



## The Green Step

### Proposal:

# Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028

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Cover Art - Martina Flanagan

The following insights are in direct response to the questions laid out in each section of the proposed development plan and are laid out accordingly.

### **3. Town Profile**

- **What types of housing (e.g. houses, apartments) and tenures (e.g. owner occupied, private rental, social) should be provided to meet population growth targets for Cork City? Where and how should they be planned for?**

-Apartments with communal spaces, rooftop gardens, renewable energy and water collection systems. New housing should aim to offer each resident access to a green space where they can have a sense of ownership (should they desire to). This could include a combination of tenures (i.e. social, owner occupied and private rental) so that housing types are not linked with socio economic status and are therefore more inclusive. These spaces should also be age friendly to ensure intergenerational living opportunities for the elderly, families, couples and individuals.

- **How can the next City Development Plan help to increase participation in the labour force throughout the city?**

-Efficient sustainable transport - cycling, light rail network, walking routes with green spaces and sensory plants throughout.

-Established more decentralised co-working spaces (e.g. Glandor, Republic of Work) in the city suburbs.

- **How best can we increase the percentage of people using active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport in the city?**

-Segrate walking and cycling paths from the main roads where possible with green spaces with rich biodiversity. Use sensory plants (e.g. rosemary, lavender, thyme, lamb's ears) along walking routes.

-Architectural glass canopies over popular walking streets like princes, opera lane and other areas where many people travel from bus stops to busy work hubs. This is also an effective way to facilitate outdoor eating and drinking as COVID measures persist into the future.

- ensure public transport is an affordable option and flexible in getting people where they need to be

- **How can the next City Development Plan help increase access to jobs throughout the city, but especially in disadvantaged areas?**

-Emphasize the need for green space employment in managing vegetable patches, wildlife gardens, green architecture, permaculture design, urban food growing. As the population of Cork City increases it is essential that we can have a sense of self sufficiency and be able to in part be able to produce food within the city for the city.

-Refocus the importance on trade work (i.e. plumbing, carpentry) and encourage local support for these important services. Included in these trades will be the work of retrofitting the houses around the city.

-Establish more co-working spaces in city suburbs like Togher, Ballyphehane, Douglas.

#### **4. Shaping the Structure of the City**

- **How do we make our city more compact to avoid undesirable sprawl and increase the delivery of walkable city neighbourhoods and urban towns that are highly accessible by public transport?**

-Low-rise multi-function buildings with shops and co-working spaces on the ground floor, Offices on the second floor and apartment and living space on the top floor. In these spaces put emphasis on car free streets to encourage walking and a child friendly environment with sensory plants, richly biodiverse public green spaces, cycle routes, architectural glass canopies over popular walkways

-Big belly solar powered bins with general, recycling and compostable options to manage the waste produced by a higher density of residents

-Localised anaerobic digesters to manage the food waste produced within the city and produce fertilizer for local food producers and public green spaces.

-Recycling plants to manage and sort the waste produced by a higher density of people.

- **How do we make the most of lands that are underutilised and undeveloped in the city centre, city suburbs and the urban towns, while retaining the character and environmental importance of the city's hinterland? //How do we ensure the most effective use of land, infrastructure and resources, while balancing the need to retain the character, landscape, urban form and environmental qualities of Cork City?**

-Create permaculture spaces with various edible plants, benches and pathways to offer sensory experiences to city workers, before and after work and during breaks. These can be tiny oasis' of high density plant life, mitigating the island heat effect of the city, capturing CO2, mitigating climate change and enhancing local biodiversity. Once established these ecosystems can become self regulating and will require little maintenance and can be enjoyed by residents, visitors and workers alike. The little maintenance needed in multiple spaces can be an opportunity to create new jobs.

-Create small community gardens, community garden initiatives and groups, which are open and inclusive, so people can have a go at growing something, getting together, social

inclusion, feeling part of and in touch with their environment and community and develop a sense of belonging as well as responsibility for their city and community.

- **How do we achieve the regeneration of City Docks and Tivoli Docks to enable the sustainable growth for Cork City, Cork Metropolitan Area and the Southern Region?**

-Ensure any new developments have green roofs/indoor gardens, are powered by 100% renewable energy and are built with the most efficient materials possible (e.g. hempcrete)  
Ensure that the contractors hired have a low waste and sustainable ethos.  
-Focus on light rail and cycling access to the area

## **5. Tackling Climate Change**

- **How can land use zoning be used to help tackle climate change in Cork City?**

-Land zoning for long term natural flood management (i.e. reforestation & wetland habitats) needs to be prioritised on the banks of the River Lee. This will serve as a long term measure to prevent the city from flooding in the future. As climate change continues and sea waters rise this needs to be considered as the bedrock of all future plans. See the Cork Nature Network submission for a more detailed analysis and proposal on this.

-Land that is zoned to be rewilded may also be considered as a place for green graveyards like Irelands first in co. Wicklow. As Graveyards are protected, sanctified land doubling them with protected well managed natural areas would be wise.

- **What actions are needed to protect strategic infrastructure from climate change?**

-Long term, Natural flood management needs to be implemented to ensure the protection of all city infrastructure. This includes re-establishing the flood plains, reforesting the upland areas, not dredging the river or building walls as these are short term initiatives that damage and disrupt the ecosystem of the river lee and it's wildlife.

-Short term protection from sea surges and high tides may be a wall at the entrance of the river as proposed by the Love the Lee campaigners.

-Greening the city scape will also protect against the city island heat effect and help to reduce global warming and CO2 emissions. This can be a way to ensure carbon off setting of city emissions within the city limits.

-All buildings need to be retrofitted, and new buildings built, to the highest energy efficiency standards possible.

- **What role do green and blue infrastructure, sustainable agriculture and renewable energy have in helping to tackle climate change in Cork City?**

-As mentioned green-blue city infrastructure (i.e permaculture gardens, green rooftops, natural flood management) are essential for a number of reasons from community to climate resilience.

-Other measures not yet mentioned include water collection tanks to water green spaces and for use in toilets and showering, green bus stop roof tops, ponds in green spaces.

- **How can energy efficiency and effectiveness be improved within the next city development plan?**

Solar panels need to be installed across the rooftops of cork city be they apartments or office buildings. These will act as a clean energy source to power up the entire city. Also more charging points for electric cars need to be installed throughout the city. Service stations

that already sell fossil fuels need to be encouraged to switch to electric. This will make it possible for more electric cars to be used throughout the city.

- **How can Cork City's transport systems be improved to reduce greenhouse gas emissions within the city and region? How important are the delivery of measures set out in Corks Metropolitan Area Transportation Strategy in achieving this?**

An inner city train service needs to be built in the city and it needs to be electric. This has already been achieved in Dublin with their dart train service Proving that electric public transport is possible. It is also possible to convert the trains going out of the city into electric trains as well .Electric buses are also a possibility.Rental electric bikes and scooters can also be a means of public transport. The reason why they should be electric is because cork city is built on many hills and electric bikes and scooters would make it easier and cheaper to travel around the city.

- **What are the best means of increasing the greening throughout the city, including local, neighbourhood and city scale greening projects? What other actions and policy changes could be made to help mitigate and adapt to climate change?**

Rooftop and vertical Gardens could play a major role in protecting the city from the effects of climate change.If installed in the city centre they will not only purify the air but reduce the heat. Also a better waste management system needs to be created. As incidents of littering and illegal dumping have increased in recent years. Proper public bins with separate containers for recycling, compost and general waste need to be reinstalled throughout suburbia and especially on the new greenways. Seabins can also be installed in the river lee to stop pollution and litter from floating out to sea.

## **6. Creating a Livable City**

- **What can make your community more of a 'liveable' place?**
- **How can we accommodate the increasing diverse community needs within the City?**

Co-living spaces (i.e apartments with mixed tenders) can be built to provide intergeneration access (i.e. elderly on lower floors, communal spaces), Louder residents on top floors, several access points for families and late comers. In any co-living space nonviolent communication training would be important.

- **Thinking about where you live, how would you suggest old and new places and spaces, be (re)designed and created to increase community engagement?**

### Creating community gardens in the city:

~ connecting existing green initiatives and using the already existing structures and know how and expand from there.

~ strong opportunity for people finding connections

~ community building

~ inclusion of isolated people

~ therapeutic effects of horticulture/plants/working with your hand in a community, on people

~ resulting improvement of community mental health

Improvement of physical health in the community

~ possible reduction of crime

~ opportunity of social workers/horticulturists/ horticultural therapists to work with groups of people in disadvantaged areas, creating positive change

- Inclusion of city council workers/gardeners in these projects (shift of employment).
- ~ improving air quality in the city
- ~ enriching the visual scape of the city, creating oasis
- ~ growing food for the community within the community
- ~ giving disadvantaged people the opportunity to grow and eat fresh/healthy food that they may otherwise not be able to afford
- ~ inclusion of children in growing projects, nurturing children into environmental and health awareness at a young age.
- ~ inclusion of elderly people, combating loneliness

*Possible challenges:*

- ~ destruction of parts of plots by drunk people or rowdy teenagers (it has been shown that these kinds of spaces have prevented/reduced littering in the past).
- ~ fizzling out of energy over time, neglecting these spaces
- ~ create structure for the projects
- ~ identify how much funding is necessary
  - Obtaining and distributing materials

*How to ensure, that community gardens in the city centre, suburbs and adjacent towns are maintained and work for everyone:*

~ create employment for some horticulturists that can run community groups and maintain these spaces. This will prevent solely voluntary movements to fizzle out. Also employ horticultural therapists and community workers, especially when working within disadvantaged areas or people with different abilities.

Also, when there are people employed and dedicated to these projects, we can create blueprints, which we can be implemented in other areas, such as schools or companies and we can give them support and advice when starting their own projects.

People growing their own ideas, showing initiative, projects becoming self running  
Groups under the green cork community umbrella

for instance:

- ~mental health gardens
- ~ gardens specifically in disadvantaged areas in conjunction with social care
- ~ intercultural gardens to include new people into the cork community
- ~ school garden project
- ~ artistic garden project
- ~ elderly gardening project

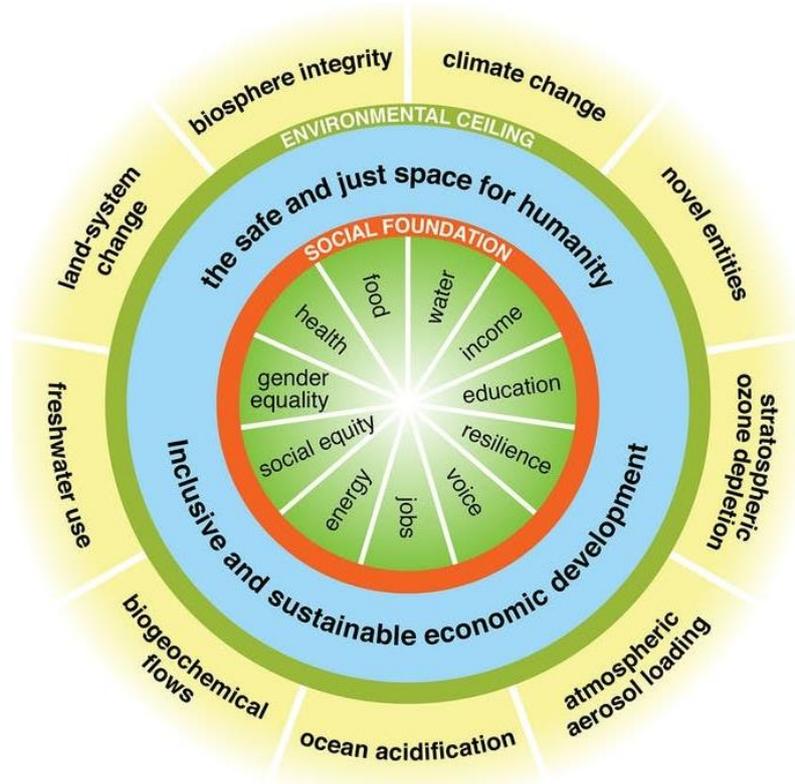
## **7. A Diverse Economy**

- **How do we build the resilience of our economy and ensure that there are jobs for people in Cork in the long term as technology changes?**

-We need to focus on rebuilding the local economy in accordance with circular economic principles (i.e. doughnut economics graph illustrated below). Emphasis needs to be put on our waste and energy sectors and the hundreds of potential jobs that recycling centres, composting facilities, waste management, and renewable energy that can be created (i.e retrofitting, ect.)

-Other essential jobs needed to help us transition include environmental educators, climate resilience experts, community educators, holistic health practitioners, herbalists, horticulturalists, permaculturists, ect.

-It is essential that we shift the focus of our trade from consumption and retails to holistic and circular alternatives. We need to embrace a minimalist 'less is more' mentality and focus on localised trading and food production to promote community resilience as the climate continues to shift.



### 8. A Connected City

- **What key actions would you like to see to improve walking and cycling infrastructure?**

More green ways connected to biodiversity initiatives and wildlife corridors.

- **What needs to be done to increase use of public transport over the coming decade?**

15 minute walkable town designs for all new builds

