

10<sup>th</sup> March 2020

## Re: Horgan's Quay 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 economic and sustainable 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 this scheme to improve pedestrian and cycling facilities on Horgan's Quay and Water Street.

### Cycling and Pedestrian

With the extensive development of Horgan's Quay ongoing, we will see a dramatic change in the profile and usage of the quay in 2020. This requires a transformation in how the Water Street and Horgan's Quay corridor is managed and a balancing of multiple needs and usage patterns. As the quay and surrounds are due to become an increasing focal point for commercial activity in the city, with greatly increased workforce and visitor numbers accessing and being situated at this location on a daily basis, and with the subsequent increase in footfall,

we welcome Cork City Council's objective of ensuring that sustainable and public transport is integrated into the rejuvenation at this stage rather than trying to retrofit infrastructure at a later stage. An important element of designing new cycling lanes is to ensure interconnectivity with pre-existing infrastructure, and this is a key piece of connecting infrastructure that will enhance the safety of cycling along this busy traffic corridor, increasing the overall permeability and accessibility of the Quays and the subsequent access to and from the City for cyclists. As such, the extension of the existing cycle lane on the Lower Glanmire Road via the provision of this proposed inbound cycle lane on Water Street and Horgan's Quay, and its connection with the Penrose Quay cycle lane is a welcome extension to this continuity and connectivity of the city cycle network.

Overall, to grow the share of cycling across Cork City is it important that we invest in cycling infrastructure that improves safety and the overall cycling experience. It is particularly important that safe cycling is encouraged in areas with high employment, and vehicular traffic flows. As this corridor is one of the main city arteries, it is imperative that the proposed infrastructure is designed and implemented in a way that increases the safety for cyclists, appealing to cyclists of varying confidence, skill and experience levels.

In relation to the proposed cycle lanes and taking account of the volume of car, bus and HGV traffic that use this corridor on a daily basis, Cork Chamber suggests segregating the cycle lane from the road using a raised curb, armadillos or other rumble lines. The detail of the points of intersection of the route with road users at crossings and junctions will be critical to safety and to success. As ever, there must be an onus on vehicles to give way to the more vulnerable road users. Junctions should use best in class marking, surfaces and signage to ensure that road users are left in no doubt that they are interacting with a pedestrian and cycle lane. We suggest that bicycle parking stands are incorporated into the design.

Ensuring cyclability of Cities presents one of the greatest opportunities towards carbon neutral environments. In Scandinavian cities, 98% of people using public transport begin their journey on foot or by bicycle. The opportunity exists to replicate this in Cork, connecting residential zones to commuter hubs and commercial activity while enabling a more active, healthier and happier workforce.

Investing in the walkability of the Cork Metropolitan area is a necessity for Cork. Currently there are significant inconsistencies in pathway widths, levels, surfaces as well as pedestrian signals and wait times at traffic lights. Cork Chamber welcomes the proposed improvements in the scheme for pedestrians and highlights the importance of the permeability and the walkability of the City, and its development as a living city. The connection of employment zones, pre-schools, and schools to residential zones and catchment areas, via high quality pedestrian routes with attractive public realm will be instrumental to engendering a change in travel behaviours over time. We highlight the need for quality pedestrian crossings and the timing of pedestrian lights and traffic sequencing as key to ensuring the walkability of the Quay.

### **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.

**Public Realm Upgrades (street furniture, lining and signage)**

We encourage the incorporation of as much indigenous planting as possible. This will greatly enhance the public realm and could be utilised to separate cycles lanes and footpaths from road users rather than hard engineering options. The development creates potential for indigenous planting to soften the visual hard edges, enhance biodiversity, drainage, dampen noise, pollution, and dust from traffic. The Chamber recommends that this opportunity should not be missed as it would detract from both the user experience and environmental opportunity. We 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.

Placemaking must be a core goal throughout all delivery aspects. The aesthetic, cultural and civic value of quality of place, biodiversity, tree planting and appropriate lighting are at the core of what will make our City region attractive and sustainable and every effort must be made to ensure best practice is sought and attained throughout implementation. Furthermore, as these improvements are being designed, we suggest that a pole and signage levels are reviewed to reduce excessive signage along Water Street and Horgan's Quay where identified.

In conclusion, Cork Chamber shares the commitment of Cork City Council to facilitate the sustainable economic development of the Cork region.

Best regards,



**Michelle O'Sullivan**

**Senior Public Affairs Executive**

**Cork Chamber**