



**Waterford
Chamber**
Advancing business together



Proposal
**To connect the Greenway
(Bilberry) to City Centre**

June 2019

The Greenway between Waterford and Dungarvan has been one of the most significant and successful tourism offerings delivered in recent times in Ireland. This simple concept of re-vitalizing a former Rail line and creating a walking/cycle offering through the countryside, working its way through our villages etc has been delivered simply and cost effectively.

Whilst the success of the Greenway, in terms of a tourist offering, has been no great surprise given the level of amenities and vantage points the route offers, the fact that it is outdoors, family friendly and adds exploration with exercise, it was always going to a winner.

However what the real success of the Greenway is the economic impact it has had in Dungarvan, Kilmacthomas etc. The rejuvenation of these centres, the job creation and the spin off tourism spend in these locations has literally transformed the accommodation, food and beverage and all of the ad on service provider spend associated with the Greenway. You are now looking at Kilmacthomas as a thriving town, we are talking about Dungarvan as being booked out for guest accommodation 12 months in advance. These towns are bustling and the centers are busier due to the impact of the Greenway but more importantly the consumer confidence and business development opportunities the Greenway has brought has been the real

success. It has created a real tourism entrepreneur that wasn't there before.

With that in mind, we very much welcome the connectivity of the Greenway to the City Center and we applaud and support its delivery. We acknowledge the challenges and embrace the opportunities, however the Greenway and Waterford City Center needs to provide a more robust and interactive visitor experience.

We would ask that the council to reconsider the route of this connection, as whilst the river side route will be nice for a user, especially on a dry sunny day, the reality is this river edge route will be hidden from the City as it will run done the back of a number of car parks. These car parks and the heavily trafficked Quay creates a physical and visual barrier between the City Center and the greenway that will encourage users to by-pass the City Center, the Cultural Quarter and all of the great current tourism, food and beverage offerings the City has currently and negates the ability for this tourism entrepreneurial spirit in the City to engage with the Greenway as a planned.

We would ask WCC to reconsider this route and investigate with the relevant stakeholders, business, community groups, retailers etc and consider a more intimate route that takes the greenway into the city center , harness's the offering of the City and allows the City showcase what it has to offer

visitors, making it a more intimate and interactive experience.

We would suggest an alternative route via Mary Street/Brewery, onto O'Connell Street, through the Cultural Quarter, into Broad Street (John Roberts Square) and via Barronstrand Street onto the new North Quays Bridge.

We strongly feel that not alone will this alternative route transform the lesser travelled areas of the City but it will also create a common connection between these areas with a single common thread but it also gives the planned Cultural Quarter with the potential of 500,000 users / footfall. The alternative Greenway route has the potential of enhancing the life blood, energy and vibrancy o the existing City/ Cultural Quarter underpinning any existing or planned business.

We can collectively create this opportunity.

This singular solution in our opinion gives the heart of our City a transformational blood supply that will allow Waterford City Center re-establish itself and a thriving , buzzing center capitalising on tourism experiences and developing an organic sustainable business model for our City Center business, building owners and dwellers.

CONTACT

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