



The Business Post's National Infrastructure Summit

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Rialtas
na hÉireann
Government
of Ireland

Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040

INTRODUCTION TO METROLINK

- **Ireland's First Mega Project** (in almost 100 years!)
- Primary response to Dublin's congestion problems
- Key scheme in the GDA's transport strategy
 - High-capacity, high-frequency, modern and efficient rail line
- 16 stations linking seamlessly with Irish Rail, Dublin Bus & Luas
- Fully electrified, carbon-neutral and driverless trains
- 20,000 passengers per hour each direction - "Access for All"



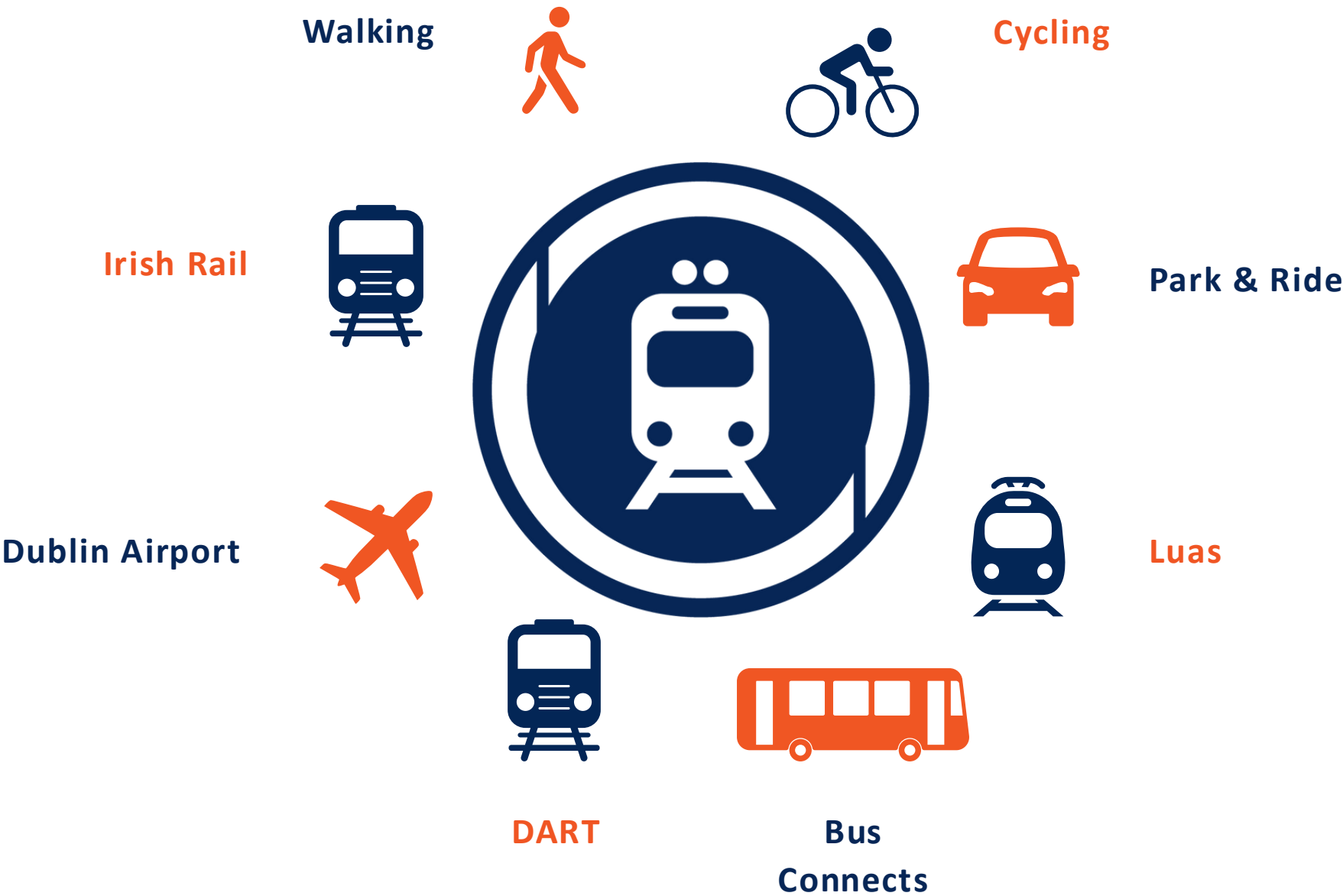
INTRODUCTION TO METROLINK



- Connects Key Destinations
- Aligns with National Strategic Outcomes of Project Ireland 2040
 - Enables compact growth
 - Enhances regional accessibility
 - Delivers sustainable mobility
 - Assists with transition to low carbon & climate resilient economy
 - Full integration with all other modes



INTEGRATION





WHAT IS THE NEED FOR METROLINK?

- Dublin has outgrown its current transport infrastructure
- In 2025, Dublin ranked as the 3rd most congested city in Europe (Inrix)
- 2011- Dublin population = 1.26 million
- 2024- Dublin population = 1.54 million
- 2036 - Dublin population = **1.86 million*** (cso.ie)
- Intervention is needed to - give choice, to change transport patterns



WHAT IS THE NEED FOR METROLINK?

- Why not extend DART or extend Luas or more buses?
- Govt already investing in expansion of DART+, Luas Finglas and BusConnects
- Dart is already very busy at peak hour, an extension to the Dart cannot provide anything like the same
- Luas already very busy at peak hour, would take an hour to get from Airport - if there was avail capacity
- Buses carry approx. 100 people, in traffic, taking up road space. 45 mins to get across town in rush hour.
Limited ability to add further buses at peak



WHAT IS THE NEED FOR METROLINK?

- Governments **ALL AROUND THE WORLD** are investing in metros
- NOTHING can shift people like an underground metro - 20,000 ppd/hr (more than twice capacity of Luas)
- \$1.4 trn US currently “on the books”. Europe \$145bn, Mid East \$135bn, Asia \$920bn, LatAm/Afr \$100bn
- Metro Rail Market \$182 bn (2024) will grow to \$250 bn (2035)
- Metrolink will ADD further capacity to an already stretched public transport system

HOW WILL METROLINK BENEFIT IRELAND?



Unlock planning potential for almost 9,500 hectares* of land, within a 2.5km radius of its stations



Direct route from Dublin Airport for onward travel



Creates over 8,150* construction jobs per annum



Boosts Ireland's economic activity



Frees up roads for essential journeys. It is estimated that congestion and lost time will cost the Irish economy over €2 billion per annum in 2033 (EFEU, 2017)



Assists net-zero goals



Swords to Dublin city centre in 25 mins



Connects 127 schools, 3 third level Institutions & 5 hospitals



SCHEME VISUALISATIONS



Dublin Airport



Swords Central



Tara



St. Stephens
Green



CHALLENGES FACING METRO PROGRAMMES



- Competing in the international market
- Safety
- Underground Construction
- Co-ordination with other infrastructure projects
- Public Engagement
- Construction in urban areas - disruption



SETBACKS TO SUCCESS STORIES



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Copenhagen:

- **Setbacks:**

- Delayed delivery and cost overrun
- Stakeholder challenges, led to legal action and a temporary suspension of night construction
- Residents appealed to the United Nations, blaming the government of several policy violations
- Violent protests due to frustration from the public
- Metrosekskabet faced accusations of withholding information from stakeholders
- Reports highlighted concerns about working conditions, including violence, harassment and inadequate safety measures
- Described as being 'holder of the Danish record for the worst working environment'

- **Success:**

- Now considered a major success and vital system for the city, achieving passenger satisfaction rates of around 97-99% in 2023

SETBACKS TO SUCCESS STORIES



Crossrail:

- **Setbacks:**
 - Constant protests and lobbying from communities, disrupting construction
 - Delayed by over 4 years
 - Large cost overruns
 - Media narrative focused on repeated postponements, fueling public & political frustration
- **Success:**
 - Exceeding passenger number expectations – now the busiest railway service in the UK with over 4 million journeys per week.
 - 90% of passengers reported positive impacts to their area
 - Contributed towards the development of 55,000 new homes
 - Cut journey times by up to 50% between key destinations

SETBACKS TO SUCCESS STORIES



Amsterdam Metro:

- **Setbacks:**
 - 13-year delay
 - Significant challenges with community stakeholders
 - Mishandling of communication led to the erosion of public trust
 - Violent protests
 - Huge cost overruns, with headlines focusing on poor cost forecasting and the taxpayer burden
 - Damage caused to historic buildings during tunnel boring and general construction
- **Success:**
 - Now heralded as being the backbone of Amsterdam's public transport network
 - Travel times have been reduced by over 2 million hours annually
 - Stimulated investment in neighbourhoods along the line
 - Urban rejuvenation

SETBACKS TO SUCCESS STORIES



Sydney: Metro & Light Rail:

- **Setbacks:**
 - Cost overruns and lengthy delays
 - Protests and demonstrations from affected stakeholders:
 - Groups like “Save T3 Bankstown line” organized rallies
 - Protests over the permitted 24-hour construction work period and overdevelopment concerns
 - Complaints re noise and vibration
- **Success:**
 - Now, widely regarded as a huge success. In its first week of operation, the M1 Northwest & Bankstown Line recorded 1.4 million trips with 98.8% of services running on time
 - Sydney Light Rail has transformed transport through the CBD

COST & PROCESS



- The process to gain an Enforceable Railway Order (ERO) commenced in 2022, there has been two periods of public consultation and subsequent response to the issues raised. On January 31 last, TII's MetroLink team responded to the final comments raised in the second public consultation. The programme is now awaiting a decision from An Bord Pleanála
- The most recently approved **Preliminary Business Case** developed in **2021** has a capital cost forecast for MetroLink in the range of between €7.2 billion and €12.3 billion. (VAT excl)
- Vat to be added, construction escalation since then has been +20%, designs have been developed
- The full cost of delay building MetroLink is estimated@ **€2.5 - €5 million per day /€60 - €120 million per month**

**There is no competing project, no credible alternative and no cheaper time to build
MetroLink, Ireland's first mega-project**

MEGA PROJECT – REALITY CHECK



A Mega project is "a large-scale, complex undertaking that typically costs billions of dollars, takes many years to develop and build, and involves multiple public and private stakeholders, with transformational and widespread impacts"

- 100 years ago, Ireland did its first and only Mega project to date - **Shannon Hydroelectric Scheme (Ardnacrusha)**
- **Ardnacrusha** was built for roughly 20% of the country's GDP, in a time when the country did not have the financial reserves it has today
- It was responsible for 80% of Ireland's electricity for years
- **THIS** is an example of nation building in its purest form
- MetroLink can be built for roughly 5% of Ireland's GDP at a time when the public finances are in a healthy state



MEGA PROJECT – REALITY CHECK



- I have been involved in 3 (possibly 4) Mega-Projects and there is a reasonably well worn script:

Project encounters
major issue/
unforeseen issue



Media posse
rounds on the
project



Breathtakingly ignorant
statements about what
has gone wrong and why



(opposition) Politicians
climb in demanding
action i.e. sack someone



- The more outrageous the statement, the more it is reported. No-one is ever asked to justify their criticism

MEGA PROJECT – REALITY CHECK



- **Luas** - *“expensive toy train set that will damage the city” “no-one will use it”*
- **Te Papa Tongarewa (NZ National Museum)** - *“ it will be a dull building, full of dull people, with dull ideas”*
- Media loves grandstanders, they get all the attention and very hard to defend their predictions of failure until you have actually built it, until then- it is “open season”
- Social media (fact free zone) makes it worse
- Incredibly simplistic criticisms
- The issue of greater good isn’t debated anymore

MEGA PROJECT – REALITY CHECK



- Scott Fitzgerald famously wrote: “**Let me tell you about the very rich. They are different from you and me**”
 - You could say the same for mega projects! They are **very different** from “normal projects”
- People have made careers reporting on the challenges, missed deadlines and missed budgets
- Bent Flyvbjerg, well known commentator – “**THE IRON LAW OF MEGAPROJECTS**” - Performance data for megaprojects speak their own language. Nine out of ten such projects have cost overruns. Overruns of up to 50% in real terms are common, over 50% not uncommon

Why is it so hard to it right?

- The truth is, these projects are massive in their levels of risk, uncertainty and complexity that is beyond human comprehension
- Economics term - “**Human Frailty**”. Mega projects are beyond the level of human frailty
- The industry does a very poor job of explaining that to politicians and the public
- Have promoted a mechanistic industrial model where all inputs and outputs can **quantified exactly**

MEGA PROJECT – REALITY CHECK



- Nation Building Projects – very different from “normal projects”



- **HS2 TV** programme recently. Q “These projects are so big and complex. How can you get it right, how can you truly estimate the costs and quantify the benefits?”
- Betting a very large but uncertain amount of money on a future result. Given that, who should decide?
- Dublin is growing, grinding to a halt, no counterfactual case to Metrolink, no viable alternative
- Beware of worshipping at the altar of business cases
- Nation building projects – Full Benefits never fully captured/ envisaged
- Easy to criticise, hard to build!
- Nothing can take the full risk and uncertainty out of the decision
- Require courage from the politicians AND the people tasked with delivering them

SUMMARY OF BENEFITS



- 20,000 people, Dublin Airport to O'Connell Street in 20 minutes – no other option can do anything close
- Dublin ceases to be the ONLY European Capital City without a rail link to the airport
- Unlocks 9,500 hectares of land for housing
- This is the **single biggest** capital works project since Ardnacrusha
- Just to reiterate, there is no counterfactual, no credible alternative and no cheaper time than now

It fundamentally changes the city for the better, unblocks tourism and business travel, catalyses housing development, removes traffic and congestion (there by improving both the environment and road safety) and is a project we can be nationally proud of.



METROLINK

Integrated Transport. Integrated Life.

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