



Cork Chamber  
Fitzgerald House  
Summerhill North  
Cork  
T23 TD90

Ann Doherty  
Chief Executive  
Cork City Council  
City Hall  
Anglesea Street  
Cork  
T12 T997

**17 April 2020**

**Re: Enhanced public realm for pedestrians and cyclists**

Dear Ms Doherty

Firstly, I write to communicate the sincere gratitude of Cork Chamber for the exceptional speed and responsiveness of Cork City Council to the COVID-19 pandemic, in what are extraordinarily challenging times.

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 believe it timely to review our shared public realm and the space allocated to pedestrians and cyclists, and where possible and appropriate adapt our urban and community recreation spaces to meet this challenge going forward. While we are seeing a reduction in vehicular traffic throughout urban areas, we are at the same time seeing the reclaiming of road space by walkers and cyclists doing their best to adhere to the 2 metre social distancing guidelines. To avoid the current situation where pedestrians and cyclists are obliged to enter road space to ensure sufficient distancing, which in itself is a safety issue for all road users, we suggest where possible that community groups are enticed to identify such pinch points and work with the team in the City Council to safely allocate this road space. In doing so, giving increased certainty to all road users. Otherwise the risk is run of exacerbating road user safety issues for drivers, pedestrians and cyclists alike.

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 and enjoy their community and locality. 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. We believe this heightened requirement will be a lasting outcome of the pandemic with city residents requiring an enhanced allocation of amenity space. To this end, we suggest a number of considerations.

The prioritisation of the Marina for cycling and walking on a permanent basis would prove an immediate quick win in respect of creating more amenity space for city residents by re-designating this existing space. While this has recently been undertaken as a temporary measure to facilitate the Covid-19 testing centre, the permanent prioritisation to facilitate non-vehicular usage would prove very beneficial to increase the overall available amenity space for city centre residents. While enforcement of such re-designations can persist as a challenge, we suggest the use of automatic raising arm barriers (allowing limited access e.g. for emergency services, residents) as an aid to ensuring the change in use and priority is observed. The emergency enhancement of pedestrian access to Tramore Valley Park would prove invaluable during the pandemic, and beyond. While we acknowledge there are constraints, we encourage the expedited resolution of the pedestrian access issues to facilitate increased green space access for city centre residents. Cork Chamber as a representative voice of the Cork business community greatly supports all efforts to invest and designate additional public amenity spaces, recognising their intrinsic value to overall wellbeing for a community and the value of these to increasing the overall attractiveness and liveability of Cork City.

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 the short to medium term, there is an opportunity to investigate the potential for quietway cycling routes (for example using already existing laneways by increasing their interconnectivity) as have been developed in the UK, US and Netherlands and which could be influential in promoting a change in mode to cycling at a modest cost. Alongside projects such as the Lee to Sea Greenway these could enhance the accessibility of interurban residential to amenity/ education/ work locations, where identified. Such quietway routes would increase the safety for all road users.

The provision of amenity space is a priority for the Cork business community, identified in a previous quarterly economic trends survey to members within their top three priorities for increasing the liveability of the city, alongside housing, and public transport.

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 light grey rectangular background.

CEO  
Cork Chamber

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