

Senior Executive Engineer,
Infrastructure Directorate,
Anglesea Street
Cork

5th February 2021

Re: Passage Railway Greenway Improvement Scheme- Phase II

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 development. 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 – Phase II.

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



This commitment is supplemented and further developed through our Sustainable Cork Programme which focusses on a sustainable and resilient recovery for Cork, and which is developed in considerable detail through significant member and community engagement in our Building Economic Resilience report which sets forth a strong and sustainable vision for the future of Cork.

Under Project Ireland 2040, the population of the Cork metropolitan area is set to grow significantly by 125,000. It is therefore essential that improvement works are undertaken now to address sustainable and active travel infrastructure capacity challenges towards accommodating an already growing number of users of the Passage Railway Greenway. We take this opportunity to commend the work of Cork City Council in progressing the improvement scheme.

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 that should be maintained, enhanced, appropriately improved and extended to connect with employment, residential and amenity location. The Covid pandemic has amplified the importance even more so of our outdoor amenity spaces and the necessity of developing and enhancing those spaces to meeting public health advice, and to match safely and comfortably the user numbers. Furthermore, we highlight the practicality of greenways in promoting active travel choices for commuters and are fully supportive of the improvement scheme, and the development of future greenway projects.

Cork Chamber do not have specific preferences regarding the elements that make up the route, though support the **widening of the surface area as a practical step towards increasing the comfort and the safety for all users, of all age groups and mobility**. We 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, and buggies. We encourage the inclusion of appropriate seating along walking routes which is crucial to nurturing the liveability of the City. **While not specifying a route preference, we suggest that those routes which include the least number of interruptions would be the most beneficial to the continuity and safety of activity along the route, as well as to car-based traffic on Rochestown Road. It is widely acknowledged that active travel routes are most utilised where there is least resistance and 'on/ off, stop/ starting' along the route. We highlight the importance of ensuring appropriate active travel connecting infrastructure towards Douglas and via the Rochestown Road to optimise the passage railway greenway as a commuter route and as an attractive amenity from adjacent locations, enabling a 'start to finish' active travel journey. Addressing the question of additional carparking, we acknowledge the need however on this we do not have a specific opinion on the optimal location, and support the best appropriate location.**

Traffic congestion is a regular occurrence on the Rochestown Road (in particular pre-Covid) and especially at peak times, and the improvement of this route (and the future phases of improvements) will facilitate a potential modal shift for an additional 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, will add to the aesthetic attractiveness and the richness and diversity from an ecological perspective.

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 style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Michelle O'Sullivan

Senior Public Affairs Executive