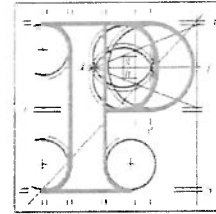


**Our Case Number:** ABP-320164-24

**Planning Authority Reference Number:**



**An  
Bord  
Pleanála**

Fáilte Ireland  
88-95 Amiens Street  
Dublin 1  
D01 WR86

**Date:** 06 November 2024

**Re:** DART + Coastal North Railway Order 2024 - Northern Line between Dublin City Centre and Drogheda including the Howth Branch  
Dublin City Centre and Drogheda, located in counties Dublin, Meath and Louth

Dear Sir / Madam,

An Bord Pleanála has received your recent letter in relation to the above mentioned case. The contents of your letter have been noted.

More detailed information in relation to strategic infrastructure development can be viewed on the Board's website: [www.pleanala.ie](http://www.pleanala.ie).

If you have any queries in relation to the matter please contact the undersigned officer of the Board at [laps@pleanala.ie](mailto:laps@pleanala.ie)

Please quote the above mentioned An Bord Pleanála reference number in any correspondence or telephone contact with the Board.

Yours faithfully,

Aisling Reilly  
Executive Officer  
Direct Line: 01-8737131

RA03

Teil	Tel	(01) 858 8100
Glaao Áitiúil	LoCall	1890 275 175
Facs	Fax	(01) 872 2684
Láithreán Gréasáin	Website	<a href="http://www.pleanala.ie">www.pleanala.ie</a>
Ríomhphost	Email	<a href="mailto:bord@pleanala.ie">bord@pleanala.ie</a>

64 Sráid Maoilbhríde	64 Marlborough Street
Baile Átha Cliath 1	Dublin 1
D01 V902	D01 V902

BL-002537-24

## Aisling Reilly

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**From:** LAPS  
**Sent:** Thursday 24 October 2024 14:59  
**To:** Aisling Reilly  
**Subject:** FW: DART+ Coastal North Railway Order Ref. NA29N.320164-24 (Submission)  
**Attachments:** Fáilte Ireland Submission-DART+ Coastal North Railway Order Ref. NA29N.320164-24.pdf

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**From:** SIDS <[sids@pleanala.ie](mailto:sids@pleanala.ie)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 24, 2024 11:00 AM  
**To:** LAPS <[laps@pleanala.ie](mailto:laps@pleanala.ie)>  
**Subject:** FW: DART+ Coastal North Railway Order Ref. NA29N.320164-24 (Submission)

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**From:** Bord <[bord@pleanala.ie](mailto:bord@pleanala.ie)>  
**Sent:** Thursday 24 October 2024 10:31  
**To:** SIDS <[sids@pleanala.ie](mailto:sids@pleanala.ie)>  
**Subject:** FW: DART+ Coastal North Railway Order Ref. NA29N.320164-24 (Submission)

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**From:** Yvonne Jackson <[Yvonne.Jackson@failteireland.ie](mailto:Yvonne.Jackson@failteireland.ie)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 23, 2024 5:17 PM  
**To:** Bord <[bord@pleanala.ie](mailto:bord@pleanala.ie)>  
**Subject:** DART+ Coastal North Railway Order Ref. NA29N.320164-24 (Submission)

**Caution:** This is an **External Email** and may have malicious content. Please take care when clicking links or opening attachments. When in doubt, contact the ICT Helpdesk.

Dear Secretary,

Fáilte Ireland would like to take the opportunity to make a submission regarding the DART + Coastal North Railway Order 2024 - Northern Line between Dublin City Centre and Drogheda including the Howth Branch. Ref. NA29N.320164-24

The attached submission has been prepared by Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority.

I would be grateful if you could send a reply email acknowledging receipt of submission.

Regards,

Yvonne

**Yvonne Jackson**  
**Product Development-Environment & Planning Support | Fáilte Ireland**

88-95 Amiens Street, Dublin 1, D01 WR86  
M +353 (0)86 0357590



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**Fáilte  
Ireland**

**Turasóireacht Náisiúnta  
An tÚdara Eorbartha**  
National Tourism  
Development Authority

An Bord Pleanála  
64 Marlborough Street,  
Dublin 1,  
D01 V902

By e-mail: [bord@pleanala.ie](mailto:bord@pleanala.ie)

23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024

**Re: DART + Coastal North Railway Order 2024 - Northern Line between Dublin City Centre and Drogheda including the Howth Branch. Ref. NA29N.320164-24**

A Chara,

Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority, welcomes the opportunity to input to the Dart+ Programme consultation that Iarnród Éireann is preparing which aims to modernise and improve existing rail services in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA). Fáilte Ireland is supportive of the programme and its objectives. We note the electrification plans of the DART+ Coastal North Project to Drogheda, and the proposed enhancements to increase peak passenger capacity and increase train frequency between Dublin City Centre and Drogheda MacBride Station - inclusive of the Howth Branch. We are eager to ensure the programme takes account of the needs of tourism and visitors as DART + Coastal North traverses Fáilte Ireland's Brand Regions Dublin and Ireland's Ancient East.

### **The value of Tourism for Dublin**

In a Dublin context, in 2019 Dublin welcomed 6.6m overseas tourists, 1.8m domestic trips generating €2.4bn in revenue and supporting 65,000 jobs. The Dublin brand proposition speaks to the unique position of the capital, with a vibrant city centre, nestled between the mountains and an extensive coastline with a UNESCO Bay Biosphere at its core. Fáilte Ireland has a number of key programmes in place to enhance visitor orientation in the capital. Measures including the installation of gateway and discovery point signs along the Dublin Coastal Trail, improvements in wayfinding and onward journey information at transport hubs and integrated public transport maps are being prioritised.

## Public Transport & Tourism

Tourism and transport go hand-in-hand and tourism displays a very high dependency on public transport in particular for its successful operation. International tourists visiting here expect a high-quality transport system. 67% of overseas holidaymakers visiting the island of Ireland in 2019 were travelling to Ireland for the first time. Therefore, an efficient and reliable public transport system is a key requirement and enabler to creating a great tourist experience, particularly in Dublin where tourists tend to use public transport more than in other parts of the country. For the most part, Fáilte Ireland and the tourism industry have no control over where our major heritage attractions are located. However, for tourists to experience these, accessibility is key. Therefore, a high degree of convergence between the tourism and transport sector is crucial.

Public transport is required for access, within Dublin City and its immediate environs, between accommodation, major transportation hubs [airport, port, train stations and regional bus termini] and the main tourism attractions – monuments, museums, amenities, hospitality and entertainment venues. While many tourists use coaches and hired cars when travelling between regions, within the city region most tourists rely heavily on public transport.

In addition, there are a number of principle typical day trips within the DART network. Some of these include the coastal villages in the north and south of the county, Dublin/ Wicklow Mountains (start of the Wicklow Way) popular for outdoor activities including walking/hiking and cycling and to large scale attractions. The extension of DART+ Coastal North to Drogheda will also improve access to Ireland's Ancient East and the Boyne Valley and presents an opportunity to drive visitor flow to Drogheda and wider hinterland.

Fáilte Ireland has recently launched the **Dublin Coastal Trail**, it is the culmination of a 4-year orientation programme with key industry stakeholders including Irish Rail. The Trail begins at Skerries and runs to Killiney, with signage installed in 11 towns and villages along the route, including the DART stations highlighting key visitor attractions and experiences along the way. Visitors are able to walk, cycle or take a rail service along the route, with way-finding signs in 6 languages, in addition to English and Irish, to ensure accessibility for international visitors. The tracking of visitor flow on these routes should be considered which would allow for an understanding of footfall to the coastal towns and villages.

The Trail aims to encourage domestic and international tourists to explore Dublin's coastal region, immersing themselves in the coastal villages and increasing dwell time in the region. In this context, the extension of the network and more frequent services are very much welcomed. DART services and transport hubs are not only important for visitors themselves but, of equal importance, to those employed in the hospitality sectors, who are often critically dependent upon public transport, often at times at the very beginning and end of the working day.

## **Specific Comments on DART+ Coastal North Railway Order Application**

### ***Orientation***

Orientation for tourists unfamiliar with Ireland can be poor and more work is required to make it easier for visitors to navigate their way seamlessly using the public transport network. Orientation, including signage, tourist information and integration of ticketing systems/Next Generation Ticketing can either make life easy for tourists or be a source of significant frustration.

The DART network of stations are key transport hubs and nodal points within our public transport system. There is an opportunity to improve orientation for tourists at all stations along the DART+ network to improve the interpretation and dissemination of tourist transport information. These systems should recognise and consider the visitors' needs and requirements, particularly their lack of familiarity with their surroundings.

### ***Upgrades proposed at Howth Junction & Donaghmede Station***

The significant upgrades proposed at Howth Junction & Donaghmede Station as part of the DART+ Coastal North project are welcomed and should both improve the passenger experience generally and develop the station to better serve as an interchange station going forward. As an interchange station, the role Howth Junction & Donaghmede Station plays from a tourism perspective will be crucial as tourists will be required to change at this station to go to Howth and use the proposed shuttle services to get to this key coastal village. This would require passengers to transfer between platforms to board connecting services and in other scenarios the interchange would potentially be from one side of a platform to the other. This underlines the requirement to ensure the station is more accessible, user friendly and customer focused station for all rail users including tourists.

### ***DART shuttle service on the Howth Branch line***

For visitors, changing trains is nothing new and is something that is expected in capital cities. We note that the project is proposing infrastructure that would enable the operation of both a DART shuttle service on the Howth Branch line as required by future passenger demand, and/or a direct through service to/from Dublin City Centre. The proposals should allow for the capacity and frequency of DART+ services on both the Northern and Howth Branch lines to be maximised. Ultimately from a visitor perspective, their key consideration is that services are both more frequent and more reliable. Generally, visitors may utilise DART+ outside of the morning peak and any final operational decisions, relating to the potential for the operation of a shuttle service on the Howth Branch in future together with when/how this shuttle would operate (e.g. during peak times, etc) must take into consideration the needs and travel patterns of visitors to and from Howth.



### ***Train Travel with Bikes***

It is our vision for Ireland to be a world class, year-round activity destination and ongoing development of greenways and blueways will further grow demand. Therefore, future rolling stock should cater for this growing demand. Also, the publicity and information regarding the transportation of bicycles on DART services should be improved accordingly. At present, there are a number of different policies around the carrying of bicycles and restrictions depending on the service. Such restrictions and lack of clarity and awareness amongst visitors has the potential to curtail the growth potential of this sector.

As most visitors to Dublin do not have their own bikes, there is an opportunity to enhance the provision of shared bike schemes at relevant stations as part of DART+ where appropriate.

Specifically relating to North Dublin & Louth there are a number of Greenway projects which are either completed or in development including;

- Broadmeadow Way
- Fingal Coastal Way
- Boyne Greenway

If further information is required on any of the detail of this submission, please do not hesitate to contact Fáilte Ireland as per details below:

Yours Sincerely,

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Shane Dineen  
Manager of Environment & Planning, Fáilte Ireland