



Uimhir Thagarta Uathúil: CRK-C155-DEV21-362

Údar: Cork Chamber

Stádas: Submitted

Aighneacht:

Cork City Development Plan 2022 - 2028, Cork Chamber
Submission

Comhairliúchán:

Draft Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028

Strategic Objectives 5: Green & Blue Infrastructure, Open Space and Biodiversity

Caibidil: Volume 1 - Written Statement» 6. Green and Blue Infrastructure, Open Space and

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This plan must formally recognise biodiversity as a key infrastructural component of the City with multiple roles, in carbon sequestration, air quality, noise pollution, mental health and countless others overtly acknowledged. It must actively promote the integration of more biodiversity on the city's streets with clear and significant targets. It is not appropriate to restrict biodiversity to designated spaces, it must be encouraged in a linear manner throughout the city.

The benefits of additional tree planting and greening are widespread and have impacts environmentally, visually and from a health perspective. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN one tree can absorb as much as 150 kilograms of carbon dioxide annually[1]. In Melbourne the city's authorities have set planting targets in a bid to maintain their city for those who live and work there as well as tackling climate change. 3,000 trees are to be planted every year up to 2040 in a bid to boost canopy cover from 22% to 40% [2]. The climate emergency must be tackled from every available angle.

A programme of appropriate scale but of similar ambition to that of the Civilian Conservation Corps in the US, who planted 3.5 billion trees, and created and landscaped 711 state parks from 1933 to 1942 should be implemented. The CCC model is now outdated, but its legacy is beyond reproach. Funding should be provided for an appropriate contemporary delivery model.

Cork Chamber welcomes the commitment to ensuring that all residents have access to parks and public spaces, particularly the presumption against development of land zoned for public open space being used for alternative purposes. Cork City Council should also be commended for a proposal to prepare a citywide Open Space Strategy in the lifetime of this plan. In the planning of new public spaces and plazas associated with new developments, every opportunity should be taken to create credible space for biodiversity, rather than token planting.

The Chamber is supportive of green roof targets. The requirements should not be so excessive as to compromise viability of projects, but every small intervention, when added together can have a significant cumulative effect. This application should range from new builds to bus stops.

Cork City Council has pledged to work with stakeholders in facilitating safe, improved accessibility to the water environment including the River Lee and Cork harbour. This commitment must be enacted with haste as the river is currently an underutilised amenity for locals and tourists alike. The plan must facilitate enhanced access to the Lee at

existing access points and encourage new access points, and pontoons. The feasibility of a water taxi that would ferry passengers from the city to areas such as Cobh, Haulbowline and Ringaskiddy should also be considered and catered for in this plan as another transport and tourism offering.

Given the unrivalled nature of water as an amenity the culverting of rivers should be carefully considered in the Plan. There may be a case for uncovering certain waterways and restoring them to their natural state. We cite the restoration of the Singel canal in Utrecht as an exemplary case study.[3] It has created both an amenity and a global thought leadership position for the City. The City should explore this possible opportunity over the lifetime of the Development Plan.

It is essential that the consideration of active leisure facilities is broad, contemporary, and urban. The draft ARI study[4] highlights a deficit across many forms of active recreation infrastructure. The development of an active recreation strategy with a clear parent directorate driving capital projects will be essential if the deficit is to be tackled and progressed in line with projected growth. The scope must be diverse and contemporary, encompassing elements such as skateboarding, bmxing, basketball, parkour and other activities increasingly synonymous with urban areas worldwide. All sports offer life skills, but given the relationship of Cork to its waterways for both leisure and safety, the provision of public swimming pools, indoor and lido must return in earnest to the development plans for the City.

[1] <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/news/2019/03/on-international-day-unece-fao-forestry-and-timber-section-releases-10-facts-to-fall-in-love-with-forests/index.html>

[2] <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/greening-the-city/urban-forest/Pages/urban-forest-strategy.aspx>

[3] <https://www.dutchnews.nl/news/2020/09/joining-the-circle-utrecht-removes-road-to-be-ringed-by-water-once-more/>

[4] <https://www.corkcity.ie/en/media-folder/cork-city-development-plan/cck-active-recreation-infrastructure-needs-study-draft-report.pdf>

Attachments:

CRK-C155-DEV21-362-13152 - Cork Chamber Submission Draft Cork City Development Plan Oct 4 .pdf