

Item No. 2

Report to the Chairperson and Members of the Transportation Strategic Policy Committee

Liffey Cycle Route: Emerging Preferred Option Update

1. Background

The Liffey Cycle Route project sets out to provide a continuous cycleway connecting the Phoenix Park and Heuston Station along the Liffey to the Tom Clarke Bridge (formerly the East Link Bridge). Work began on the design in 2012 with workshops being held with stakeholders to allow for their input into the design.

Since 2015 discussions on the Liffey Cycle Route have concentrated on the area between Heuston Station and Church Street as Dublin City Council (DCC) has sought to identify an optimal route past the pinch point on the quays between Ellis Quay, east of James Joyce Bridge (Blackhall Place) and Arran Quay, west of Father Matthew Bridge (Church Street). In particular seven options have been considered in detail:

- Option 1: Two Way North Quays with limited boardwalk
- Option 2: Two Way North Quays with buses rerouted via Benburb Street
- Option 3: As per Option 2 with Croppies Acre relocated to the quays.
- Option 4: One way building side on either quay.
- Option 5: Cyclists rerouted north of Croppies Acre and through Smithfield
- Option 6: Buses rerouted via Benburb Street as far as Queen Street
- Option 7: Traffic rerouted via Blackhall Place, North Brunswick Street and Church Street.

At the SPC meeting in May 2016 DCC proposed to develop Option 5. On the basis of concerns that were raised at the May SPC meeting, DCC informed the SPC at the October Meeting that it would be investigating the feasibility of Option 7 in more detail.

The purpose of this report, following on from the request at the last SPC Meeting, is to present the entire Liffey Cycle Route, from Tom Clarke Bridge to Heuston and Phoenix Park to the Members for their consideration. These proposals provide the basis for the high quality segregated cycle route which will meet the current and future needs of cycling along the Quays.

2. Overall Route

The entire Liffey Cycle Route as presented provides for a high quality segregated cycle route connecting Heuston Station and the Phoenix Park with the Tom Clarke Bridge. The overall segregated cycle network length along the route is 6.0 kilometres. It provides a vital spine to the Cycle Network Plan and links with the existing Grand Canal Cycle Route as well as the Royal Canal Cycle Route and the proposed Clontarf to City Centre Cycle Route. There is potential in the future to extend the Liffey Cycle Route to link with Poolbeg SDZ via the proposed Gut bridge and the Tom Clarke Bridge following potential improvements. It will also provide an important commuter link to the Docklands SDZ where cycle parking provision in new developments will be more than three times that of car parking provision.

Currently, more than 800 cyclists travel east and west along the quays during the morning peak hour. The Liffey Cycle Route will not only provide for this volume of cyclists using the quays but will cater for the anticipated growth in cycling numbers, estimated to be at 1,200 cyclists per hour by 2021. This is in line with the growth that has been experienced on the Grand Canal Cycle Route.

Implementing the Liffey Cycle Route will present certain challenges. In order to provide the LCR, approximately 15 of 19 existing trees on the north quays between the Millennium Bridge and O'Connell Street Bridge will need to be removed. Ten of these trees have been identified following a tree survey as being of high quality. Some modifications may be required on the Scherzer Bridge at North Wall Quay which is a protected structure.

The Liffey Cycle Route as presented takes account of the proposals for the Eden Quay bus gate. However the Liffey Cycle Route is not dependent on the Eden Quay Gate for its implementation.

3. Addressing the Pinchpoint at Ellis Quay and Arran Quay

Option 7 maintains bus priority on the north quays. It provides a feasible solution for placing the Liffey Cycle Route on the quays in line with the previously stated preference of the SPC Members. This will require rerouting of traffic from Ellis Quay and Arran Quay. This rerouting will maintain access to all city centre car parks. The junction of North Brunswick Street /North King Street/Church Street junction will be significantly upgraded to improve access through to Bolton Street and the orbital routes around the city centre.

Since the last SPC meeting in October, a detailed constraints analysis has been conducted on Option 7 with the conclusion that there are no physical impediments which would prevent this option from being implemented as presented. DCC has also consulted with the National Transport Authority and they are supportive of Option 7.

4. Next Steps

On the basis of the Liffey Cycle Route as presented, the Environment and Transportation Department will proceed to undertake the following:

1. finalise the scheme preliminary drawings,
2. complete the detailed analysis of the traffic impacts and identify appropriate mitigation measures,
3. complete the air quality and noise impact assessments and,
4. complete a screening process to establish the appropriate public consultation process to follow.

It is intended to present the outcome of the screening process and the time line for the public consultation process to the SPC in Q1 of 2017.

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