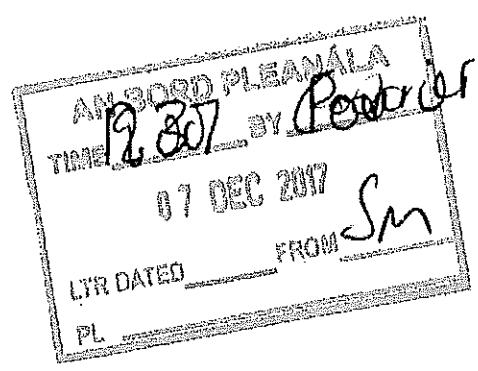


DUBLIN CITY CENTRE TRADERS ALLIANCE LTD



BY HAND

7 December 2017

The Secretary
An Bord Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902

RE: Dublin City Council provision of significant additional data in relation to the proposed development of a new civic plaza at College Green and ancillary traffic management measures (An Bord Pleanála Reference Number: 29S.JA0039)

Dear Sirs,

The "Dublin City Centre Traders Alliance" is a single-issue company which was incorporated in 2016 to represent the interests of its Shareholders. It has the specific purpose of protecting the sustainability of City Centre Retail and Hospitality businesses within the context of a changing City Centre transport network.

The Alliance members include the following groups and companies:

- Brown Thomas
- Arnotts
- Jervis Shopping Centre
- Fitzwilliam Real Estate Capital
- Brown Thomas Car Park
- Westfield Investments

The DCCTA welcomes the principle of a Plaza for College Green and is supportive of any project which proposes a reduction in car dependency by upgrading public transport proposals or which improves the public realm.

Clandestine Plan

This Plaza proposal should not be planned and implemented *in sui* and we ask the Board that it does not agree to facilitate this. The DCCTA is of the belief that this Plaza as proposed is further example of how DCC/NTA are continuing to seek to implement their Transport Plan (renamed Study) of May 2016 "bit-by-bit". We advise that the Local Authority are currently implementing this plan via an unprecedented series of road layout changes and traffic restrictions primarily with the use of Section 38 of the Road Traffic Act 1994:

38 Road Traffic Act 1994. — (1) A road authority may, in the interest of the safety and convenience of road users, provide such traffic calming measures as they consider desirable in respect of public roads in their charge.

The Plaza proposal represents this group's first opportunity to communicate our concerns to the Board about the 2016 Transport Plan. Our group has formed the firm belief that elements of the NTA and DCC are now driving and implementing a form of new Transport Plan for the City by stealth, avoiding oversight from An Board Pleanala or independent assessment, where possible, through the repetitive use of traffic safety legislation from 1994. Furthermore, as no Transport Plan has been published or prepared and put onto a statutory footing, the Local Authority are avoiding the obligation to assess the cumulative impact of the almost monthly traffic restrictions and changes being implemented, ultimately completely restricting private car access to the City Centre: these changes unchecked will materially and irrevocably damage the retail landscape of the City Centre.

Sustainable Urban Transport Plan

We in the Alliance believe that Dublin, as a Medieval City, should have restrictions as to how the traffic moves into the City, how it is controlled within the City Centre when it arrives and how it exits the City, in each case causing as little disruption to all road users as possible and in a safe and environmentally friendly manner. The arrival in the City of the "cross city Luas" is a very welcome and worthwhile development, making the City Centre more safe and accessible to the growing number of cyclists, pedestrians, tourists and all City Centre users, coming into the City Centre for work/leisure/living.

There is no doubt that the City's transport infrastructure is under a new wave of pressure as demand to access the City increases proportionally to the activity increase in commercial, tourism and leisure sectors. It is clear that the City holds specific constraints given its precious built heritage. This City will continue to densify and as this occurs the problems of congestion and the absence of a cohesive and statutory Transport Plan will become more pronounced.

We submit that consideration must be given by the council to the preparation and implementation of a holistic plan which is prepared to international best practice standards. This group previously offered to the Dublin City Council Executive to co-fund the development of a Transport Plan for the entire City. The DCCTA are still prepared to provide this financial assistance to the Executive if it is simply an issue of lack of resources that has restricted the preparation of an international-best-practice-standard Transport Plan for Dublin. The DCCTA have no expectations or requirements for this Plan other than that it includes Traffic, Retail and Footfall numbers when assessing Traffic and Public Transport options and that it is conducted in an open manner with the opportunity for third party submission. These issues have not ever been appropriately studied or incorporated by DCC into the recent long series of traffic changes. Indeed, we understand that Dublin City Council have no direct access to accurate Footfall figures for the City Centre and have not had access to same for a number of years.

We submit that such a Transport Plan would take into account the various needs and requirements of all users in all forms of transport in the City and indeed DCCTA would opine that in other cities such as London and New York, when shopping by car where preferential treatment is afforded to this subset of private car drivers at peak periods with the use of congestion charges and via restriction or disincentive on commuter "all day parking" by those working in the City Centre.

In the interim this group hopes that the Board take this singular opportunity afforded to the City by the planning process to intervene and direct Dublin City Council to cease the piecemeal implementation of their own non-statutory and unpublished plans with the use of the safety elements of the Road Traffic Act 1994.

Oral Hearing

This group cannot provide at such short notice conclusive comment on the DCC Further Information provided at this time given the nature, volume and occasionally confusing content of same. We note that the Board set the minimum statutory period for third party comment on this further information. We take this opportunity to reiterate our request of the 30th June 2017 to the Board that it call an Oral Hearing into this matter. We undertake at such a hearing to produce in detail the basis we submit, that a Transportation Plan could be pursued. This would give an open forum for our experts to clearly demonstrate that there are clear alternatives to the illegal misuse of Section 38 of the RTA 1994 and that the City overall and its daily inhabitants and users will be the main beneficiaries. This group looks forward to the opportunity to examine the specific proposals set out by Dublin City Council for College Green Plaza and hopes that the Board will afford the public the opportunity to make the arguments for changes to the proposal as currently set out. This group submits that the Board will consider and if thought fit, dedicate the time to hear from our experts both Irish and International on the impact and damage which will be caused to the City by this proposal in the absence of a statutory Transport Plan for the City. We believe that if the Board takes this opportunity to examine this proposal and to listen to our concerns that it will come to a similar conclusion to our own.

We look forward to exploring and examining these matters further at the appropriate setting of an Oral Hearing in the New Year.

Yours sincerely,

Noel Smyth
Noel Smyth
DIRECTOR

