



Dublin City Council

Comhairle Cathrach Bhaile Átha Cliath

DART Underground – Oral Hearing

Proof of Evidence of

Mr. Dick Gleeson, City Planner

In respect of Strategic Planning Context

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 My name is Dick Gleeson. I hold a BA from NUI Maynooth, a H.Dip in Town Planning from U.C.D. I am a member of the I.P.I. and am an honorary member of the RIAI. As Dublin City Planner I head up the professional side of the City Planning Department where I have overall responsibilities for strategic and local planning and for development management.
- 1.2 I have served on several juries for city centre architectural competitions including the competition for the Spire and am a member of the Board of Temple Bar Cultural Trust, The Grangegorman Development Agency and the Academy of Urbanism.

2.0 Strategic Planning Context

- 2.1 As has been indicated in Section 2 of the Planning Authority's submission in relation to this application, the development of DART Underground is promoted and supported by a range of planning policies from national to local level. At a more strategic level this includes the National Spatial Strategy, the National Development Plan, the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area, Transport 21 and Platform for Change. At the more local level, DART Underground is supported by the Dublin City Development Plan and is consistent with the objectives contained in the Liberties Local Area Plan, Dublin Docklands Masterplan and the North Lotts Planning Scheme.
- 2.2 In the adopted City Development Plan 2011-2017, the proposed DART Underground is a key element of the Core Strategy, which seeks to achieve a quality, consolidated metropolitan area, for example through the strategies, policies and objectives contained in chapters 3, 4 and 5 of the Plan.
- 2.3 The adopted City Development Plan sets out the vision and the core strategy for the future development of the City.

The vision for the City is that;

Within the next 25 to 30 years, Dublin will have an established international reputation as one of the most sustainable, dynamic and resourceful city regions in Europe. Dublin, through the shared vision of its citizens and civic leaders, will be a beautiful, compact city, with a distinct character, a vibrant culture and a diverse, smart, green, innovation-based economy. It will be a socially inclusive city of urban neighbourhoods, all connected by an exemplary public transport, cycling and walking system and interwoven with a quality bio-diverse greenspace network. In short, the vision is for a capital city where people will seek to live, work and experience as matter of choice.

As set out in section 3.3 the core strategy is set out to achieve the vision and is translated into 3 key and interwoven strands ;

- a compact, quality, green, well-connected city, which generates a dynamic mixed use environment for living, working, social and cultural interaction
- a smart city, creating long term economic recovery
- a city of sustainable neighbourhoods and socially inclusive communities

The provision of DART Underground will underpin the successful delivery of the various priorities, policies and objectives in the adopted City Development Plan that have been developed out of the Core Strategy and the delivery of Transport 21 proposals has been identified as a priority.

- 2.4 Dublin is currently in the process of building a successful City Region that can deliver economic success, a high quality of life for all citizens, a powerful engine for the Republic as a whole, and perform effectively in a highly competitive international arena.
- 2.5 Successful city regions combine an effective core at the heart of the region with a coherent regional spatial structure incorporating a network of polycentric higher order urban centres, supported by economic strategies, density policies and an integrated public transport network. Synergies and interconnections between the regional core and the outer urban centres are critical.
- 2.6 Dublin's Inner City, the regional core, had contracted greatly by the mid 1980's and geographically was aligned with the two Inner City retail cores and the Georgian City to the South-East. Extensive urban regeneration over the last 20 years has seen this area greatly expand eastwards towards Docklands and The Point and westwards towards Heuston. While there is still a great level of unevenness across this extended area, and much needs to be achieved in terms of consolidation, the Inner City is developing cohesiveness and connectivity.
- 2.7 The City Council has mapped a network of local character areas and an evolving eco-system of economic engines, specialisms and cultural clusters which inhabit and are continuing to colonise this network. While the mapping of local character areas celebrates diversity and local identity, Legible Dublin is tackling the challenge of unity. A strategic framework of key public spaces and the routes that connect them will generate legibility in the urban structure and achieve the twin objectives of, (A), a public realm of international standing and, (B), making Dublin a great walking city. The corridor of the Liffey is a central spine and critically important in delivering this public realm network. An integrated and efficient public transport network is critical infrastructure that is required to service this complex and extended

Inner City. In rail terms this network can be seen to include higher density corridors extending out into the region and penetrating the core and an associated network of light rail connecting all significant locations within the extended Inner City.

- 2.8 In the adopted City Development Plan, it is stated policy to promote and facilitate the provision of DART Underground etc in order to achieve strategic public transport objectives (Policy SI 4). Policy SC 1 of the adopted Plan also emphasises the consolidation of the inner city through the linkage of existing and emerging clusters and communities.
- 2.9 In terms of providing a strategic network serving the Inner City and the region a number of critical planned pieces of the jigsaw are missing. DART Underground will connect the southern arc of the Dublin City Region with Metro North (and consequently the airport) at Stephens Green and directly link into the existing DART and mainline rail services at Heuston and Pearse stations. A second layer of light rail, QBC, and local bus services will support this primary network in the Inner City and outer urban areas.
- 2.10 Spatial economic strategies are emerging to support and develop existing Regional Planning Guidelines and integrate and exploit the public transport rationale. Existing and new economic and innovation specialisms including education, finance, digital services, law, retail, tourism, media, advertising, cultural services and medical campuses will continue to locate and cluster right across the extended Inner City.
- 2.11 Three innovation corridors are proposed in the adopted City Development Plan to strategically link the region with its Inner City core (section 3.2.2.2);
 - (a) The Northern Corridor will connect with the North City region and will develop from the spine and corridor infrastructure of Metro North. It will serve the Dublin City Region's main Airport, linking its passengers with the extended City Region and providing a platform to exploit the economic potential of the Airport zone. Metro North will also link with Swords, an urban centre with an increasingly important scale and economic profile in the City Region. This Northern Corridor also integrates the important Dublin City University (DCU) campus within the City Region and helps build and consolidate a sustainable future for Ballymun, the biggest regeneration project in the state. The Metro North route through the North Inner City will help to achieve a number of economic objectives for the area. The regeneration of O'Connell Street will be consolidated and a range of strategies to address the long-standing imbalance between the North and South Inner City will be strategically underpinned. The route will also connect major cultural and institutional uses within the wider Dublin area, such as the

cultural facilities in Parnell Square, the Mater Hospital, DCU etc.

- (b) The Southern Corridor builds on the new partnership between University of Dublin, Trinity College and University College Dublin, aimed at developing the economic potential of an entrepreneurial ecology focused on 3rd and 4th level research. While Trinity is already integrated with the DART corridor, additional rail infrastructure will develop interconnection with the UCD campus, link with the green line and connect with the business cluster at Sandyford. The DART Underground link at Pearse will connect the Southern Corridor with the Docklands area, the Western Corridor and with the mainline services at Heuston
 - (c) The Western Corridor will develop, expand and upgrade the existing infrastructure of the Naas Road, Grand Canal and Kildare rail line, and will tie into Heuston and, via DART Underground, into the city centre. The potential for redevelopment of large tracts of underutilised industrial lands combined with a sequence of dense new urban settlements along the Kildare line, e.g. Adamstown and Clonburris, means that DART Underground can deliver greater benefits in terms of interfacing with the Inner City.
- 2.12 As stated in the Plan, the inner city is now performing the function of a capital city core, linking to a number of regional polycentric centres, such as Swords, Tallaght and Sandyford, through the proposed corridors described in the core strategy. One of the keys to the success of this functional role is that high quality transport links are provided between the corridors and the polycentric centres. DART Underground will play a vital role in providing linkages between these locations. The Heuston and Environs Area will be the subject of a Local Area Plan under the new Development Plan and has also been designated a Strategic Development and Regeneration Area.
- 2.13 It should be noted that the Heuston Gateway area of the city has been transformed under the Heuston Framework Development Area and the guidance in the Dublin City Development Plan. This Framework aims to develop a new urban gateway character area focused on the transport node of Heuston Station. This incorporates sustainable densities and a focus on a quality contemporary architecture and urban form. The Framework highlights the opportunities to create linkages and dynamic relationships with the national cultural institutions in the Heuston environs.
- 2.14 DART Underground will further underpin the ability of the Heuston area to deliver on the strategy of the Framework. The Heuston station area has been identified as a Strategic Development Area under the adopted City Development Plan which will also feed into the Local Area Plan, also identified in the adopted City Development Plan.

- 2.15 The provision of a new transport network with key station locations will significantly improve access to areas of the City that previously may have suffered an element of dislocation, providing a fast and efficient link between the eastern and western parts of the City and, by virtue of interchanges both planned and existing networks, with the wider City Region. This will help to consolidate the Inner City in terms of retail, leisure and employment destinations such as the old city, the Digital Hub, the Grafton Street area, Trinity College, and the Docklands. Through the interconnection with the Luas Red Line at Docklands this connection route will be continued back to Heuston via O'Connell Street, and National Museum at Collins Barracks.

3.0 Urban Design and Public Realm

- 3.1 DART Underground, much like Metro North, represents one of the most significant insertions into the cityscape and, as such, urban design issues are of extreme importance. It is the Planning Authority's opinion that DART Underground has the potential, through excellence of design and the use of high quality materials, to provide a positive contribution to the urban design and public realm of the City.
- 3.2 It is considered vitally important that the design of the stations contributes architecturally to the City.
- 3.3 The new City Development Plan includes a number of policies promoting a high quality, safe public realm (see policies SC18 to SC24). Considerable investment by the City Council has taken place in the city in order to improve and maintain the public realm. Sections 9, 10 and Appendix 1 of the Planning Authority's submission deal with specific design issues in relation to the proposed stations and suggested conditions.

4.0 Consultations subsequent to submission

- 4.1 Subsequent to the submission of the Planning Authority's comments to An Bord Pleanála, a significant number of meetings have taken place between Irish Rail and various Departments within the City Council including Planning, Architecture, Archaeology, Conservation, Roads and Traffic, Engineering, Drainage, Water Services, Parks and Biodiversity. The purpose of these meetings was for Dublin City Council to give Irish Rail the opportunity to address the issues raised in the 114 no. conditions requested by the Planning Authority. The Planning Authority can confirm that an Agreed Position was reached in line with the evidence submitted by Messrs Muldoon, Lavery and Conroy for Irish Rail. To that end, the Planning Authority would indicate that the requested conditions should no longer apply as the issues have been addressed in the Agreed Position.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 In planning terms and in terms of the development of the City Region into the future, the development of DART Underground is a key piece of infrastructure, physically, economically and socially. The Planning Authority is of the opinion that DART Underground will bring significant long term benefits to the City and its population in terms of the provision of a world class piece of key infrastructure that will address the transport challenges of an expanding City Region. In economic terms, DART Underground will provide the City Region with the ability to better compete with other global locations. In social terms DART Underground will benefit the population of Dublin through the provision of safe, reliable and quick access across the city centre and the ability to unlock the potential of the wider City Region rail network.