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**Re: Cork Docklands to City Centre Road Network Improvement Scheme**

To whom it concerns,

Cork Chamber welcomes the opportunity to submit our views on the Docklands Road improvement scheme. Representing 1,200 members who employ over 100,000 people across the region, delivery of public and sustainable transport is among the top priorities of our membership.

The timing of preparing this proposal is commendable. A total transformation of Cork's Docklands is currently underway, exemplified by the development of Navigation Square 1 & 2, One Albert Quay, and the recent planning application for over 200 apartments by Albert Road. In addition, planning has been submitted for an extensive regeneration project and a high-rise hotel development at Custom House Quay, while works are ongoing at Penrose Quay and Horgan's Quay on new offices, public realm, apartments and a hotel.

Cork's Docklands will soon become the focal point for commercial activity in the city centre. In this context, we welcome Cork City Council's objective of ensuring that sustainable and public transport is integrated into the City Dockland's rejuvenation from the outset rather than trying to retrofit infrastructure at a later stage.

Linked to this, we highlight the importance of delivering on this (and other) proposed scheme(s) in a timely and transparent manner so that the increasing number of people working in the city centre are incentivised to commute to and from work using bus, rail, cycling or walking from the outset.

Below, we list our recommendations linked to public realm, cycling and bus infrastructure, pedestrian walkways and associated matters.

**Pontoon & Waterfront Access**

The proposal to open access to the waterfront by Albert Quay is massively welcomed, including plans for a pontoon and an art space, which will significantly improve the area's amenity value while keeping in touch with the heritage of the quays.

We note the proposal for a temporary structure like Shoreditch BoxPark at the cross section of Albert Quay / Kennedy Quay. Such a structure would add positively to the overall area and we suggest that this proposal is carried through to the final plans. Given the volume of jobs expected to be created in the surrounding area, the use of the river frontage for creative structures that could incorporate food and cater for public amenities is ideal. As has been successfully achieved in both Brixton and Shoreditch, we propose that any BoxPark type development includes both restaurant/bars as well as recreational space, for example a public street soccer pitch/skate park or similar games/sporting facilities.

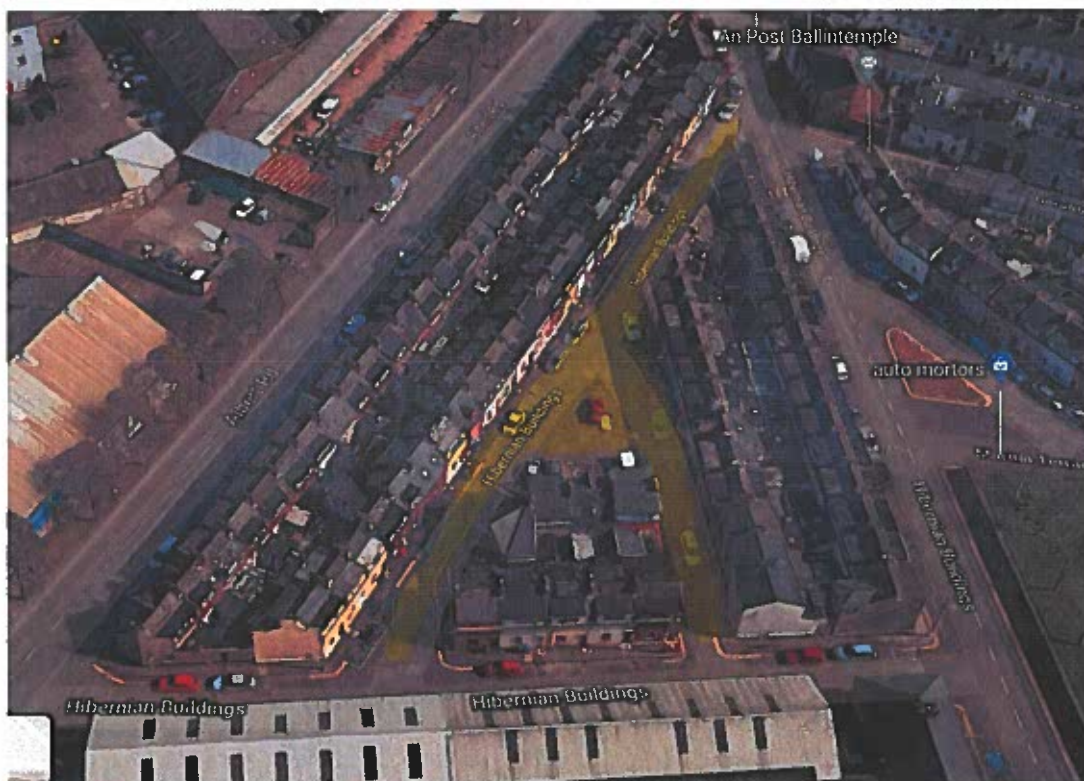
We suggest that bicycle parking stands are incorporated into the design at the waterfront on Albert Quay as well as Kennedy Quay and we support the removal of vehicular access to Kennedy Quay from Victoria Road as alternative access routes will be maintained.

### Public Realm Upgrades

The noticeable attempt to incorporate as much planting as possible in the proposal is a welcome change from the status quo and represents a significant improvement on the existing public realm. In particular, we support the emphasis on using sustainable drainage and planting to separate cycle lanes and footpaths from other road users rather than hard engineering options.

In relation to public realm improvements by Albert Road/Marina Terrace, there is an opportunity to address existing problems relating to the high proliferation of bins in this area which currently obstruct footpaths for wheelchair and other vulnerable road users, in addition to having a negative impact on public realm. We suggest that options for incorporating communal bin locations where residents can dispose of rubbish are explored as part of the design to minimise the negative visual impact of wheelie bins. We note that most of the houses along Albert Road/Marina Terrace are too narrow to bring bins through the doorways. Instead, it may be an option to install communal underground bins which already are used extensively across Europe.

Furthermore, we note the proposal to maintain vehicular access through Hibernian Buildings. Given that alternative routes are available for vehicles, we ask that the option of pedestrianising the triangle (highlighted in yellow below) and/or turning the area into a public outdoor space for locals to enjoy is explored with local residents while retaining some local parking options.



As the proposal is finalised, we finally suggest that consideration be given to Age Friendly design principles, along with consideration of users with visual, hearing or mobility impairments and

buggies. Furthermore, we ask that the adopted plans include appropriate seating along walking routes, which is crucial to nurturing the liveability of the City.

**Public Lighting:** At design stage, consideration regarding appropriate lighting should be given. It is important that the type of lighting should be carefully considered in terms of shielding, setting appropriate lighting levels and consideration for 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.

### **Bus Infrastructure**

The proposed new contra flow bus lane on Victoria Road (North) and Albert Quay are welcome. Presently, Cork only has 14 kilometres of priority bus corridors, and this figure needs to increase dramatically to improve the reliability and attractiveness of travelling by bus across the city region.

In the same breath we support the proposal for a bus lane on Terence MacSwiney Quay which will connect with the pre-existing bus lane on Anglesea St and thus extend the existing bus corridor.

**Real time bus stops:** Welcome and needed to improve the attractiveness of travelling by bus.

### **Cycling Lanes**

Cork Chamber welcomes the proposed 2-way cycle lane on Albert Quay and Victoria Road. To grow the share of cycling across Cork City is it important that we invest in segregated cycling infrastructure to improve safety and the overall cycling experience. It is particularly important that safe cycling is encouraged in areas with high employment, as is envisioned in the Docklands.

However, an important element of designing new cycling lanes is to ensure interconnectivity with pre-existing infrastructure to form a cycling network. The start/finish to the proposed cycle lane on Terence MacSwiney Quay looks very abrupt. From the proposed design it is unclear where cyclists travelling West are expected to travel on from there. Are cyclists meant to merge into traffic or cross the road and feed into the existing cycling lane on Parliament Bridge? We suggest that this section of the plan is revisited to ensure a smooth onward journey for cyclists continuing their journey into the city centre.

The same issue applies to the end of the cycling lane at Monahan Road which abruptly ends at a pedestrian crossing. Is it intended that cyclists merge back into traffic at Victoria road? We propose that the cycle lane is extended down until the end of Victoria Road/ the traffic lights by Blackrock Road, again to improve interconnectivity and to extend the network of cycling lanes in Cork.

We also note that someone cycling from Blackrock Road/Victoria Avenue towards the city centre will be cycling on the left-hand side of Victoria Rd. Under the current proposal said cyclist would be required to cross the road in traffic to access the 2-way cycling lane starting on the right-hand side of Monaghan Rd. This link between the road travel pattern and start of the cycle path is suboptimal. As above, we propose that this section of the plan is revisited with a view to improve the interconnectivity of cycling infrastructure and to avoid cyclists having to cross the road mid traffic and halfway down a straight road to access a cycling path.

In relation to the proposed cycle lanes, we suggest the raised, uninterrupted continuation of cycle paths across intersecting streets and behind bus shelters (e.g. Centre Park Road, Marina Walk, by the temporary box park structure at Kennedy Quay). This simple but powerful design principle will

improve cycle safety, ease cycling by minimising start/stops, and send an important message to other road users regarding pedestrians and cyclists taking priority in the urban environment.

With respect to the cycling lane on Albert Quay/Terence MacSwiney Quay, it is unclear from drawings if this lane will be protected. Cork Chamber suggests segregating the cycle lane from the road using a raised curb, armadillos or other rumble lines.

We also seek clarification on whether a right-hand turn for cyclists exiting Albert Quay onto Eamon De Valera bridge will be permitted. By incorporating a right-hand turn into the design, cyclists would be able to continue over the bridge onto Custom House St and Michael Collins Bridge to connect with the existing cycling infrastructure by Penrose Quay.

As for the colouring of the cycle lane road surfaces, we note that current proposals are beige yet cycling lanes elsewhere in the city are coloured red. Overall, it would be preferable to have uniform colouring clearly marking cycling lanes throughout the city to minimise confusion for cyclists and to educate other road users on how to identify cycling priority.

At signalised junctions we propose that the sequencing of lights gives priority to pedestrians and cyclists.

### **Pedestrians**

We suggest that pedestrian crossing at Albert Road and Centre Park Road are raised and uninterrupted across intersecting streets (e.g. Centre Park Road, Marina Walk). This simple but powerful design principle sends an important message to other road users regarding pedestrians taking priority.

The same principle should apply for Rosehill, Marina Park, Geraldine Place, Geraldine Mews, Hibernian Buildings (and other side streets coming onto main road).

### **Parking on Victoria Rd**

We welcome the integration of electric vehicle charging in the design and suggest this be carried through into the adopted proposal.

We have some concerns about the design of parking on Victoria Road. Under current plans the expectation is that drivers will have to stop on the road and reverse into spaces. We question whether this design is the optimal solution for the area and suggest that parallel parking is considered instead, similar to the proposed designs for Morrison's Island.

Lastly, using this public realm improvement as a test case for the rest of the city, we propose that speed limits are reduced to 30 km/h to improve road safety and the urban environment.

Thank you for the opportunity to shape this proposal. We look forward to seeing the improvements implemented and remain at your disposal to discuss our recommendations in further detail should you have any questions.

Yours Sincerely,



**Sarah Thatt-Foley**  
Senior Public Affairs Executive