



## DART+ South West Public Consultation

### Submission to Irish Rail

23 June 2021

#### ***About Us***

Rail Users Ireland is Ireland's National Rail Users Organisation. We are objective observers and customers of Ireland's rail transportation network. We want the provision of excellent customer service to rail transport users and international best practice applied to the development of Mainline, Suburban, Metro and Light Rail transport in Ireland. We are ordinary rail users just like you, and we aspire to being your voice in the media and at Operator/Government level. We are a member of the European Passenger Federation and are thus recognised at EU level.

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## **Summary**

We express our full support for the DART+ South West project, a significant and long overdue contribution to the provision of a world class urban transit solution for Dublin.

We are however obliged to call attention to the fact this proposal is a compromised solution which sets out to find a cheaper solution for the DART Underground Western portal. But this in turn significantly increases costs between Hazelhatch and Parkwest owing to major trackworks and signalling modifications which could be avoided as well as the disruption to passengers during these works.

## **Electrification**

The electrification system should incorporate energy recovery through regeneration of braking energy to the national grid or provision of battery storage to absorb energy. The current DART system does regenerate but only within the DART network, regeneration to the national grid or battery could deliver significant energy savings and reduced usage of carbon-based brakes which release carbon dust into the air. This could also permit the removal of the rheostatic brake elements from the train thus reducing weight while also increasing the life of brake discs.

While this will not alter the number of substations required it may impact the size/layout of the buildings required to host them.

Consideration should be given to provision of clearances for 25kV AC electrification given the likelihood this will be chosen if electrification to Cork/Limerick were to proceed in the future.

## **Stations**

### ***Kylemore Road***

If the original approved DART underground plan was to be followed the provision of the 4 platform station at Inchicore would avoid the need to proceed with a station at Kylemore Road, greatly simplifying the task.

If a decision is made to ignore the Western portal option at Inchicore a station must be built as part of the project. We view this as a one way decision if the station is not built we do not see any practical way to retrospectively provide a station without need for a further railway order and significant disruption.

The portal location for DART underground is a decision beyond the scope of the railway order proposed, but it would be foolish to proceed without locking this down first.

### ***Heuston***

The proposal to use platforms 6/7/8 is challenging as current track configuration is a single-track approach to these platforms, it also serves as one of the two approaches to platform 5, this presents a risk to operations and reduces capacity.

The proposal must include a two track approach with 4 electrified platforms, conversion of the siding next to the platform 8 to platform 9 for which there was passive provision already.

## ***Heuston West***

Integrating the station with the local area presents challenges, access via a gated apartment complex is unlikely to be opened to public access and the location itself is likely non-compliant with the gradient and curve requirements laid down by the CRR for new platforms.

Placing a station underneath the South Circular Road junction would provide significant connectivity options with the local area which is poorly served currently, this should be considered as a major intervention is planned already at this location. This station may be compatible with a DART underground portal option in Heuston, whereas the platform 10/11 option is not.

## ***Cabra***

While the simplest option is at the former Cement site which sufficient land has been retained for a station, we do not see this as being the best location for the local community.

Sufficient space exists between the Cabra Road and the Old Cabra Road, by providing two entrances, the catchment area includes the entire catchment area of the Cement site but also provide an additional catchment area and access to public transport connections.

While this is challenging to achieve it offers the best outcome for the local community. While there are issues with the gradient in the area, these are minor compared to gradients at existing stations.

## ***Stations - General***

Stations should have level/step free access provided on both sides to maximise accessibility and minimise walking distance to the station.

- Ramps are preferable over lifts.
- Each access point should be provided with ticket selling and validation equipment and passenger information.
- Multiple exits if possible, to maximise local access.
- Well-lit, covered, and secure bike parking should be provided at all stations
- Regardless of current or future plans, provision for bus stops with appropriate parking bays and shelters should be provided at/adjacent to all stations where this is feasible.
- Open plan stations without turnstile barriers are desirable to reduce station size and improve passenger flows.

## **Infrastructure**

Best long-term approach is to build the DART Underground per the approved plans with the Western portal at Inchicore, this results in lower cost and minimises disruption to rail passengers and the local community during construction.

None of the proposed track modifications between Hazelhatch and Park West would be required if DART Underground proceeded first.

If DART Underground were to be built first, there would be no need for 4 tracking between Inchicore and Heuston avoiding considerable disruption and cost especially at the South Circular Road junction.

All the Heuston Portal options would make it impractical to operate services via the Phoenix Park tunnel, this would make any future services to a station in Cabra impractical, thus if any level of schedule service is to be maintained on this route the DART Underground portal must be on the Inchicore site was previously approved.

