

Item No. 6

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

Liffey Cycle Route : Emerging Preferred Option Update

The Liffey Cycle Route project sets out to provide continuous cycleway connecting the Phoenix Park and Heuston Station along the Quays to the Tom Clarke Bridge and Point roundabout. The study area for the project is the North and South Quays and this project is highly significant for cycling in Dublin, as it aims to provide commuter, tourist and leisure cycling linking employment centres, and providing direct linkages to the main tourist destination.

However, the key challenge of the project has been the availability of space on the Liffey Quays to allow for a high quality segregated cycle route. The non statutory public consultation conducted in 2015 showed that 94% of respondents favoured a cycle track on the Quays and that 80% of respondents saw that this should be two way on the North Quays.

The options then considered for more detailed examination were Options 1, 2 and 3:-

Option 1 Two way North Quays with limited Board walk

Board walk was then ruled out due to the historic nature of the bridges particularly Liam Mellow's Bridge at Queen Street.

Option 2 Two way North Quays with buses rerouted via Benburb Street

This option could not be progressed further due to not having a continuous route at Arran Quay Terrace/ Smithfield, in addition there was considerable local opposition to this option.

Option 3 As per option 2 but with Croppies Acre relocated to river edge.

The issue of moving Croppies Acre to the river edge attracted a lot of negative comment regarding the historic nature of the site and the potential for disturbance of historic graves. In light of not being able to proceed with option 2, option 3 also would not be able to proceed to further examination.

At the Strategic Policy Committee meeting of 25th May 2016 a report recommending examination of an option 5 as the preferred route for the Liffey Cycle Route between Heuston and Church Street was adopted. In combination with the two-way cycle route on the North Quays between Church Street and Custom House Quay and the upgrading of the existing cycle route between Custom House Quay and the 3 Arena.

Option 5 essentially involves directing the Liffey Cycle Route to the north of Croppies Acre, along Benburb Street, via Smithfield, Phoenix Street North, Hammond Lane and rejoining the North Quays via Church Street.

This unfortunately moved away from the original project aims and so while adopting the report, the Strategic Policy Committee expressed concerns and general disappointment regarding the route and in particular the fact that the proposed route had been diverted from the Quays.

Members of the SPC asked that if this option was to proceed that it should no longer be called the Liffey cycle route as it no longer met the objective of the original proposal which was to provide the high quality segregated cycle route along the Liffey Quay. It was also felt that there was now a loss of an iconic route along the river in favour of a side route which would not provide full segregation and which the NCBI also felt may cause problems for visually impaired users of the Luas stop at Croppies Acre.

Subsequent to the meeting, one of the key stakeholders in the project, Dublin Cycling Campaign, also expressed their considerable disappointment with the proposed route and stated that they would not be able to support the scheme as proposed.

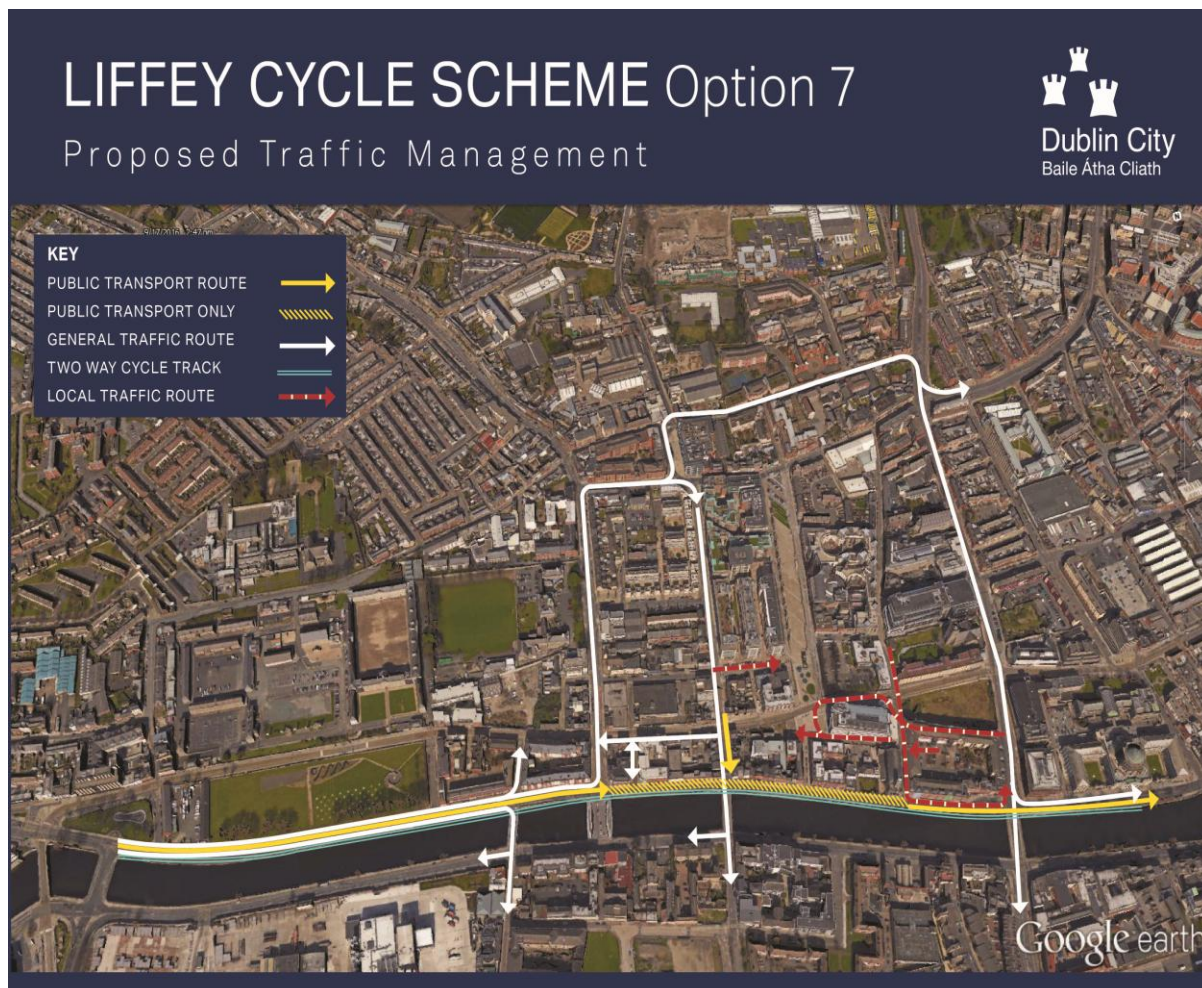
An option 6 was then suggested by the cycling campaign which was Option 3 but with the buses turning back on to the Quays at Queen Street rather than at Church Street. However this still had all the drawbacks for option 3 and major issues with the turn for buses at Queen Street on to the Quays and the inability of this option to provide a continuous cycle route.

Option 7

In light of the negative commentary received in relation to Option 5, it was decided to completely review all options for the Liffey Cycle Route from Church Street Bridge to Frank Sherwin Bridge in order to meet the requirements set out both in the original project brief and the clearly stated preference of the SPC Members.

An option 7 has been developed which makes use of the existing space from the Frank Sherwin Bridge to the James Joyce Bridge on the North Quays, and which allows for a segregated cycle track on the Liffey side alongside a Bus and a general Traffic lane. This then meant there was no requirement for any alteration to Croppies Acre.

At Ellis Quay it is proposed that there will be a Public Transport lane with the existing general traffic lane converted to a segregated cycle track from Ellis Quay as far as Church Street, where the road widths widen again to allow for Bus and General Traffic lanes as well as the segregated cycle track.



(Option 7 showing diversion route)

General traffic will be diverted at Blackhall Place via North King Street and North Brunswick Street to Church Street and can rejoin the Quays at Church Street /Inns Quay. This diversion will still allow access to all city centre car parks and also provides a easier route through to Bolton Street and the orbital routes around the city centre; it should also be borne in mind that at this point on the Quays there is only one lane of general traffic to be diverted.

Option 7 provides the following :-

- Two way segregated cycle route along the Liffey the entire distance from Frank Sherwin Bridge to Church Street bridge.
- Footpaths remain intact on the river side of the Quays.
- Public Transport and Taxis remain on the Quays providing the most direct route.
- No boardwalk is needed
- No intervention at any of the historic Liffey bridges.
- No changes required at any part of Croppies Acre.
- Diversion of general traffic from a section of the North Quays.

At present work is in progress on the detailed examination of the traffic diversion, examination of road widths, lane capacity and junction analysis to determine if any improvements are needed on the proposed diversion route.

It is now proposed that for the SPC meeting on the 23rd of November, 2016, that the entire Liffey Cycle Route be presented to the SPC including detailed analysis of option 7.

It is hoped that after this meeting the SPC will agree that the entire Scheme can proceed to public consultation using the Part VIII procedure.

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