Dear Commissioner Buckley

Dublin City Council is currently initiating a major enhancement of the Dublin quays and other streets such as Nassau Street - Leinster Street South with the removal of car parking spaces and the widening of footways.

We consider it desirable that a similar initiative be taken to curtail the level of car parking and access to Phoenix Park which is incompatible with its amenity and designation as a National Historic Park. The treatment of the central Chesterfield Avenue as a free bumper-to-bumper parking strip for all day commuters is not in line with the objectives of government transport policy as set out in the Department of Transport Smarter Travel policy 2009 which provides for significant modal shift from car based commuting.

The current restriction on through traffic and on the parking of cars along the main avenue shows the park as it should be: a place for recreation, with families able to bring young children to walk, cycle and scoot, with enhanced air quality and amenity for those seeking refuge from polluting urban traffic and noise. This should be the new normal (as shown in the image below).
While continuing COVID measures may affect passenger capacity on public transport for some time, greatly increased cycling can be promoted as an immediate measure, as Dublin City Council is doing with the creation of new cycle-lanes defined by ‘orca’ bollards (photo below). This type of intervention is being replicated throughout European cities such as Paris, Berlin, Milan and Brussels - https://www.transportenvironment.org/newsroom/blog/how-keep-cities-pollution-free-after-virus-lockdowns-lift
Dublin Quays with dedicated space for cycling

We request that the Commissioners plan now to enhance the amenity of the Phoenix Park as a place for recreation, walking and cycling and speed limit controlled electric scooting by:

1. Eliminating through traffic
2. Permanently ceasing all car/van parking along Chesterfield Avenue
3. Cooperating with Dublin City Council, and Fingal County Council in providing enhanced and safer cycling routes to the park entrances, especially around Parkgate Street
4. Seeking provision of enhanced public transport access to the park, but particularly for the Zoo, main Visitor Centre, for sports clubs, and for other park amenities.

An electronic access control system should be provided whereby vehicles serving Áras an Uachtarán, St. Mary’s Campus, Garda Headquarters, OPW, Dublin Zoo, Ordnance Survey, Farmleigh, the US Embassy and other residents and staff in the park would have continuing unrestricted access. Provision could also be made for disabled drivers.

There would be a total restriction of all day commuter car parking and any parking on the main avenue.

There would be major curtailment of parking by sports clubs in favour of cycling and public transport access.
Special provision would be provided to ensure that family visits to the Zoo were not inhibited, through an integrated public transport ticketing system and using the car park area at the Lord’s Walk (see photo).

I look forward to hearing from you soon in regard to the above.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Lumley,
Head of Advocacy, An Taisce

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