ***non-consecutive !*** - minutes in every hour the effect on traffic flows will be catastrophic and potentially very dangerous.

A legal **right of way** has existed at all four Crossings - Baldoyle Road, Station Road, Cosh and Claremont since the direct rail service to Howth was initiated in 1877. The Irish Rail proposal in respect of the so called "Shuttle" service between Howth Junction and Howth would effectively reduce, limit and partially extinguish the existing established right of way, something that would adversely affect and be vigorously opposed by residents at all four locations.

The **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)** adopted by the newly established United Nations on 10 December 1948, is a document that acts like a global road map for freedom and equality – protecting the rights of every individual, everywhere.

**Article 13** of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) guarantees freedom of movement. You should be able to travel around your own country and choose where you live.

The **Treaty of Maastricht (1992)** introduced the concept of EU citizenship to be enjoyed automatically by every member of a Member State. It is this EU citizenship that underpins the right of persons to move freely within the territories of the member States. The **Lisbon Treaty (2009)** confirmed this right, which is also included in the general provisions on the **Area of Freedom, Security and Justice**.

All EU citizens and their family members have the right to move freely within the EU. This fundamental right is established by **Article 21** of the **Treaty on the functioning of the European Union** and **Article 45** of the **EU Charter of Fundamental Rights**.

The conditions for the exercise of the right of free movement within the territories of the Member States are set out in the **Free Movement Directive 2004/38/EC**. Common barriers to free movement include difficulties accessing services.

The Irish Rail proposal would entail the closure of the Claremont level crossing an additional six times every hour, reducing the available crossing time to between 18 and 24 minutes - non consecutive minutes! - in every hour. This would double the restrictions on my ability to cross the rail line and would be a restriction on my **freedom of movement**, my ability to access social services, medical and emergency services, public transport, schooling, shopping, banking, sporting and social activities.

**“ Maintain provision for through running from Connolly to the Howth Branch Line”**

(Stated as one of the CAF (Common Appraisal Framework) review considerations, Pre-Selection Option Report, section 3.3, page 15)

Whether deliberate or not, this is again misleading. There would be through running from Connolly to Howth Junction, the proposed transfer point for the proposed Howth “shuttle” service, but there would not be a through service from Connolly to Howth as there is at present.

**“...as a shuttle service, Howth Branch trains will be almost fully insulated from delays on other parts of the DART and IÉ network.”**

(Annexe 3.7 Technical Optioneering Report, section 3, page 8)

Indeed they should be! These shuttle services would operate only between Howth and Howth Junction. Wonderful if you want to travel backwards and forwards on this stretch, but utterly meaningless if you want to travel further than Howth Junction !

The closure times referenced by Irish Rail for the Claremont Crossing do not reflect reality. Actual times vary, but average 3 - 3.5 minutes per closure at best with frequent closures exceeding 5 minutes.

The actual closure time at the level crossing commences when the amber warning lights begin to flash and lasts until the red lights have ceased to flash. Traffic must stop when the amber lights come on, unless the vehicle has already crossed the stop line. Traffic must stop when the red lights flash. Traffic must remain stationary until the lights stop flashing.

Increasing the number of Crossing closures - by 50% ! - would create circumstances tempting frustrated road users to speed across just before the barriers come down, or as they are rising, but before the red light has ceased to flash.

Irish Rail have claimed<sup>6</sup> that for a train departing Howth the closure of the Claremont gates is triggered by the train passing an electronic point, yet it is common for the gates to be closed for some time before the train has actually departed the platform in Howth.

A Dublin to Howth train entering the Sutton Station / Cosh Crossing sector triggers the gates, not just at Cosh, but also at Claremont which, when it coincides with a departure from Howth, results in the doubling of the closure time for the gates at Claremont Crossing.

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