

Infrastructure Directorate,  
Floor 2,  
City Hall,  
Cork

20<sup>th</sup> August 2019

Re: Cork Chamber submission to Improvement Works: Passage Railway Greenway  
Improvement Scheme

To Whom It Concerns,

Cork Chamber is the leading business organisation in Cork proactively working to identify and progress developments that are facilitative of sustainable economic growth into the future. Cork Chamber represents an employer base of close to 1,200 businesses and over 100,000 employees across the region. In representing the voice of business, Cork Chamber adds its strong support to the proposed improvement works for the Passage Railway Greenway Improvement Scheme.

Under Project Ireland 2040, the population of the Cork metropolitan area is set to grow significantly by 125,000. Notwithstanding the longer-term projections, the City will be home to an extra 10,000 jobs in the City Centre over the next 5 years as current and planned developments are completed. It is essential that improvement works are undertaken immediately to address infrastructure capacity issues towards accommodating the already growing number of users of the Passage Railway Greenway and anticipated increase in user numbers as population increases. Currently the greenway is an excellent and highly utilised amenity in the City. Such amenities add to the liveability of the City and are assets in themselves, an intrinsic part of the character, environment and culture of the City that should be maintained, enhanced, appropriately improved and extended to connect with employment, residential and amenity locations as appropriate. We highlight the practicality of greenways in promoting sustainable and public transport choices for commuters and are fully supportive of the improvement works for this greenway improvement scheme and the development of future greenway projects.

The improvement of access from the Marina, Blackrock Road through the reinstatement of the footbridge, the inclusion of a new access point from Rockfields Avenue/ Eden and the improvement of the access ramps from Skehard Road are all welcome inclusions and will work to enhance the practicality and usability of the greenway. The widening of the surface area from 3m to 5m is a practical step towards increasing the comfort and the safety for all users,

of all age groups and mobility. We commend the inclusion of new street furniture and highlight the importance of this for all users and request design considerations to take account of all users to include an age friendly approach, and to assess all additions to ensure their usability for those with visual, hearing or mobility impairments, as well as buggies. We encourage the additional inclusion of appropriate seating along walking routes which is crucial to nurturing the liveability of the City. We welcome the inclusion of new public lighting along the extent of the greenway and request that the lighting chosen to be appropriate in terms of shielding, lighting levels and lighting colour. Excessive, artificial lighting can cause light pollution which has negative effects on human health, the environment, biodiversity, and goals for climate action through energy waste. The greenway is a valued environmental as well as amenity, commuter corridor and so it is essential these credentials are maintained and enhanced. The use of smart technologies through inclusion of smart light sensors would be positive in terms of the benefits to wildlife and human health.

The addition of cycle access via the Old Railway Greenway to Mahon via the new slipway has already seen a notable increase in commuters choosing this option to access Mahon and vice versa to access the City from the surrounding residential areas. These proposed improvement works reflect the vision of Ireland 2040 in creating sustainable transport links and amenities for vibrant, connected communities, while also giving effect to the policy objectives of Healthy Ireland, the government led initiative aiming to create a society where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing, as well as key points of the Cork Metropolitan Transport Strategy, the Metropolitan Cycling Strategy and the Cork Cycle Network Plan for Cork City Southeast & Environs.

In reference to the recently closed public consultation on the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy, and the proposed light rail corridor to run along the passage railway greenway. We highlight the need for adaptability in the improvement works design to accommodate the addition of light rail infrastructure in the future. From a safety perspective and to maintain the area's amenity value, it is important to segregate any future light rail from pedestrians and cyclists.


Traffic congestion is a regular occurrence in Cork City area and especially at peak times, and the improvement of this route will facilitate a potential modal shift for a percentage of commuters from driving to cycle or walking. Moreover, the aesthetic, cultural and civic value of quality of place, biodiversity, tree planting, planting for pollinators, appropriate lighting and passive policing are at the core of what will make our City region safe, attractive and sustainable and every effort must be made to ensure best practice is sought and delivered as part of these improvements.

The planned improvements will greatly improve choice for commuters and lend itself to developing a sustainable, permeable, and accessible metropolitan environment. To achieve a metropolitan location that is sustainable, it is important that alongside the larger infrastructure projects the supporting works on the linking infrastructure is also completed to ensure an integrated and fit-for-purpose transport network. Such projects can be enormously valuable in their latent potential to impact positively on commuter experiences and the overall attractiveness and viability of a region to investment.

Cork Chamber support that this development take place with an appropriate design to ensure the safety and promote the route utilisation for novice, fair-weathered to seasoned cyclists while having design of appropriate width, surface and lighting that adheres to the needs of a pedestrians and those of mixed mobility. Cork now has a public transport infrastructure requirement that is greater than ever, and it is critical that developments to support growing urbanisation and the future population projections, as well as Irelands national commitment to Climate Change mitigation are undertaken and progressed now. Cork Chamber believes that the provision of cycle and pedestrian facilities is essential to meet the current and future user demands of a growing population base. It is essential that we plan for a future that caters to changing travels patterns and preferences.

In conclusion, Cork Chamber shares the commitment of Cork City Council in promoting and supporting the development and improvement of cycle and pedestrian green routes to facilitate the sustainable economic development of the Cork region.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michelle O'Sullivan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Michelle O'Sullivan**

**Senior Public Affairs Executive**