



Pre Draft Bray LAP Submission - Report

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Topic

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I feel that bray is currently on a precipice of no return. Years of bad planning, with little or no foresight has caused bray to be in constant gridlock. This bridge in particular will not solve our problems, seapoint rd is on a cliff edge, it can never be widened. The junction in question is already a danger point, as noted in the rd safety audit. Today I counted 5 hubcaps, all lost from cars since the weekend. We pick them up every few days, and leave them against the wall. Reconsider your plans. A bridge is needed, but not here.

File

8 Reasons why this bridge should not go ahead.docx, 0.02MB

8 Reasons why Wicklow County Council's proposed sustainable transport bridge

should **not** go ahead where, and as, it is planned:

- 1) It's right beside the railway line. Iarnród Éireann have already publicly acknowledged their fears for their east coast railway line due to rising sea levels and consequent coastal erosion, saying: "Some areas of the East Coast rail line have seen encroachment through the loss of coast of up to 20-30 metres in the last 10 years alone" Why would we build another multi-million bridge beside this? (See Project Background in <https://www.irishrail.ie/en-ie/about-us/iarnrod-eireann-projects-and-investments/ecripp>)
- 2) The outgoing Government committed to 'looking at' setting up an inter-departmental steering group (Housing and Public Works) to deal with rising sea levels and coastal erosion following the publication of the National Coastal Change Management Strategy last October. The NCCMS recommended a policy called 'managed retreat' of homes and businesses from the coast, according to a report in the Irish Independent (<https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/thousands-of-homeowners-could-be-forced-to-abandon-coastal-properties-under-new-national-policies/a1699941090.html>). Wicklow County Council proposes to locate this bridge immediately west of the railway line in Bray: immediately east is Bray harbour.
- 3) Its design, similar to the Samuel Beckett bridge over the Liffey, has been shown to be highly dangerous to swans, as their poor forward eyesight and heavy bodies make it very difficult for them to see and to over-fly the high cable design of a suspension bridge. The proposed bridge would be directly on the flight path of our swan colony at Bray harbour, shortly after their take-off from the harbour. (<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/environment/warning-issued-over-risk-of-swan-deaths-at-new-bray-bridge-1.4668724>)
- 4) It is highly dangerous to humans too because of its access road from the north diminishing and damming an already constricted flood plain. See the mandatory 'Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines' at <https://www.opr.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/2009-Planning-System-Flood-Risk-Mgmt-1.pdf>. Bray's Development Plans show an increase in Flood Zones A and B (the two highest categories of flood risk) on the former Bray Golf Club lands from 2011 to 2018, despite flood defence works being completed along the Dargle in 2017. In Wicklow's proposal for the sustainable transport bridge, however, the flood plain next to the river is categorised as Flood Zone C, the lowest category of flood risk, directly contradicting Bray's development plans. The former categorisation allows the site to 'pass' the Justification Test required by the above Guidelines to allow housing to be built on Flood Zones A and B, while the latter 'justifies' building a high, wide embankment across the flood plain.
- 5) The Safety Audit submitted with Wicklow's plans is laden with criticism, warning that the design of this bridge is dangerous for both cyclists and pedestrians, as its constricted nature, especially where it passes between the old pumping station and the railway, means that pedestrians and cyclists will have to share the same lane at times. It is particularly dangerous where the bridge is proposed to end at the narrow, crooked junction between the only access to Seapoint Court and the railway bridge next to the Harbour bar. (<https://www.wicklow.ie/Portals/0/adam/Documents/0dhBRy7-7kKinU82VPYiDg/Link/App%20I%20-%20Road%20Safety%20Audit.pdf>)

- 6) The proposed sustainable transport' bridge will divert public transport *away* from the town centre, north of the river: it will not take one single car off the Fran O'Toole bridge or its feeder roads. Surely any new bridge should be designed and located to divert cars away from the town centre, and instead use the Fran O'Toole bridge for public transport only, with safe pedestrian and cycle boardwalks (already proposed) on either side of it. The following document takes councillors' agreement to the proposed transport bridge for granted also, but admits (end of page 4) that a "new road bridge from Herbert Road to the Upper Dargle Road", where a bridge for cyclists and pedestrians has been planned at the Slang area for years now, "may be deemed necessary"
(https://www.nationaltransport.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Bray_Transport_Study_2019.pdf). A bridge at that location would allow cars to leave the M11 at the Fassaroe exit, mid-way between the Wilton Roundabout at Bray North (Junction 5) and the major roundabout near Brennanstown Riding School at Bray South (Junction 6), both permanently congested.
- 7) The coming of the Luas to Bray seems to be Wicklow's consistently declared *raison d'être* for putting this bridge in place at all. Yet the Luas is not even part of Wicklow's present proposal. The latest report that we can find on the possibility of the Luas being extended to Bray is from our local newspaper on 7th March last -
<https://www.independent.ie/regionals/wicklow/wicklow-district/blow-to-wicklow-commuters-as-plans-for-dart-and-luas-extensions-hit-setback/a1310490220.html> . Tom Galvin reported the NTA as saying: "Luas to Bray is part of the Medium-Term proposals for development and delivery within 2031-2036. *The alignment and the locations to be served have yet to be determined and will be the subject of future planning, appraisal and design work.* The enabling infrastructure required for this extension have therefore not been determined at this stage." By 2031-2036 will the Government's 'managed retreat' strategy not be in place already? Older plans for the extension of the Luas to Bray show other, more viable, options. Finally, while Minister Eamon Ryan delivered a somewhat cautious written reply on the subject in the Dáil in February this year
(<https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2024-02-20/178/>), he was much more definite in a verbal answer to a question from Deputy Cormac Devlin on 20th September, 2020 - <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2020-09-24/10/> .
- 8) This land should be used to build homes on safe ground, not roads.

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