

Dublin, May 7th 2020

The Chief Executive

Owen Keegan

Dublin City Council

Wood Quay, Dublin 8

D08RF3F

CCed: Brendan O'Brien, Executive Manager (Traffic), Dublin City Council

Anne Graham, Chief Executive Officer, National Transport Authority

Re: Temporary infrastructure for cycling and walking

Dear Mr Keegan,

We, as residents, business owners and representatives of the Phibsboro community, would like to see improved infrastructure for walking and cycling implemented in the area, permanently where possible and temporary where necessary. Towns and cities around the world are already doing it: Milan, Berlin, Bogota, Paris, and many more.

We would like firstly to express our support for the implementation of the contraflow cycle lane on Nassau street as well as the installations of bollards around the city to widen the footpaths (e.g. Rathmines). We also welcome the change in traffic sequencing at Doyle's corner. This makes a huge difference in making the area more walkable. We do also welcome the closure of the Phoenix to through motorised traffic, making it a true public amenity that families can enjoy. We will send a request to the OPW on the subject.

However, with the large increase in people, including children, cycling and walking, it is clear that many street layouts across Dublin generally are not currently fit for purpose.

This is especially true for the Phibsboro area. With two national roads crossing the village, the majority of public space has been given to motorised traffic. As a consequence, footpaths are narrow and there is no segregated cycle lane in the entire area, making 1) social distancing impossible for pedestrians 2) cycling very intimidating for people who want to cycle and 3) nearly impossible for children to cycle as they would have to mix with general motorised traffic. At the moment, people have to step onto the road to maintain social distancing - if motorised traffic goes back to pre-Covid 19 levels, people will endanger themselves by doing so, or endanger themselves by not having the appropriate social distancing on the footpaths.

Covid-19 is going to be a long term fight, and social distancing is here to stay, at least in the medium term. Post the current lockdown restrictions, a large proportion of the Irish population will again be moving around towns and cities, but will be hesitant to use public transport. Our cities pre pandemic were choking with motorised traffic, costing the exchequer and endangering people's health. Furthermore, with social distancing measures still in place, the capacity of public transport will remain at a fraction of what it was. Dublin Bus will have to refuse passengers entry to buses. This could lead to an increase in motorised traffic, impeding the economic recovery that the country and the city will badly need.

A low cost solution is cycling, as it enables social distancing, while a cycle lane enables 4 times more people per hour than a lane given to the private car. Lastly, it has been demonstrated that air pollution is a contributor to the dissemination of the virus, making the switch to walking and cycling not only the cheapest, but also the safest option if we want to curtail the virus.

Already, a great number of people across the city have already switched to cycling on quiet residential and arterial streets. Those gains will be lost if safe infrastructure isn't provided to make cycling viable as a normal activity.

At a micro level, in the Phibsboro / Dublin 7 area, we feel the following should be implemented:

- Widening of the footpaths by installing cones / bollards all along the Phibsboro road, from Monck place (at the Back Page junction) to the Whitworth road (at the Bernard Shaw), especially around bus stops.

- Creating a continuous cycle lane along the same stretch by removing on street parking spaces and loading bays. Having a continuous cycle lane in the village is essential for commuters to get safely into town. Furthermore, businesses in the area are having a hard time and enabling more pedestrians and people on bikes to visit the area could be very beneficial for their survival, as cycle lanes have a positive impact on retail

- Widening the footpaths in the village, especially in front of cafes, to allow for outdoor seatings and provide a socially distant seating area for customers, thus boosting local businesses.

- Widening of the footpaths from Dorset St to the Phoenix Park + creating a cycle lane by removing on street parking. Many people use the Phoenix park when it is within the 2km radius. Getting there while respecting social distancing is not possible. There is not enough space for one person with a buggy or a wheelchair, let alone for people 2 metres apart. This pushes people onto the road.

- Widening the footpath at Crossguns Bridge to take over some space from the road to make it safer for pedestrians.

After weeks of lockdown, we believe that implementing those measures will help contain the infection rate thanks to proper social distancing, as well as helping the city, its citizens and its businesses for the next stage in fighting this new coronavirus.

Again, our thanks to the works to date in other Dublin areas, and we hope you will consider focusing on the Phibsborough neighbourhood next. I enclose a

list of signatories, including local, national and European representatives, business representatives, as well as 100 residents.

Sincerely,

Anne Bedos

Rothar