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To: <devplan@naasudc.ie>
Date: 4/3/09 12:06
Subject: New Naas Town Council Development Plan 2011-2016

Please find attached a submission from Iarnrod Eireann to the above Development Plan.

Yours sincerely,

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Planning Department
Kildare County Council

3rd April 2009

**Re: Naas Town Council Development Plan Review – Preparation of new Naas Town
Council Development Plan 2011-2016**

Dear Sir or Madam,

I refer to your letter of 13th March inviting Iarnród Éireann (IÉ) to submit a response outlining the company's long term plans and programmes and in particular how they relate to the new Naas Town Council Development Plan Review. Thank you for the opportunity to respond. I set out in this response IÉ's submission which summarises IÉ's key investment plans for the next decade.

With specific regard to rail the Government has strongly endorsed the vital role of rail in all National / Local strategic land-use and transportation policy. IÉ is also anxious to see further expansion and integration across the railway network. It is our policy to adhere to the objectives contained in the various Regional Planning Guidelines and the overarching National Spatial Strategy. These plans promote significantly enhanced inter-Regional connectivity thereby improving competitiveness and accessibility throughout the island. Rail development and expansion is considered an important driver of this objective in all Local, Regional and National planning.

The challenge for the railway, as an important national asset, is to provide frequent quality services that meet the mobility needs of customers effectively and at an affordable cost while contributing to the long term sustainable development of the country in line with a number of key national policies.

In expanding the railway, IÉ's current infrastructure investment priorities are largely focused on the roll-out of the major rail projects contained in the Government's strategic transport plan Transport 21. This will deliver very significant improvements in rail over the next decade.

In recent years Iarnród Éireann has been among the fastest growing railways in Europe with a total patronage of 46 million journeys recorded in 2007, although the recent economic downturn has adversely impacted on the demand for travel across all sectors. The record investment programme in our network continues to pay dividends. Rail modal share is

increasing and in Dublin alone the proportion of rail trips in the peak accessing the City Centre has increased from 13% in 2000 to over 17% currently. Many of these newly generated rail trips arising from the investment in the network are would-be car users. This trend is very encouraging and is compatible with policy at all levels including the new DoT Transport Policy for Ireland 2009 – 2020 'Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future'. Notably one of the key objectives of this new Transport Policy is the reduction of the private car's share of modal transport from 65% to 45% by 2020. IÉ welcomes this objective and we would like to see it strongly endorsed in all Development Plans going forward.

The role of rail is being transformed by a progressive expansionist policy which will see rail competing strongly for car based trips in the future. In the Dublin Region alone it is clear from trends that investment in rail has won the hearts and minds of many would-be car drivers accessing the city centre. For Iarnród Éireann the issue of sustainability is not only building on these trends but replicating it throughout the country.

Priorities for investment in rail in the GDA are determined by a number of factors including the;

- Need to provide capacity for the very significant population growth along the rail lines radiating from the City, particularly the Northern, Maynooth and Kildare lines.
- Need to serve an expanding commuter belt driven by the search for affordable housing.
- Need to address key bottlenecks in the system particularly relating to terminal capacity in the city centre and inadequate train paths along feeder lines.
- Need to ensure compatibility with longer term higher capacity options e.g. the through running of services via a city centre tunnel.
- Need to facilitate easier interchange options e.g. ticketing, park and ride etc
- Need to upgrade facilities in line with modern customer expectations and to provide for the appropriate levels of comfort.

The major focus of the IÉ Investment Plan of relevance to the new Naas Town Council Development Plan is on the development of Commuter / Regional / Intercity rail links to / from the Capital.

A number of key rail infrastructure / service enhancement projects are planned which will further improve the attraction of rail services, particularly for motorists.

One of the key Transport 21 rail infrastructure projects that will provide a very significant boost to rail frequency and capacity in Kildare County is the Kildare Route Project.

This project involves quadrupling of critical section of track between Cherry Orchard and Hazlehatch on the Heuston-Kildare line, as well as associated ancillary works such as signalling and station developments. The project will allow separation of long distance and commuter services and improve speed and capacity for commuter, regional and intercity services.

The areas served by the Heuston/Kildare line are growing rapidly. Existing train services are fully subscribed and capacity for growth is very restricted. New trackwork and signalling is designed to provide increased operational flexibility to run more frequent services for each of the three market segments operating on the line –commuter, regional and intercity. A key objective is to accommodate a peak hour service pattern of 4 commuter, 4 regional and 4 intercity services. The project will also facilitate higher density developments along the corridor according to local authority land use objectives. Construction began in mid 2007 and good progress is being made. On 16 April 2007 Adamstown Station was opened. On 05 August 2008, Park West and Cherry Orchard Station was officially opened and Clondalkin Fonthill station was also officially opened on 13 October 2008. The full project is on target for completion in Spring 2010.



Frequency of Intercity/ Regional and commuter trains will increase very significantly along the South-West rail corridor when this project is completed. This project will have significant benefits to citizens living in Kildare County.

A number of other projects are planned and which will be implemented with Transport 21 funding include;

- The Centralised Traffic Control centre will be expanded and updated to accommodate the increased volume of traffic throughout the network.
- There will be increased outer commuter belt service frequencies providing improved rail connections between Dundalk, Longford, Athlone, Portlaoise, Carlow, Gorey and the city centre. A modern fleet of Intercity Railcars has already been ordered and will be phased in over the next three years.
- The DART and Intercity railcar fleet will be expanded to facilitate the increased service offering.
- There will be a further expansion of exit validation, supported by the introduction of a Smart Card ticketing system.
- New Stations will be provided where feasible and where third party funding / development levies is made available (e.g. Naas & Sallins South)
- Ongoing expansion of Park and Ride facilities at suitable locations throughout the GDA
- Major redevelopments of Pearse and Tara Street Stations are also planned as part of wider commercial developments, in order to meet the access requirements of a significant increase in passenger numbers.
- Resignalling the Maynooth and Northern rail lines including through the City Centre along with the removal / automation / peak closure of level crossings along the Maynooth and South East DART lines. This will allow a future potential level of service of around 17 trains per hour subject to demand.
- Upgrading the capacity of the Maynooth line to cater for the re-opening of rail services to Navan on a Phased basis. Phase 1 will be to Dunboyne / Pace including a major M3 P&R site and is scheduled for delivery by 2010. Feasibility studies and demand modelling has indicated that the Navan line, which is scheduled for completion by 2015, could potentially bring up to 8m passengers into the city centre by rail annually, largely from County Meath. This will further improve the public transport modal share access to the city centre.

One very significant T21 rail infrastructure development that is planned which also falls within the next Naas Town Council Development Plan period is the construction of the DART Underground tunnel between Docklands and Heuston Station. This is scheduled for completion in 2015. The DART underground running east-west through the city centre is the most significant piece of rail infrastructure to be constructed under the T21 investment programme.

This will serve several new city centre stations bringing direct rail access to an expanding and geographically wider catchment.

This DART underground tunnel will remove a major bottleneck in the City Centre and will allow for the efficient twinning of services, serving a wide commuter rail belt, without central area conflict. Such conflict has to date severely limited the critical peak capacity of the network. The key features of the network will include:-

- Superior access to the City Centre for commuter rail services offering less than a 75 minute journey time between the City Centre and most of the major population centres within a 100km radius of the Capital.
- Northern and Kildare route services linked via the DART Underground.
- Maynooth and South East DART services linked via the Loop Line bridge.
- Pearse will be the major interchange station between both services.
- St. Stephen's Green will be the main interchange point with Metro North.
- Electrified DART services extended to Drogheda, Maynooth and Hazelhatch
- Higher frequency services in the peak encouraging turn-up-and-go travel patterns

The DART underground project when completed will deliver much improved penetration of the city centre directly by rail serving key destination zones for both work and leisure based trips. This will have a very significant positive impact on rail users in Kildare who currently have to interchange at Heuston Station in order to complete their journey into the City Centre. Rail usage is forecast by the DTO, subject to economic and population growth, to increase significantly across the network with the introduction of the tunnel link. The DTO have estimated from detailed simulation modelling that the implementation of Transport 21, including the DART Underground link, will result in a potential trebling of rail patronage in the GDA to around 100m passengers by 2020, subject to demand. The DTO have also estimated that the DART underground tunnel will have a major decongestion benefit. This is entirely consistent with the DoT's Sustainable Transport future policy and will make the Dublin Region, not only a better place to live and work, but will also enhance its competitiveness and attraction.

Investment in public transport is only one side of the equation to achieve a sustainable balance to increasing levels and changing patterns of travel demand. The focus will also need to be on policies which promote greater use of the radical investment in public transport coming on stream. Iarnród Éireann for its part will continue to work with all agencies to maximise the benefits of rail and to widen the catchment to build on recent trends and entice a greater number of car users to rail in the future. Despite current economic difficulties, the

surge in passenger growth achieved by Iarnród Éireann throughout the country, within Dublin and across all services in recent years is testimony to the benefits of investment in rail.

I hope that this gives you a good indication of the ambitious rail developments that are planned to be delivered over the next Development Plan period which will further build on the good progress made to date and will significantly enhance rail access within Kildare County in the future.

Yours sincerely,

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