

25 May 2020

Re: Covid 19 Recovery pathway - Proposed Road Closure: Tuckey Street/ Pembroke Street/ Paul Street

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. Representing an employer base of close to 1,200 businesses and over 100,000 employees across the region, Cork Chamber is the largest business representation organisation in the south of Ireland.

This submission has been guided by our commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Five specific goals have been identified by the Chambers Ireland network which we actively advocate for throughout our work;



In representing the voice of business, Cork Chamber adds its strong support to the Covid-19 recovery pathway as proposed via the road closures of Tuckey Street, Pembroke Street and Paul Street. Businesses, jobs and economic activity of Cork City centre have been devastated by Covid-19 and it is essential that as a City we do all that we can to support our business, jobs and wider community to access their City centre safely, with confidence and trust.

Now more than ever we are in a situation that is testing the resilience and robustness of our urban and community spaces. To aid the societal response to COVID-19, we strongly support and believe that a thorough review of our shared public realm and the space allocated to pedestrians and cyclists is a necessity across the entirety of the city environs. We need to adapt our urban spaces to meet this

Covid-19 challenge and the proposed pedestrianisation of Tuckey Street, Pembroke Street and Paul Street are a positive start with further measures needed in the weeks and months ahead. In reference to unavoidable removal of designated disability car parking spaces on Tuckey, Pembroke and Paul Street, we encourage that these be reinstated at other suitable city centre locations to ensure the inclusivity of our city centre and access for all.

Investigating the opportunities to pedestrianize streets will give the City a fighting chance to grow trade and where suitable and appropriate enable businesses to adapt their operations where there is potential for outdoor dining. Recovery of the city centre will be based on the ability to attract people in, to create a safe healthy space for people to visit, shop, work, dine and enjoy. By exploring the options for outdoor dining, Cork has an opportunity in helping businesses and the city centre recover and operate in the months, and year ahead in the context of Covid-19. While this will need to be assessed on a street by street basis to take account of all user requirements, it is positive that this is being investigated and that businesses are being supported and facilitated to assess their street locations.

With a goal to increase City centre activity and get people back to work in a safe manner, city access also needs to be addressed. Exploring the use of dedicated cycle corridors from key residential zones to urban and amenity centres as a viable alternative to the car must form part of the Covid-19 response. By increasing the number of those accessing the City via a sustainable mode, there is the opportunity to increase the footfall and commercial spend in the City. Achieved through re-designating car/ road space from car to cyclists/ pedestrian/ business operations (outdoor dining), this will facilitate safer healthier commuting, effectively increasing the capacity of businesses to recover.

The availability of urban amenity space, be it green park space or car free amenity space is recognised by all as a necessity for city residents to thrive. While acknowledging the work and dedication ongoing by Cork City Council to amplify and accelerate the provision of these spaces, we highlight their ever-heightening importance now for all age groups, family sizes and mobility abilities.

Furthermore, in relation to the overall city centre there is a case to be made for slower vehicle speeds along priority pedestrian routes and throughout the city centre, and stronger emphasis on planting and greenery, bringing an immediate benefit to all residents. In part, increasing the nature and biodiversity of our city centre while increasing the liveability and appeal. In the coming years, the introduction of a ban on HGV traffic through the city centre, which could be facilitated through National Development Plan investment in the North Link road network, would be hugely beneficial, making journeys and communities safer, quieter, and less polluted.



In conclusion, Cork Chamber shares the commitment of Cork City Council to facilitate the reawakening of Cork City centre.

I thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Kelly", is written over a faint, light-colored rectangular stamp or watermark.

CEO
Cork Chamber

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